



University of the  
West of England

**MODALITY MARKERS AND POLITENESS STRATEGIES IN BRITISH AND  
AMERICAN AMBASSADORIAL SPEECHES: A CORPUS-BASED APPROACH**

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## ABSTRACT

This study investigates modality markers used as expressions of politeness in British and American ambassadorial speeches via a corpus-based method. Results of the research reflect the semantic and pragmatic perspectives of modality markers on the theories of modality and politeness. Although modality and politeness are the central topics in a wide range of studies, the two domains have been discussed separately and their relationship has not been empirically investigated. Moreover, there has been no study on modality markers in British and American discourse, nor has the use of modality markers in British and American ambassadorial speeches been examined. Therefore, this research examines the relation of modality to politeness via the use of British and American ambassadorial speeches. The research contributes to the practice of the discourse community with the analysis of modality markers as politeness strategies in ambassadorial speeches. The results of a comparative analysis of modality markers as speakers' politeness strategies collected in ambassadorial speeches reveal that American and British ambassadors are strikingly different in their frequency of modality markers expressing particular politeness categories. American ambassadors use more modality markers expressing positive politeness strategies such as paying attention to hearers, expressing strong commitment, hedging on hearers' positive face, expressing optimism, complimenting to mitigate the force of comments, making claims and minimising the imposition of face-threatening acts. British ambassadors, however, employ more modality markers expressing negative politeness strategies such as hedging on negative face-threatening acts, expressing hypotheses, expressing humbleness and mitigating the force of obligation. Therefore, this thesis claims that American ambassadors use more modality markers expressing positive politeness in terms of personal emotions and directness, while British ambassadors prefer modality markers expressing negative politeness such as tentativeness, indirectness and mitigation. It is noted that modality is represented in a range of syntactic structures and patterns other than single modal auxiliary verbs. In addition, since modality markers as expressions of politeness are culture-specific, the use of modality markers differs from one culture to another. Moreover, modality markers cannot totally be treated as hedges in intercultural communication since some modality markers which seem to be semantically similar between languages are actually different in their pragmatic functions among different cultures.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

A	Agent
AAC	American Ambassador Corpus
AAs	American Ambassadors
AmE	American English
BAC	British Ambassador Corpus
BAs	British Ambassadors
BNC	British National Corpus
BrE	British English
CC	Conversational Contract
COCA	Corpus of Contemporary American English
CP	Co-operative Principle
D	Dynamic
DFID	(UK) Department for International Development
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
F	Force
FEA	Face-Enhancing Act
FOB	Freiburg - Lancaster - Oslo/Bergen (Corpus)
Frown	Freiburg-Brown (Corpus)
FTAs	Face-Threatening Acts
H	Hearers
ICAME	International Computer Archive of Modern English
ICE-GB	International Corpus of English (Great Britain minicorpus)
ICLE	International Corpus of Learners' English
IP	Irony Principle
IRR	Irrealis (assertion)
L	Later
L2	Second language
LCLE	Longman Corpus of Learners' English
LLC	London Lund Corpus

LLELC	Longman/Lancaster English Language Corpus
LOB	Lancaster - Oslo/Bergen
MMs	Modality Markers
N <sub>Mod</sub>	Modal noun
NSEs	Native Speakers of English
P	Probability
PP	Politeness Principle
R	Ranking
S	Speaker
R-assertion	Realis assertion
SEU	Survey of English Usage (spoken mini-corpus)
VLEs	Vietnamese EFL Learners

## **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY**

### **1.1 Introduction**

This chapter introduces the background of the study on modality markers and politeness strategies in British and American ambassadorial speeches by providing a picture of the research including the motivation for the study, its aims and objectives, the research questions, contribution of the research and an outline of the thesis. The motivation for this study originated from two perspectives. On the one hand, although modality and politeness are important areas of research in several respects, their relationship has not been empirically investigated. On the other hand, there has been no study on the pragmatic functions of modality markers as politeness expressions in British and American discourse. Therefore, this study aims at examining the semantic and pragmatic perspectives of modality markers through British and American ambassadorial speeches. The main focus of the study is on the relation between modality and politeness, and the difference in the use of modality markers as politeness strategies between British and American ambassadorial speeches. These major points give way to the indication of the research questions and the position of the study with its theoretical contribution presented. Finally, an outline of the thesis is given which explains its structure and provides the title, content and aims which each chapter is expected to address.

### **1.2 Motivation**

With globalisation and international integration, activities such as diplomatic contacts and negotiations, international conferences and cultural exchange, multinational corporate transactions have become essential aspects of world events. In such contexts, the English language with its vital role as an effective means of international communication has taken the central position in every aspect of intercultural communication.

In fact, the English language has been frequently used across the continents in daily-life activities and work exchanges. Consequently, there has been a wide range of research on the issues of authentic English usage among which are studies on expressions showing the speaker's view in the utterance. Such studies have become a matter of interest in corpus linguistics (see Chapter 4). Recent corpus-based studies, e.g. Biber et al. (1998), Krug (2000), Hyland (2001), Facchinetti et al. (2003), Aijmer and Altenberg (1991), Facchinetti and Palmer (2004) have contributed to the investigation into subtle components of authentic

English. These studies are practical not only as a corpus-based framework but also as an essential reference, especially for second language learners of English, for studying expressions showing the speaker's attitude in the utterance.

In our everyday communication, we not only exchange information but also have to convey our attitude towards, or opinions about, the content of what we say. As such, interactants have to know how to use language to encode and decode each other's feelings and commitments to the event or the act uttered. These expressions used to reveal the speaker's view in the utterance are identified as modality markers (House & Kasper, 1981). However, such markers are effectively used only among people of the same cultural background who share emotions through the use of verbal and even non-verbal expressions. Conversely, in intercultural communication, L2 users of English may misunderstand each other due to the lack of competence in variables of language usage. Consequently, interactants in intercultural communication may experience a certain confusion because of their non-targeted use of markers expressing their attitude.

An utterance normally consists of two major relative components: one is the modality marker creating the illocutionary force<sup>(1)</sup> of the speaker's attitude towards the other as the core information of the utterance. The speaker's attitudinal markers have been referred to in a number of studies in terms of "mitigation markers" (Brown and Yule, 1983); "harmonic combinations" (Coates, 1983); "modal expressions" (Perkins 1983); "modality-filled markers" (Dedaic, 2004) and "expressions of modality" (Frawley, 2006). However, these expressions may be a challenge facing EFL users, even those whose grammatical competence is advanced since their L2 speech act competence is incomplete (see Rose, 2000; Kasper & Rose, 2002). Therefore, a study on components expressing the speaker's commitment to what s/he says and the relationship between the speaker and hearer(s) in terms of modality markers is essential for L2 users.

The rationale for this study on modality markers as politeness expressions and the selection of British and American ambassadorial speeches as the database for the research is as follows:

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<sup>(1)</sup> Illocutionary force "refers to whether an utterance is an assertion, a question, a command or an expression of a wish" (Van Valin and LaPolla, 1997: 41)

Firstly, although there is a range of theoretical approaches to modality, the major concerns are traditional modal logic (Lyons, 1977; Palmer, 1974); grammatical categories as “tense-aspect-modality” (Givón, 1984); basic semantic dimensions in terms of deontic, dynamic and epistemic modality (Palmer 1986, 1990); and the semantics of modal auxiliaries (Coates, 1983). Moreover, despite a wide range of notions with regard to the discussion of modality (see 2.4), no specific structures or patterns have been provided to illustrate categories of modality. Therefore, this research will reflect the semantic and pragmatic perspectives of modality markers in the theories of modality through British and American ambassadorial speeches.

Secondly, samples of British and American ambassadorial speeches have been selected as the data sources of the research for two reasons. First, these samples of ambassadorial speeches are among the major variables of native English which can be seen as representative of authentic data for the study. (It is obvious that modality markers can be found in other sources of data, i.e., in everyday conversations of British and American English in general. However, it is too large in scale and inappropriate for the objectives of this study.) Second, ambassadorial speeches may contain potential face-threatening acts (see Brown & Levinson, 1987) which may violate the interactants’ face wants (see Chapter 3) and ideological autonomy. In order to avoid or attenuate such violations, the speaker has to use linguistic devices adding to the proposition of the utterance. As such, ambassadorial speeches are expected to contain expressions of the speaker’s attitude which correspond roughly to the objectives of this research on modality markers and politeness strategies.

Thirdly, this research is not a contrastive analysis of modality markers between English and Vietnamese (my native language) because there are differences in modality systems in the two languages. There are modality markers in Vietnamese which seem to have similar meanings to their English counterparts but they actually cover different pragmatic functions. Thus, a comparative analysis of modality markers in British and American ambassadorial speeches is an alternative to provide L2 users of English with a reference for more targeted ways of using modality markers.

Modality markers (hereafter referred to as MMs) can be defined as devices that co-occur with the proposition in an utterance to express the speaker’s view of and commitment to the content of the proposition presented. In this research, MMs are identified as syntactic



structures and lexical items expressing modality meanings in terms of *modals* for modal auxiliaries and *modal forms* for other non-auxiliary patterns of modality meanings including modal lexical verbs (verbal modals), modal nouns (nominal modals), modal adjectives (adjectival modals) and modal adverbs (adverbial modals). With the use of MMs, speakers offer their judgement and points of view so that hearers may locate a background for their recognitions, arguments and other points of view in response.

In such a process, MMs play essential roles as interpersonal signals in spoken communication. The meaning that MMs express in a discourse segment also extends to the speaker's attitude towards the situation or event described by an utterance. In addition, there is a wide range of alternatives in the use of MMs in speech performance. For instance, we say '*I think that...*' when we mean '*probably*', '*I believe that...*' as '*almost certainly*', '*Don't you think...?*' as '*definitely*'; or the difference between the sense of subjective probability and that of objective probability as in '*I think that...*' and '*it is likely that...*' or '*in my opinion*' and '*in all probability*'. Therefore, a study of such attitudinal markers expressing the speaker's view and commitment to the propositional content of the utterance is essential.

### **1.3 Aims and objectives**

The main aim of my thesis is to investigate the use of MMs as expressions of politeness in British and American ambassadorial speeches. The desired outcomes of the thesis are to investigate two major issues. First, the thesis will unfold the semantic and pragmatic perspectives of MMs on prior theories of modality and politeness with illustrations of patterns of MMs in association with basic semantic dimensions of modality. Second, the analysis of MMs as particular politeness strategies will indicate the differences between American ambassadors and British ambassadors in the use of MMs as expressions of politeness in their speech delivery. The aims of the thesis are mainly related to modality and politeness, and thus a brief introduction to these two domains is presented as follows.

Although modality and politeness are broad areas of research, these two domains have been discussed separately in the literature. Essentially, there has been no research that can put forward any claim on the relation between modality and politeness. Therefore, on the theoretical background of modality and politeness (see Chapters 2 and 3), this study examines the functions of modality markers as politeness expressions through the method of corpus-based analysis of British and American ambassadorial speeches.

Modality (see Chapter 2), as claimed by Simpson (1993), extends to a speaker's attitude towards the situation or event described by a proposition. Dedaic (2004) also states that "modality-filled markers" satisfy Lakoff's (1973) three rules of politeness and Leech's (1983) six paired politeness maxims. As such, an investigation into the semantics of MMs and their pragmatic functions as politeness strategies in ambassadorial speeches will indicate the relation between modality and politeness.

With regard to politeness, Brown and Levinson's (1987) "face-saving" view can be considered as "the best known of the recent approaches" (Fraser, 1990: 228). This theory considers politeness as a mechanism for saving interactants' face and a strategy for avoiding face-threatening acts in communication (see Chapter 3). According to Brown and Levinson (1987: 61) face is something that can be maintained, lost and enhanced. For example, when an ambassador says "*Enterprises would really like it if you could make some more changes to the business environment*", s/he implies a command using a conditional structure. This can obviously save both the speaker's and hearer's face and is thus more polite than a direct speech act such as "*Please make some more changes to your business environment*" (which may be polite only in a culture oriented to positive politeness but may violate hearers' negative face).

As such, politeness can be seen as an important area in spoken and other areas of communication. It is also a component of pragmatics since pragmatics studies meanings in relation to aspects of speech acts such as the relationship between the speaker and hearers, context, goals, and the content of the utterance. The notion of *politeness* has actually been of central interest in a range of fields i.e., sociolinguistics, pragmatics, applied linguistics, social psychology and conversation analysis, and has been referred to in these disciplines. However, in this study the term is narrowed down to the manifestation of language devices as MMs in spoken communication.

In order for the aims of the thesis to be accomplished, MMs found in British and American ambassadorial speeches will be classified and analysed in their semantic and pragmatic functions under the umbrella of politeness theories. Apart from grammatical structures and meanings of modal auxiliaries, non-auxiliary patterns with modal lexical verbs, modal adverbs, modal adjectives, and modal nouns will be taken into account. The investigation will provide results on frequencies of MMs and their semantic roles in

expressing the speaker's attitude and opinion in particular utterances, and the use of MMs as particular politeness strategies in the corpora of American and British ambassadorial speeches (see Chapter 4).

The main steps undertaken in this study are as follows. Firstly, I provide an overview of modality (Chapter 2), speech acts and politeness (Chapter 3) as the theoretical background for the study. I then make use of prior theoretical research to classify and describe the semantic and pragmatic functions of MMs collected from samples of ambassadorial speeches. This study is undertaken using a corpus-based analysis (Chapter 4). MMs in terms of semantic categories of deontic, dynamic and epistemic modality are classified and analysed (Chapters 5, 6 and 7). These provide data for a comparative analysis of MMs expressing particular politeness strategies (Chapter 8) in ambassadorial speeches and the identification of differences between the British and American ambassadors in some major categories of politeness markers (Chapter 9).

#### **1.4 Research questions and contribution of the research**

The domain of modality has been approached from a range of views (see 2.1). Moreover, recent studies have proposed the reorganisation of the theoretical issues of modality and suggested more subcategories such as possibility, probability, necessity, belief and confidence (see Frawley, 2006). For instance, Traugott (2006) provides the picture of historical development and changes of modal verbs; Nuyts (2006) not only covers essential terms referring to modality but also differentiates his ideas from notions introduced by past studies; De Haan (2006) suggests a broad typological analysis of modality, clarifies the modes of modal expressions in the world's languages, and elucidates the ways modality interacts with mood, realis-irrealis, and other categories.

This study will reflect the semantic and pragmatic perspectives of MMs on prior theories of modality and present a comparative analysis of MMs used as politeness strategies in British and American ambassadorial speeches. The study is intended to contribute to the practice of the discourse community with the analysis of MMs in the particular discourse of ambassadorial speeches. In order to realise those major aims, this study answers the following key questions:

- What types of MMs occur in British and American ambassadorial speeches?
- What grammatical structures do these MMs have?

- Can current grammatical theories provide a good account of the use of MMs?
- What pragmatic functions can be identified and analysed from the coding of MMs?
- What similarities and differences in politeness strategies can be identified from the comparative analysis of MMs used in British and American ambassadorial speeches?

In addition, since there has not been any study distinguishing between MMs in British and American discourse and nothing between British and American ambassadorial speeches either, I believe that this research will provide a guide for L2 English learners on how to use MMs in their communication. In sum, the study is expected to contribute to the theory of politeness and to the discourse analysis community with the functions of MMs as patterns expressing politeness strategies and provide L2 English learners with an essential reference for more targeted ways of using MMs to express politeness in their communication.

### **1.5 Outline of the thesis**

The overarching aim of this research is to examine the nature of MMs and their pragmatic functions as expressions of politeness strategies in the corpora of British and American ambassadorial speeches. Since the main focus of the research is related to modality and politeness, the thesis commences from the theory chapters as overviews of these two domains leading to the theoretical framework for the study. Following this, with the utilisation of software packages under the umbrella of a corpus-based method, modality markers coded and collected in the corpora of British and American ambassadorial speeches are classified and analysed in the dimensions of deontic, dynamic and epistemic modality in successive chapters. These will provide data for a comparative analysis of politeness strategies in the two variables of ambassadorial discourse. Finally, the differences between British and American ambassadors' usage of MMs in their politeness strategies are identified and analysed.

As such, the thesis is organised into ten chapters. Chapter one is an introduction to the background of the research including its motivation, aims, research questions and the contribution of the research. Chapter two consists of an overview of modality theories leading to the framework for the analysis of modality markers. Chapter three provides a theoretical analysis of speech acts and a review of major theoretical approaches to politeness as the framework for the analysis of MMs as politeness strategies. Chapter four describes the

mixed method of quantitative and qualitative analyses used in the study, the compilation of the research corpora and the software packages used for data collection and analysis.

In Chapters five, six and seven the three major categories of deontic, dynamic and epistemic modality are successively discussed. Each chapter consists of an analysis of the corresponding category of modality, i.e. the syntactic structures and semantic properties of MMs associated with each category. The meanings of MMs coded in each category are illustrated with a comparative analysis of their frequency use in the two types of ambassadorial speeches. As such, MMs collected from British and American ambassadorial speeches are analysed in terms of their meanings associated with the specific category in each chapter.

Chapter eight consists of a pragmatic analysis of MMs occurring in ambassadorial speeches under the two super-strategies of positive and negative politeness. MMs collected in British and American ambassadorial speeches are classified and analysed in their functions associated with particular positive and negative politeness strategies. Such analyses provide data for a comparative analysis of differences in usage between British and American ambassadors in some major categories of politeness in Chapter nine. Finally, Chapter ten as the conclusion contains a summary of modality categories; the idiosyncratic features of MMs as politeness strategies and the differences between British and American ambassadors in their use of MMs. In addition, suggestions for a more targeted use of MMs as politeness expressions and further research orientation are proposed. A detailed description of the thesis structure is as follows:

Chapter 1: Introduction to the research.

This chapter consists of an introduction to the research in which I present the motivation for the research, and its aims and objectives. Following this, the research questions and contribution of the research are described. Finally, an outline of the research is presented and explained.

Chapter 2: Theoretical background of modality.

Chapter Two as an overview of modality theories consists of the historical development and different theoretical approaches to modality. The taxonomy of modality categories, other related categorisations, and subdivisions and alternatives in the domain of modality are discussed. Such discussions provide the background for the definition of MMs used in the

thesis. As such, Chapter two covers major issues of modality including a critical analysis of different approaches to the domain leading to the definition of modality; the distinction between modality and the proposition in an utterance; major features of modality meanings including the speaker's view and the expression of factuality; the comparison between traditional modal logic and linguistic categories of epistemic, deontic and dynamic modality; and a discussion of other divisions of modality. Through the theoretical analysis, a diagram illustrating relations of modality meanings is proposed as a framework for the analysis of modality markers.

### Chapter 3: Speeches and politeness theories

Chapter Three is organised into two sections covering issues in relation to speeches and politeness theories. The first section presents discussions on the main issues of spoken communication including speech genres, components of spoken communication and political speeches. The second section is an overview of politeness theories which uncovers different views from polite behaviours in general to linguistic politeness in particular. A critical analysis of major approaches to politeness is presented as the framework for the analysis of MMs as politeness strategies in British and American ambassadorial speeches.

### Chapter 4: Methodology

The thesis is undertaken on the basis of corpus-based research. Therefore, this chapter presents an introduction to corpus linguistics, outlining what a corpus can do and why a corpus-based method should be used for the research. In addition, methods of collecting and sampling data, and other issues of corpus design are presented. This research is conducted using a mixed method approach in which the results of a quantitative corpus analysis provide an empirical basis for a qualitative analysis of MMs as particular politeness strategies in the selected utterances taken from ambassadorial speeches. As such, the specific steps undertaken in this research are the following: designing the corpus, reading the samples, identifying and coding the data of MMs, using software packages to search for the terms and confirm the data, identifying the context of the utterance where a specific modality marker occurs and selecting utterances for the qualitative analysis.

### Chapter 5: Deontic modality markers

In this chapter, markers of deontic modality used in ambassadorial speeches are classified and analysed in their function of expressing obligations, permissions, commands and

requests. The frequencies of deontic MMs in ambassadorial speeches are presented to show the similarities and differences between British and American ambassadors in the use of deontic MMs.

#### Chapter 6: Dynamic modality markers

This chapter continues with the analysis of MMs in the sense of dynamic modality. The types of MMs used in samples of ambassadorial speeches to convey the meanings of ability, volition, intention, and willingness are analysed. Frequencies of dynamic MMs collected from the two research corpora provide data for a comparative analysis between British and American ambassadors in their use of MMs in this category.

#### Chapter 7: Epistemic modality markers

Chapter Seven comprises a discussion of epistemic modality markers which focuses not only on the modal verbs expressing epistemic senses but also on other expressions showing the speaker's commitment to, or confidence in, the content of the utterance. A comparative analysis of the frequencies of epistemic MMs will show the similarity and difference between the British and American ambassadors' politeness in expressing certainty, commitments, assessment and belief in the possibility of the event referred to.

#### Chapter 8: MMs and politeness strategies in ambassadorial speeches

This chapter presents a pragmatic analysis of MMs used in ambassadorial speeches under the two super-strategies of positive and negative politeness. MMs collected from samples of ambassadors' speeches are classified and analysed in their functions associated with particular positive and negative politeness strategies. The analysis also includes illustrations of differences in frequencies of MMs used as politeness strategies in the two types of ambassadorial speeches.

#### Chapter 9: A comparative analysis of MMs and politeness strategies in British and American ambassadorial speeches

This chapter consists of a comparative analysis of the major politeness strategies expressed through the use of MMs in British and American ambassadorial speeches. The analysis will lead to the identification of differences between British and American ambassadors in styles and preference through the use of MMs to express their politeness strategies.

#### Chapter 10: Conclusions

Chapter Ten comprises concluding remarks in which all findings of the study are summarised together with the idiosyncratic features of MMs as politeness strategies, and the similarities and differences between American and British ambassadors in their use of MMs as politeness strategies are mentioned. This will provide answers to the question whether American and British ambassadors are different in the frequency use of MMs or their politeness strategies or both. Finally, the limitations of the research and some suggestions for further research will be presented.



## CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL BACKGROUND OF MODALITY

### 2.1 An overview of modality

The term ‘modality’ has long been used by philosophers, logicians and linguists to refer to a range of aspects in logic and language. Although it has been studied since Aristotle’s time, the formal theory of modality “was revolutionized in the 1960s” (Kaufmann et al. 2006: 71). Since then, there have been a range of approaches to modality, leading to a wealth of publications referring to both the semantic and pragmatic features of this domain. However, it is also its diversity and broad sense that makes it difficult to delineate modality in appropriate and relevant terms. As a result, there has been no consensus on the definition of modality, as Bybee et al. (1994: 176) state:

Mood and modality are not so easily defined as tense and aspect. A definition often proposed is that modality is the grammaticization of speakers’ (subjective) attitudes and opinions [...] Recent cross-linguistic works on mood and modality, [...] however, show that modality notions range far beyond what is included in this definition. In fact, it may be impossible to come up with a succinct characterization of the notional domain of modality and the part of it that is expressed grammatically.

As such, different studies with different structures and aims have approached the notion of modality from different angles. Consequently, there have been a variety of approaches to the theoretical description and analysis of this domain. Some are grammar-centred, (e.g. Givón, 1982, 1990; Bybee et al., 1994; Bybee and Fleischman ed., 1995); others are semantically oriented, centring on ideas of modal notions, showing the speaker’s attitude towards the information presented in the proposition (Palmer, 1990; Coates, 1983, 1995; Facchinetti et al., 2003; Frawley ed., 2006). In addition, recent approaches to modality have been modified by critical analyses of the basic semantic dimensions and proposed a “nomenclature” of modality categories (Bybee, 1985; Bybee et al., 1994; Bybee and Fleischman, 1995 among others) (see 2.4). There are further additional notions and subcategories in the manifestations of modality such as subjectivity vs. objectivity; and performativity vs. descriptivity.

Therefore, the ‘many-faceted features’ of modality, together with linguists’ different views, make it a highly diverse object of study. Van der Auwera and Plungian (1998: 80)

claim that “modality and its types can be defined and named in various ways. There is no one correct way”. Nuyts (2006: 1) also claims that “modality turns out to be very hard to delineate in simple, positive terms”. As a result, it is relatively difficult to give a stable and clear definition that can cover all these related dimensions of modality. Perkins (1983: 1-4), when presenting the five principal ways that distinguish his approach from Lyons’ (1977) and Palmer’s (1990) views in defining modality, states that: “in spite of the vastness of the available literature, it is by no means easy to find out what modality actually is”. Likewise, conducting research on modality, “is very similar to trying to move in an overcrowded room without treading on anyone else’s feet”, Perkins (1983: 4).

Although previous studies on modality diverge in different ways, the major interest that scholars share is in the taxonomy of this domain. That is to say the common thing that can be seen from prior theoretical approaches to the domain of modality is to reflect multi-faceted relationships between the speaker’s attitude and the proposition; between the proposition and the objective reality; and between the speaker and the addressee. However, it can be argued that these are mostly just general characterisations of the multiple perspectives on modality. In practice, an appropriate identification of modality as a specific category that represents its actual semantic and pragmatic features is still not available because modality does not simply relate to the modal auxiliaries<sup>(2)</sup> but also to other constructions. For instance, expressions like *I believe that, I think that, I expect that* or *It is my hope and my belief that, I am confident that, I am sure that, as you probably know, etc.* are among patterns normally used to show the “speaker’s attitude” towards what is uttered (see Kiefer, 1987).

In sum, modality<sup>(3)</sup> has received divergent interpretations. However, it can be argued that the relevant literature has mainly been concerned with theoretical issues such as notions of possibility and necessity, grammatical categories such as tense-aspect-modality, and basic semantic dimensions in terms of deontic, dynamic and epistemic modality (as presented in the following sections). In point of fact, there has been no research providing specific structures or patterns suggesting modality markers are related to the categories of modality

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<sup>(2)</sup> Modality has been viewed semantically rather than grammatically since grammatical structures differ considerably from language to language (see Bussman, 1996).

<sup>(3)</sup> For instance, Krug (2000: 45) claims that “the history of the central modals has received an enormous amount of attention in the linguistic literature”. Simon-Vandenberg and Aijmer (2007: 2) also state that “modality in English has tended to be regarded as identical with the modal auxiliaries”.

discussed. Therefore, this study will attempt to unfold syntactic structures and lexical items used as modality markers expressing particular modality meanings and analyse their pragmatic functions as expressions of the speaker's attitude, opinions and emotions towards the proposition through samples of British and American ambassadorial speeches. The following sections comprise a review of traditional notions of modality and an overview of the dimensions of modality.

### **2.1.1 Traditional modal logic**

In traditional modal logic, the term modality is basically related to the truth of the proposition in terms of it being a 'necessarily true proposition' and a 'possibly true proposition'<sup>(4)</sup>. Propositions, as far back as Aristotle's time, have been classified in terms of entities separated from the actual world (the speaker, hearer(s) and discourse context). The semantic role of modal logic is expressed in the way of qualifying the truth of the utterance. That is to say the truth (or falsity) of an utterance does not depend on the actual world but on the proposition. Traditional modal logic divides the notion of truth into four types: (1) necessary truth is the one that is true by definition; (2) factual truth is the one that is true as fact; (3) possible truth is the one that is true by hypothesis; and (4) non-truth is the false one. Of these four types, the first two can be seen to overlap with logicians' distinction between 'analytic propositions' and 'contingent propositions', respectively (see Lyons, 1977; Kiefer, 1987; Kaufmann et al, 2006). The former indicates propositions that are necessarily true (whereas those which are necessarily false are contradictions) and the latter indicates those that are contingently true or false. Likewise, necessarily true (or analytic) propositions are true in all 'possible worlds'<sup>(5)</sup>. Possibly true (or contingent) propositions are those that are not necessarily false whereas possibly false propositions are those that are not necessarily true.

Central to the notion of modality, according to traditional modal logic, is "alethic"<sup>(6)</sup> modality. This type of modality, as von Wright (1951), quoted in Palmer (1986: 10-12) claims, concerns the necessary or contingent truth of the proposition and therefore focuses on the notions of 'logical necessity' and 'logical possibility' (see Lyons, 1977; Palmer, 1986; Kiefer, 1987; Kaufmann et al., 2006). The terms necessity and possibility are expressed and

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<sup>(4)</sup> See 2.2 for the distinction between modality and proposition.

<sup>(5)</sup> The notion of 'possible worlds' may be considered in relation to the systems of beliefs and assumptions which are logically appropriate for different kinds of discourse (see Lyons 1977).

<sup>(6)</sup> The alethic mode is a central notion in classical logic but has little place in linguistic modality (see 2.3.2)

analysed by traditional modal logic according to the criteria of possible worlds. Kiefer (1987) uses the term “possible world semantics” to provide a general framework for the definitions of all types of modality. Kiefer (1987: 71) states that:

*p* [a proposition] is necessarily true if *p* is true in all accessible possible worlds and *p* is possible if there is at least one accessible possible world in which *p* is true.

However, the problem that faces us in considering the truth of the proposition, according to traditional modal logic, is the ambiguity in many English declarative sentences. As such, what we are concerned with is whether a sentence is true or false in a given interpretation. That is to say a proposition which can be true under one interpretation may appear to be false under another in a possible world. As such, the important point to be considered is not only the possible world but also the content of the utterance as it determines the truth conditions in a specific world in terms of possibility and necessity.

Typical ways to analyse the necessity and possibility of propositions are as follows: (1) a proposition will be true in some possible world if it has the value ‘true’ in some state description. This is the type of proposition that affirms the existence (or not) of some state of the universe; (2) a proposition is necessarily true only if it is true in all possible worlds. This is the proposition of necessity reflecting the state that it is true in all possible worlds; and (3) a logically impossible proposition is true in none of the possible worlds (see Lyons 1977).

As such, logicians have created a set of symbols of possibility and necessity, of universal quantifiers and existential quantifiers and also classes of entities. Propositions in modal logic are different from those analysed in linguistics in that they are exactly and objectively formalised and quantified in their specific system. In such an indivisible and closed system, modal logic may be mainly concerned with the relationship between the proposition and objective reality, without any attention to other components such as the speaker, the hearer(s) or the situation of the utterance. Modal logic can, therefore, be treated as objective modality and opposite to subjective modality which has its central focus on the speaker and other relationships in the reality of communication.

However, traditional modal logic can be seen to lay an important foundation for the basic concepts of modality and the system for representing the internal structure of propositions. These are of essential interest to linguists because they accurately portray the underlying

logical form of sentences in correspondence to structures of facts or states-of-affairs in the external world. Modern modal logic may make use of these to formalise phenomena which can be seen as the starting points for developing a theory of linguistic modality.

### 2.1.2 Linguistic modality

The notion of modality in linguistic literature is more open than that of modal logic and is used in a variety of ways expressing the mutual relationships between the speaker and the proposition as well as the speaker and hearers in spoken communication. The literature on linguistic modality reveals a range of ways in approaching semantic categories of modality. Palmer (1986, 1990) proposes three basic semantic dimensions in terms of *epistemic*, *deontic* and *dynamic* (see 2.4.1), which can be seen as the seminal introduction to modality notions. In other scholars' views, the term modality is broadly used to refer to both grammatical terminology (*tense-aspect-modality*) (i.e., Givón, 1982; Bybee, 1985; Bybee et al., 1994) and semantic terminology (Palmer, 1990; Nuyts, 2001; de Haan, 2006). These approaches create a diversity in the semantics of linguistic modality as Nuyts (2006: 1) claims:

The domain is usually characterized by referring to a set of more specific notions, each of which is defined separately, and which may be taken to share certain features motivating their grouping together under the label *modality*, but which differ in many other respects. As such the notion of modality is best viewed as a supercategory.

Consequently, “there is as yet no consensus on the proper terminology for modal meanings” (de Haan, 2006: 28). However, the most common aspect deriving from these different approaches to modality is that the notion of *epistemic modality* basically remains unchanged. The other two basic notions have been reorganised in association with a range of terms. For instance, Bybee et al., (1994), Bybee and Fleischman (1995) have suggested the distinction between *agent-oriented modality* and *speaker-oriented modality* (2.4.2.2); Coates (1983, 1995), Haegeman (1983) and Palmer (1990) use the term *root modality* to cover both *deontic* and *dynamic* modality.

All in all, interest in modality has developed in diverse ways and is targeted narrowly within the objectives of specific research or the theoretical and methodological framework that researchers rely on. This linguistic domain has been pursued from a formal (Kaufmann et al, 2006) to a functional perspective (de Haan, 2006). Consequently, discussions on modality

meanings are wide ranging but not a single one of them has received scholarly consensus as being adequate and relevant as a framework of linguistic modality.

Therefore, this study will be based on the major views on modality. An overview of the theoretical analysis of modality will be presented including the basic categories of modality and different approaches to the divisions and subcategorisations of this semantic domain. The theoretical analysis will lead to a diagram showing the relations of different modality meanings and indicate the framework of modality for the research. In this research, the view of modality as the speaker's attitude towards the content of the proposition and commitment to the performance of the act uttered will be taken for granted as a guideline for the analysis of the semantic and pragmatic perspective of MMs.

## **2.2 The distinction between modality and propositions**

When modality is presented as the category by which the speaker expresses his/her attitude towards the core information of the utterance, we mean that the two major parts in the semantic structure of an utterance are modality and the proposition. "Modality is used by the speaker in order to express his opinion or attitude towards the proposition that the sentence expresses or the situation that the proposition describes" (Lyons, 1977: 452). The former is represented by modality markers, the components that can be defined as syntactic structures or lexical items, which co-occur with the proposition to signal the speaker's attitude towards the content of what is being said. The latter is the main content of the utterance. As such, the two major parts of an utterance are the modality marker and the propositional content.

Such a distinction between the two components of an utterance is similar to what Caffi (1994: 334, reproducing Bally, 1965: 36), terms "modus" and "dictum", respectively. Modus corresponds to the modality marker in relation to such dimensions as the speaker's emotion, volition, attitude, and judgement towards what s/he says. Dictum is the core of information in the utterance, related to the communicative and descriptive functions of language. This is the stable component of the utterance even if other connected elements can be changed. Similarly, Palmer (1986: 14), reproducing Austin (1962), points out that the distinction between proposition and modality is very close to that of "locutionary act" and "illocutionary act". That is to say in the former we are "saying something", while in the latter we are "doing something". Lyons (1977: 141-2) claims that "a proposition is what is expressed by a

declarative sentence when that sentence is uttered to make a statement”. Kiefer (1987: 73) in the revision of traditional linguistic accounts of modality also characterises modality as “the speaker’s relation to reality”. Kiefer (1987: 77-84) divides a sentence (an utterance) into two parts, namely “an attitudinal operator” and “the propositional content”. The former which is also called the propositional attitude represents the speaker’s attitude while the latter represents the essentially independent context of the utterance. From the above views of modality and the proposition, it can be simplified by stating that an utterance consists of two major relative components: one is the modality marker expressing the speaker’s attitude towards the other which is the core information of the utterance.

However, the semantics of modality has been interpreted in a number of approaches. What is required is a reliable common theoretical framework for the analysis of MMs. In the following sections the major views that scholars have identified in the semantics of modality will be discussed with a view to shedding light on the analysis of MMs in the next chapters.

### **2.3 Earlier studies on modality**

Although most prior theoretical studies tend to approach modality as the expression of the speaker’s attitude towards or opinion about the proposition, there are diverse points of view (reproduced from Palmer, 1986) in relation to the semantic dimensions of modality. This diversity may be due to the following two major reasons. Firstly, linguists’ theoretical analyses of modality seem to originate from traditional modal logic but have then developed in various ways. For instance, Lyons (1977) attempts to formalise meanings of modality from the view of ‘possible world semantics’ while Perkins (1983) indicates expressions of modality in terms of ‘sets of laws’, principles and formulas of modal meanings. Secondly, the application of speech act theory and the concern with the pragmatic aspect of modality proposed different realisations and reorganisations for this wide domain. However, it is owing to such diversity that we have an opportunity to view an overall picture of modality (see Table 2.3) with different categories and dimensions classified in theoretical studies. The following is a brief critical analysis of the major theoretical views on modality in chronological order of authors.

#### **2.3.1 Jespersen (1924)**

Jespersen’s discussion of moods (indicative, subjunctive and imperative), expressing “certain attitudes of mind of the speaker towards the contents of the sentence”, can be

considered as a seminal study for the pragmatic aspect of modality (1924, reproduced in Palmer, 1986: 9-10). According to the author, the choice of mood is not only determined by the speaker but also by “the character of the clause itself and its relation to the main nexus on which it is dependent”. Jespersen’s (1924) list of twenty sub-categories of modality, quoted in Palmer (1986), is divided into two sets: one “containing an element of will” and another “containing no element of will”, which delivers a variety of the speaker’s attitudes towards the context of the utterance.

Although there are some repetitions and overlaps in the introduction to these sub-categories, Jespersen’s discussion is essentially significant in that we can easily realise the two basic types of modalities with or without “the element of will”. These two categories also correspond roughly to the two basic semantic dimensions of deontic and epistemic modality, respectively (see 2.4.1).

### **2.3.2 Von Wright (1951)**

Von Wright’s (1951, reproduced in Palmer, 1986: 10-11) “pioneering work on modal logic” suggests a distinction of four ‘modes’ (known as modalities):

- the alethic modes, or modes of truth
- the epistemic modes, or modes of knowing
- the deontic modes, or modes of obligation
- the existential modes, or modes of existence.

In his discussion of these modes, von Wright (1951) sets them out in a table of possibilities to investigate their formal structures in terms of truth. Of these four modes, the most essential are epistemic and deontic modes which are considered to be roughly correspondent to Jespersen’s two sets of modality meanings. The existential mode, according to von Wright, is a matter of quantificational logic and is more concerned in ordinary language with the use of *some*, *any*, *all* rather than the expressions of modality. The alethic mode, which is considered as “a central notion in classical logic” (Kiefer, 1987: 68-9), has little place in the discussion of linguistic modality (cf. 2.1.1). This is because there is no formal grammatical distinction between alethic and epistemic modality, and epistemic modality has taken the central position as a basic category of modality in linguistics. Palmer



(1986: 12) claims that “although something similar appears in Jespersen’s analysis, it is doubtful whether this should be included within modality at all”.

In sum, it can be argued that in spite of the four modes suggested, von Wright’s view is actually central to the discussion of epistemic and deontic modality.

### **2.3.3 Rescher (1968)**

Rescher’s (1968) initial remark about modality refers to the qualification of the truth or falsity of a proposition. Rescher (1968: 24-6, quoted in Palmer, 1986: 12), states:

When such a proposition is itself made subject to some further qualification of such a kind that the entire resulting complex is itself once again a proposition, then this qualification is said to represent a modality to which the original proposition is subjected.

On the basis of von Wright’s (1951) four modes, Rescher (1968) adds four more types including ‘temporal’, ‘boulomaic’, ‘evaluative’ and ‘causal’ modalities. Rescher also provides further discussion on the three types of ‘conditional’ modality. These are the central notions of modal logic that contribute to the general framework of modality. Although Rescher’s list of modality is of some interest, according to Palmer (1986), this would define modality too widely and there seem to be some complications with such a definition.

In short Rescher’s (1968) view on modality may be central to traditional modal logic which is mainly related to states of affairs that can be true or false. Therefore, this view is too general to be used as a framework for the discussion on the semantic dimensions of modality.

### **2.3.4 Lyons (1977)**

Lyons (1977: 725) initially uses the theory of speech acts, derived from Austin (1962), as the framework for his analysis of mood and modality. He states:

One of the most attractive features of the theory of speech acts [...] is that it gives explicit recognition to the social or interpersonal dimension of language behaviour and provides a general framework [...] for the discussion of the syntactic and semantic distinctions that linguists have traditionally described in terms of mood and modality.

Lyons (1977) considers modality not only as a device expressing the speaker’s opinion and attitude but also as an influence on hearers. He claims that “when we communicate some

proposition to another person, we do so, normally because we wish to influence in some way his beliefs, his attitudes or his behaviour” (1977: 725). The major meanings of modality proposed in Lyons (1977: 787) are as follows:

(i) Necessity and possibility, originally distinguished by logicians, are types of modality that make distinction between “propositions that are contingently true or false” (synthetic propositions), and “propositions that are either necessarily true (analytic propositions) or necessarily false” (contradictions). These are the central notions of traditional modal logic used as the basic dimensions for linguistic analysis of modality.

(ii) Epistemic modality refers to the speaker’s knowledge or commitment to the content of the utterance in relation to factivity and reality as Lyons (1977: 793) claims:

Knowing what a proposition means implies knowing under what conditions (i.e. in which possible worlds) it is true; and knowing what someone knows or believes implies knowing the semantic content of the proposition that he subscribes to, or takes to be true.

(iii) deontic modality is quite widely used by philosophers to refer to a particular branch or extension of modal logic, that is the logic of obligation and permission. Lyons (1977: 823) claims that “deontic modality is concerned with the necessity or possibility of acts performed by morally responsible agents”.

Lyons (1977) also makes a distinction between the two kinds of epistemic modality namely objective and subjective which are synonymous with traditional modal logic and linguistic modality, respectively. Of these two types, Lyons (1977) considers subjective epistemic modality to be more concerned with linguistic modality than objective epistemic modality. Although Lyons (1977) provides a detailed discussion on modality, he has not offered his own view on the different approaches to the definition of this domain.

In sum, Lyons’ (1977) discussion of modality can be viewed from two different angles: one is in traditional modal logic as alethic modality and the other is the distinction between the two major categories of epistemic and deontic modality.

### **2.3.5 Searle (1979)**

Searle (1979), reviewing Austin, (1962), develops the theory of speech acts into a three-dimensional distinction of ‘locutionary’, ‘illocutionary’ and ‘perlocutionary’ acts. This theory can be seen as recognition of the social and interpersonal dimension of language behaviour. It

indicates the relation between the speaker and what (s)he says. Searle (1983), quoted in Palmer (1986: 13) further develops five basic categories of illocutionary acts as:

Assertives: where we tell our hearers (truly or falsely) how things are

Directives: where we get them to do things

Commissives: where we commit ourselves to doing things

Declarations: where we bring about changes in the world with our utterances

Expressives: where we express our feelings and attitudes

Four out of these five categories cover the sense of epistemic and deontic modality. *Assertives* and *Expressives* are central to the discussion of the speaker's beliefs and emotions in the truth of the proposition presented in the utterance. Thus, they correspond roughly to epistemic modality expressing the speaker's feelings of how things are. *Directives* and *Commissives* refer to the speaker's utterances which cause others to act or committing themselves to the act presented in the utterance. As such, they convey the sense of deontic modality.

The only difference found in Searle's approach is in the category of *Declarations* which states that a declarative sentence can be either descriptive or non-descriptive. A descriptive declaration may not work with modality since it provides a description of reality and thus it simply represents a proposition. Modality, on the contrary, conveys the speaker's cognitive emotive or volitional qualification of the event presented in the proposition. Thus, it is added to the proposition and makes the utterance non-descriptive. As such, descriptive declarations can be seen as the propositional content (see 1.2.2) and bear no markers of modality, whereas non-descriptive declarations consist of modality meaning and the proposition of the utterance.

In sum, Searle's categories of illocutionary acts can be seen to provide a useful semantic framework for the discussion on the relation between modality markers and the proposition presented in the utterance.

### **2.3.6 Perkins (1983)**

Perkins (1983) covers the meanings of modality in three general sets of principles. The first one is closely related to Rescher's (1968) types of alethic and epistemic modality. This set of modality meanings "conform[s] to the rational laws of inference, deduction, etc". It is

concerned with the interpretation of the world via “the laws of human reason”. Modalities of this set are related to belief and indicate “the state of lack of knowledge which has been referred to by linguists in terms of non-factivity” (Perkins, 1983: 10). Thus, this set of modality meanings showing the speaker’s judgement on the event presented corresponds roughly to epistemic modality. The second set of principles are closely related to Rescher’s (1968) deontic modality. This set concerns modality meanings “which are defined in terms of social or institutional laws” (Perkins, 1983: 11). The third general set involves “causal modalities” which are similar to dynamic modalities. Perkins (1983) is interested in the discussion of modality central to ‘the core meaning’ of particular English modals and the distinction between modals in terms of “entailment” and “preclusion” which correspond to that of epistemic and deontic modality. In sum, it can be stated that Perkins’ (1983) approach to the meaning of modality in terms of the three sets of principles is actually similar to the scheme of epistemic, deontic and dynamic modality (see 2.4.1).

### **2.3.7 Givón (1989)**

Givón (1989) introduces three categories of modality as presupposition, realis assertion (R-assertion) and irrealis assertion (IRR-assertion). These modes of information are ranked in the speaker’s subjective certainty as: Presupposition > R-assertion > IRR-assertion.

A presupposition has the highest subjective certainty since it is assumed by the speaker to be known to, or otherwise unlikely to be challenged, by the hearer. Givón (1989: 134) suggests ways of expressing subjective certainty in English in a descending scale as: *I know* > *I am sure* > *I think* > *I believe* > *I see* > *I hear* > *I guess...*

A realis assertion is the type of clause in which “information is strongly asserted, yet it remains open to challenge by the hearer” (Givón, 1989: 137). That is to say the speaker must be prepared to clarify or defend the information by showing evidence from a source of direct experience (sensory modality), hearsay, or inference. Thus, it is rather different to simply describing facts (as in propositional statements) and to commenting explicitly on their truth status (as when using expressions of the speaker’s subjective certainty as above). Asserting implies a different sub-category of speech act from that which Searle (1979) refers to as ‘Representing’.

An irrealis assertion is the type of clause in which “information is weakly asserted as hypothesis, possibility, probability, supposition, conjecture, prediction or guess” (Givón

1989: 137). The source of information in this modality meaning is irrelevant and suspicious. In sum, Givón's (1989) discussion of modality can be seen to cover the scales of evidentiality as in the following five epistemic categories:

- (1) evidentiary strength: direct sensory experience>inference>indirectinference>hearsay
- (2) sensory evidence: visual experience > auditory experience > other sensory experience
- (3) participants in events: speaker>hearer>third party
- (4) spatial proximity: near the speech situation>away from the speech situation
- (5) temporal proximity: nearer to speech time>farther away from the speech time.

### **2.3.8 Palmer (1986, 1990)**

Palmer's texts (1986, 1990) are among the standard reference works on the typological analysis with the three basic categories of epistemic, deontic and dynamic modality.

Epistemic modality covers the use of language as a "countersign of thought" and deontic modality as a "mode of action". Epistemic modality, as claimed in Palmer (1986), not only refers to modal systems that basically involve the notions of possibility and necessity but also to any modal system that indicates the degree of the speaker's commitment to the content of his/her utterance. This type of modality reveals the status of the speaker's "understanding or knowledge" to the truth of the proposition presented. As such, epistemic modality includes expressions of judgements and evidentials showing the speaker's commitment to what s/he says. Deontic modality is concerned with actions by others or by the speaker himself referring to obligation and permission. In addition to these two basic categories of modality, Palmer (1990) proposes a third one: dynamic modality. In fact, such a division corresponds roughly to his earlier discussion on categories of modality in terms of 'epistemic', 'discourse-oriented' and 'subject-oriented' modals, respectively (see 2.4.2.3).

In sum, Palmer's basic categories of modality can be considered as the standard reference framework which provides the basic meanings for the analysis of MMs. The only difficulty with Palmer's view is that although he proposes major notions in the discussion of modality throughout his book, there is no illustration of specific structures or markers associated with the major categories of modality which can provide an essential reference for L2 users of English with targeted ways of using this domain. Therefore, in this research patterns and structures of MMs associated with semantic categories of modality will be analysed with illustrations of excerpts taken from ambassadorial speeches as presented in Chapters 5, 6 and

7 below. Such patterns and structures of MMs will be used to provide data for the analyses of politeness expressions in Chapters 8 and 9 of this thesis.

## **2.4 A discussion on categories of modality**

As understood from earlier studies, although there is “no unanimity among scholars as to how the set of modal categories should be characterized” (Nuyts, 2006: 1), modality may commonly be considered as expressions of the speaker’s personal feelings, attitudes and assessments towards the content of the utterance or the speaker’s commitment to the performance of the act presented in the proposition (see Narrog, 2005). However, for the specific purposes of different studies, the domain has been approached and characterised in a range of notions each of which is defined separately.

As such, in this section I will first present the basic semantic categories of modality (2.4.1) and then undertake a critical discussion on further divisions of modality categories (2.4.2). I would argue that although there is some diversity in the division of modality meanings, the basic categories of modality still provide a seminal framework for research on modality. This is because other alternative divisions on the one hand overlap each other while on the other are not adequate and relevant to replace basic categories of modality. (See Table 2.3 for an overall picture of modality categories.) As such, I would argue that the *epistemic-deontic-dynamic* scheme can be seen as the framework for the analysis of modality markers as politeness strategies in samples of ambassadorial speeches.

### **2.4.1 The basic semantic categories of modality**

Although there has been a range of notions related to dimensions of modality (i.e., Coates’ (1983) *epistemic* and *root* (non-epistemic) modality; Hengeveld’s (1988) division of *inherent*, *objective* and *epistemological* modality; Bybee et al.’s (1991, 1994) discussion on *epistemic*, *agent-oriented* and *speaker-oriented* modality; and several other authors’ suggestions for the reorganisation of modal categories), these can actually be seen as alternative labels (presented in section 2.4.2) for the three basic categories in terms of *epistemic*, *deontic* and *dynamic* modality as presented below. (The mapping of theories with the choice of *epistemic - deontic - dynamic* scheme is presented in section 2.8, Table 2.3.)

#### **2.4.1.1 Epistemic modality**

Epistemic modality, derived from the Greek *episteme* for ‘knowledge’, is a type of modality that has to do with the possibility and necessity of the truth of propositions. This

category of modality is, as Lyon (1977: 793) claims, “concerned with matters of knowledge and belief” of the speaker. According to Coates (1983: 18) epistemic modality is not only “concerned with the speaker’s assumptions or assessment of possibilities” but also “indicates the speaker’s confidence (or lack of confidence) in the truth of the proposition expressed” as in the following examples:

[1] ***I know*** to some of you this ***may sound*** like a diplomatic nicety, but I can assure you it isn’t. When one considers how far apart the United States and Vietnam once were, how implacably against each other we were – and it wasn’t that long ago – ***I believe*** it’s a testament to efforts in both countries to build bridges, foster communication and create an atmosphere of trust and understanding that we have been able to accomplish what we have over the past decade. [A03C]<sup>(7)</sup>

[2] ***We believe*** that this annual conference will become an established showcase for Vietnamese ELT experience. It ***must become*** an essential component of the annual calendar of ELT across South East Asia. [B01B]

The semantic aspects of modality expressions in excerpts [1] and [2] above can be seen in the senses of ‘epistemic necessity’ referring to what is known – deduction; and ‘epistemic possibility’ – speculation (see also Chapter 7). According to Palmer (1986) epistemic modality is also characterised in terms of contrast between subjective and objective epistemic modality, or subcategorised according to the speaker’s judgement of necessity and possibility on the one hand, and evidentiality on the other hand. Hengeveld (1988) considers objective modality as an evaluation process on the part of the speaker’s knowledge of the state of affairs.

It can be seen from the literature that epistemic modality is indicated as the speaker’s “knowledge of possible situations obtaining in S’s conception of reality or of a hypothesized situation” (Hengeveld 1988: 234). The pragmatic aspect of epistemic modality can be realised through the expression of epistemic qualification, which indicates the speaker’s commitment or degree of certainty to the proposition presented. This is in line with Lyons’ (1977) discussion on the relation between modality and the proposition in terms of *qualification*. The strong epistemic qualification signals the speaker’s highest degree of

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<sup>(7)</sup> This type of sign denotes the convention in the data set of speech files in which the initial letter A is for American Ambassadors and B for British Ambassadors.

certainty, i.e., *I know that, It's certain that, Undoubtedly*; the weak epistemic qualification signals the speaker's low degree of certainty as probability or neutral possibility of the state of affairs, i.e., *It is possible that, Perhaps, Probably, I think, I believe*.

In sum, as Nuyts (2006: 6) claims, “the core definition of this category is relatively noncontroversial”, epistemic is considered as the most stable and clearly distinctive from the other categories of modality.

#### **2.4.1.2 Deontic modality**

Deontic modality, derived from the Greek *deon* for ‘duty’, is “concerned with the necessity or possibility of acts performed by morally responsible agents” (Lyon 1977: 823). Unlike epistemic modality, deontic modality refers to the performance of the act presented rather than the proposition and is thus related to duties in terms of moral responsibility, such as permission and obligation. Deontic modality can be subdivided into: directives (deontic possibility and deontic necessity); commissives (promises, undertakings); and imperatives. The major point in the relation of these subcategories is that they are used to indicate the degree of moral desirability of the state of affairs expressed in the utterance as in the following excerpts:

[3] I think my main parting thought would be that **the people of Vietnam must work** for the kind of country they want. **They must ask** questions, put forward ideas, engage with their political leaders to try and strengthen the country. [A03V]

[4] **Vietnam must improve** the quality of its economic governance. Bureaucratic inertia and other problems have resulted in slow disbursement rates for both aid monies and pledged foreign investments. [B01G]

As observed in examples [3] and [4] above, with the use of deontic modality expressions the speaker shows his interest in the performance of the action presented in terms of obligations, commands and permissions. The key feature in the examination of ambassadorial speeches in this research is the speakers' politeness in conveying deontic senses, for instance, how the speaker avoids a direct imposition of obligation on hearers or how the sense of responsibility for the performance of an act or a command is expressed politely. Therefore, this type of modality is concerned with morality, which indicates ethical criteria of individual responsibility through degrees of necessity, desirability and acceptability.



In sum, deontic modality can be seen to refer to “knowledge of possible situations relative to some system of moral, legal or social conventions” (Hengeveld, 1988: 234). Deontic MMs indicate the speaker’s interest in the performance of actions such as obligations, commands and permission. Thus, the deontic sense of modality is basically performative since it is concerned with the performance of the action by the speaker himself or by others (cf. 5.1). The deontic sense of necessity which is closely related to obligation and of possibility to permission will be used as the framework for the analysis of deontic MMs in British and American ambassadorial speeches. The analysis of deontic MMs will indicate how an obligation is imposed, and how permission is granted or declined in different levels of politeness. (These will be analysed in detail in Chapter 5 of this thesis.)

### 2.4.1.3 Dynamic modality

Dynamic modality, which is derived from the Greek *dynamis* for ‘strength or power’, is considered as modality of ability, volition, intention and willingness. The distinction between dynamic and deontic modality, as claimed in Palmer (1990: 69), “is far less easy to establish”. However, the major difference between these two categories of modality is that while deontic modality is “discourse oriented”, dynamic modality is “subject-oriented” (see 2.4.2.3). Deontic modality is “discourse oriented” since it involves both the speaker and the addressee in the performance of the act uttered. Dynamic modality is “subject-oriented” because it is used to express the ability of the grammatical subject of the sentence other than the speaker. This is also in line with Perkins’ (1983) claim that dynamic modality is used to express the subject-participant’s ability in relation to circumstantial events as shown in the following excerpts:

[5] The best ***they could*** hope for was probably a decade. And now, the attitudes have changed - peace and prosperity. [A01I]

[6] We estimate that should a number of plans come to fruition, ***we could*** see the value of British FDI double to over \$5 billion within the next 3-4 years. [B01P]

As seen in examples [5] and [6], expressions of dynamic modality can be interpreted as a capacity to the grammatical subject of an utterance.

With regard to the definition of this category of modality, Nuyts (2006: 3) proposes three modifications. First, dynamic modality has to be referred to “in terms of a property of the first argument of the predicate, or of the controlling participant in the state of affairs”. For

instance, dynamic *can* is used to indicate the grammatical subject's ability to perform an act or dynamic *will* as the subject's intention or volition. Second, this type of modality meaning is used not only to express ability but also to indicate the necessity for "the first-argument participant". Third, the subcategories of dynamic modality are capacities or abilities, potentials and needs or necessities which are determined by "the local circumstances of the participant". (These will be analysed and illustrated with particular patterns of MMs in Chapter 6 of this thesis.)

#### **2.4.2 Other alternative divisions of modality**

In the division of basic categories of modality as presented above, while epistemic modality remains non-controversial in the literature, the other categories have been diversely characterised. As such, it has been proposed that dimensions of modality be reorganised and refined in different approaches with different sets of notions.

Typical among the reorganisations of modality dimensions proposed are Coates' (1983) two categories of *epistemic* and *root* (non-epistemic) modality implying certain degrees of semantic indeterminacy. According to Coates (1983: 20-1) the term 'deontic' seems to be inappropriate since it simply refers to "the logic of obligation and permission". She suggests the term *root modality* which can be seen to cover both deontic and dynamic modality. Therefore, the distinction between root and epistemic modality as Coates (1995: 55) claims "cuts across the necessity/obligation and possibility/permission distinction".

Hengeveld (1988) suggests distinguishing three types of modality. While the first type, *inherent modality*, includes deontic and dynamic modality the other two types overlap and make the division complicated. On the one hand, *objective modality* refers to the speaker's knowledge of reality or of a hypothesized situation and of moral, legal or social conventions which corresponds roughly to epistemic and deontic modality. On the other hand, *epistemological modality* is the distinction between subjective and objective modality.

In addition, there has been a range of other suggestions on the division of modality categories. Biber et al. (1999) refer to *intrinsic modality* and *extrinsic modality* which roughly correspond to deontic and epistemic modality, respectively (see below). Bybee (1985), Bybee et al. (1994), Bybee and Fleischman (1995) propose a change in the categorical term of modals as *agent-oriented modality* and *speaker-oriented modality*. Different approaches to further divisions of modality categories are analysed as follows.

#### **2.4.2.1 Intrinsic and extrinsic modality**

Quirk et al. (1985) introduces the distinction between the two categories of *intrinsic* and *extrinsic* modality. These two categories correspond to those that Biber et al. (1999, 2002) have suggested as *personal modality* and *logical modality*, respectively.

Intrinsic modality involves “some kind of human control over events” and covers actions such as permission, obligation and volition. That is to say this type of modality indicates actions and events that humans directly control and is therefore termed intrinsic modality. Extrinsic modality refers to “human judgement of what is or is not likely to happen” and expresses the notions of possibility, ability, necessity and prediction referring to logical states or events (Quirk et al. 1985: 219). Extrinsic modality is logical in that it usually refers to levels of certainty, likelihood, or logical necessity (see also Biber et al., 2002).

Quirk et al., (1985) themselves recognise a gradient and overlap of these two types of modality. Although this approach just incorporates the semantic functions of modal verbs, typical meanings of modality are clearly categorised and analysed. Moreover, the distinction between extrinsic and intrinsic modality is closely related to that of epistemic and root modality. Quirk et al. (1985: 220) also claim that “in place of intrinsic and extrinsic modality, other terminologies such as *modulation* and *modality*, or *root* and *epistemic* modality, are widespread”.

In sum, it can be said that intrinsic modality related to permission, obligation or ability, desire, intention corresponds roughly to deontic and dynamic modality. Extrinsic modality is understood as expressing the speaker’s attitude to the truth value of the proposition. It refers to the status of events in relation to assessments of certainty, probability, and prediction and thus corresponds to epistemic modality.

#### **2.4.2.2 Agent-oriented and speaker-oriented modality**

Bybee et al. (1994: 177-179) make the distinction between agent-oriented and speaker-oriented modality by considering whether the conditions which are related to “the action expressed in the main predicate” are reported or imposed by the speaker. In the same vein, Bybee and Fleischman (1995: 5-6) propose a change in the categorical “nomenclature” of modal verbs in which after epistemic modality, they make the distinction between ‘agent-oriented modality’ and ‘speaker-oriented modality’.

Agent-oriented modality encompasses all modal meanings that predicate conditions on an agent. This type of modality expresses the completion of actions referred to by the main predicate such as obligation, desire, ability, permission and root possibility. Speaker-oriented modality covers “markers of directives such as imperatives, optatives or permissives, which represent speech acts through which a speaker attempts to move an addressee to an action” (Bybee and Fleischman, 1995: 6). These meanings include both deontic and dynamic modality which are opposed to epistemic modality covering the speaker’s commitment to the truth of the whole proposition.

As such, it can be stated that the basic meanings of agent-oriented modality and speaker-oriented modality seem to cover the same meanings as in root modality (see Coates, 1983) which is considered to include both deontic modality and dynamic modality (cf. intrinsic modality). The difference is in the pragmatic meanings of each category orienting the interactants to the act uttered. However, there is an overlap between the paired meanings of deontic and dynamic modality.

#### **2.4.2.3 Discourse-oriented and subject-oriented modality**

According to Palmer (1979/1990) the classification of the three types of modality: *epistemic*, *deontic* and *dynamic* corresponds roughly to his earlier division into *epistemic*, *discourse-oriented* and *subject-oriented* modals (see also Palmer, 1974: 100-3). As such, discourse-oriented covers meanings of deontic modality since it includes both the speaker and the addressee as the deontic source of the act uttered. In contrast, subject-oriented refers to the subject’s ability and desirability rather than judgement or belief and thus it is closely related to dynamic modality. Huddleston (1988: 78-9) also claims that subject-oriented modality “ascribes a certain property to the subject of a clause”. As such, it can be inferred from such classification that discourse-oriented is in line with deontic modality and subject-oriented with dynamic modality.

In a rather different approach to these types, Palmer (1990) claims that epistemic and deontic are speaker-oriented modalities since they are related to the speaker’s judgement, in contrast with dynamic modality which is subject-oriented. Palmer (1990: 7) states:

whereas both epistemic and deontic modality appear to relate to the speaker, dynamic modality is concerned with the ability and volition of the subject of the sentence, and is not, perhaps, strictly modality at all.

However, this method of classification is quite different from Bybee's (1995) which indicates that speaker-oriented modality covers the meanings of deontic and dynamic modality as presented in 2.4.2.2.

To summarise, it can be argued that there is no unanimity among scholars in the distinction between discourse-oriented and subject-oriented modalities. Such divisions of modality dimensions may overlap with each other and become more complicated than the basic dimensions of epistemic, deontic and dynamic modality.

#### **2.4.2.4 Theoretical and practical modality**

James (1986: 13) provides definitions of *theoretical modality* and *practical modality*. Theoretical modality connects with the meaning of the indicative mood, referring to the sense of viewing and matching words with the world. This type of modality can be seen as indicating the epistemic sense of probability, possibility and certainty. Practical modality, on the other hand, refers to the sense of matching the world with words. This type of modality connects with the meaning of the imperative and subjunctive mood. Practical modality is also concerned with the root meanings of modal verbs, with the lexical semantics of certain verbs (e.g. wish, request) and with the infinitive. In sum, it can be seen that theoretical modality lends itself to the meanings of epistemic modality while practical modality corresponds to the sense of both deontic and dynamic modality.

It can be summarised from different approaches to subcategories of modality presented above that it is not possible to achieve a consensus that can cover different views of modality. The major point is that although these subcategories of modality are related, they cannot cover the basic semantic dimensions of modality as a whole. Intrinsic modality covers the sense of deontic and dynamic modality compared with extrinsic modality and epistemic modality. Agent-oriented and speaker-oriented modality can be seen to include both deontic and dynamic modality compared with epistemic modality. In a different view, discourse-oriented modality is related to the meanings of deontic modality while subject-oriented modality is close to dynamic modality. Theoretical modality indicates the sense of epistemic modality whereas practical modality is connected with deontic and dynamic modality.

In sum, it can be seen that these subcategories on the one hand overlap each other, and on the other are not appropriate to cover the semantics of modality or to replace the epistemic-deontic-dynamic scheme. As such, in section 2.8 below, an overall picture is presented of

modality in which authors of theories and overlap in elements of modality are analysed together with the discussion on the framework of modality selected for analyses of MMs in this research.

## 2.5 Other subcategories of modality meanings

### 2.5.1 Possibility and necessity

Central to the discussion of both traditional modal logic and linguistic modality are the notions of *possibility* and *necessity*. In epistemic modality (see 7.2.1 and 7.2.2), these subcategories can be paraphrased as *it is necessary/possible that* a particular state of affairs exists whereas in deontic modality (see 5.2.1.1 and 5.2.2.1), the interpretation is *it is necessary/possible for* an act to be performed as in the following excerpts:

(i) Epistemic possibility and necessity:

[7] As some of you **may** recall, on September 28, 2004 I spoke at this event shortly after my arrival here. [A03O]

[8] You **must** acknowledge that Vietnam's large population is highly energetic and entrepreneurial, devoted to education and training, and very young. [A03C]

The modals *may* and *must* in [7] and [8] express the speakers' judgements about the contents of what is said. In [7] *may* indicates the likelihood of what the speaker thinks hearers will recall. The utterance can be interpreted as *It is possible that you will recall what I spoke...* In [8] *must* orients to something for which there is evidence for the speaker's confidence that hearers will certainly acknowledge.

(ii) Deontic possibility and necessity:

[9] If I **may** add to this idea, let knowledge alongside perseverance, creativity and resourcefulness serve all our communities as well as our world. [A03N]

[10] We **must** find ways to eliminate it and we **must** ensure that no child living with HIV/AIDS suffers from it. [A03M]

The modals *may* and *must* in [9] and [10] are used to express ways of influence on the actions presented. They are paraphrased as *it is possible/necessary for the action to be performed*. In [9] *may* indicates the sense of permission, that is *if it is permissible (for me) to add to this idea* and in [10] *must* conveys the sense of obligation paraphrased as *it is necessary (for us) to find ways to eliminate it and it is necessary to ensure that no child living with HIV/AIDS suffers from it*.

In terms of negation, there are two possible ways of negating epistemic and deontic possibility and necessity. With possibility, the positive structure of “*It is possible that...*” will be negated as “*It is not possible that...*” (the modality is negated) and “*It is possible that ... not*” (the proposition is negated). Such a distinction can easily be realised as in the negative meanings of “*not possible*” and “*possible not*”. Similarly, with necessity, the negative meanings are interpreted as “*not necessary*” and “*necessary not*”. Moreover, there are logical equivalences between possibility and necessity in relation to negative meanings as “*possible not*” is equivalent to “*not necessary*” and “*not possible*” is equivalent to “*necessary not*”.

However, in actual use, there is no requirement for the negative necessity forms. This is because instead of using the “*not necessary*” form, it is possible to use the “*possible not*” form (*i.e.*, *may not*); and instead of “*necessary not*”, the “*not possible*” form (*i.e.*, *can't*) is used. These two ways of negation can be analysed as: (1) the modality is negated in which the speaker makes a negative judgement about a positive proposition (epistemic modality) or places a negative obligation about a positive course of an action (deontic modality); and (2) the proposition is negated in which a positive judgement about the desirability of a negative proposition (epistemic modality) is made or a positive obligation about a negative course of an action (deontic modality) is imposed.

### **2.5.2 Subjectivity and factuality**

The major difference between traditional modal logic (see 2.1.1) and linguistic modality (see 2.1.2) is that the former is a closed system which has been more concerned with objective modality, while the latter is concerned with components through which the speaker expresses his/her opinion and attitude towards or commitment to the event presented in the proposition of the utterance. This clearly indicates that linguistic modality presents the speaker's subjective opinion and attitude, whereas traditional modal logic excludes the speaker. In essence this research on MMs is certainly concerned with the major point of the subjectivity of modality (linguistic modality) as claimed in Palmer (1986: 16):

Modality in language is concerned with subjective characteristics of an utterance, and it could even be further argued that subjectivity is an essential criterion for modality. Modality could, that is to say, be defined as the grammaticalisation of speaker's (subjective) attitudes and opinions.

Subjectivity can be considered as an indicator of the speaker's role in both epistemic and deontic modality. Epistemic modality is subjective in that it relates to an inference by the speaker or shows that the speaker actually makes a judgement about the possibility or certainty of the truth of the proposition presented. Deontic modality is subjective as the speaker is the one who obliges, permits, declines or forbids. These may be the reasons why Searle (1983: 166) considers epistemic modals as signals of "assertives", in which the speaker tells hearers truly or falsely how things are and deontic modals as signals of "directives", in which the speaker gets hearers to do things. Palmer (1986: 17) also states that "only grammatical system in which a great deal of subjectivity is involved can be considered modal – and that is a characteristic of the English modal verbs".

However, the analysis of this characteristic can be extended to other grammatical structures and lexical categories rather than just the English modals. The major difficulty with the subcategory of subjectivity in deontic modality is that although there are varying degrees of the speaker's involvement in this type of modality, there are situations in which the speaker is not involved in the deontic source of permission or obligation as analysed in chapter 4. In sum, subjectivity can be considered as a more important feature of epistemic modality than objectivity in so far as the speaker expresses assumptions or judgements about the possibility of an event presented in an utterance to show his/her subjective knowledge or set of beliefs in it.

Another essential issue that relates the speaker's opinion to reality is the subcategory of non-factuality and the related dimensions since the view of the speaker and his/her assertion or epistemic utterances are non-factual. This discussion on the issue of factuality is based on Lyons' (1977: 794) notion in terms of 'factivity' and its opposite notions of 'non-factivity' as well as 'contra-factivity'. These terms may be used to indicate ways of expressing 'non-factive utterances'.

Factivity, as a set of state-descriptions, refers to the truth value of the proposition in an utterance to which the speaker is committed. When the speaker presents his/her evaluation on or belief in a proposition, this implies the condition or possible world that the proposition is true. That is to say, what the speaker knows or believes is also the semantic content of the proposition that he/she subscribes to, or takes to be true. In terms of non-factivity, the speaker is committed to neither the truth nor the falsity of the proposition. Contra-factivity,



on the other hand, commits the speaker not to the truth but to the falsity of the proposition. In contrast, straightforward statements of fact may be described as epistemically non-factual because the speaker commits him- or herself to the truth of what s/he asserts.

### **2.5.3 Judgement and evidentiality**

In spoken communication the speaker's degrees of commitment to the content of the proposition are also identified as subcategories of modality in terms of judgement and evidentiality. According to Palmer (1986: 51), the speaker may indicate his/her judgement about or show the evidence for the truth of the proposition. These are normally expressed by patterns indicating that:

- (1) s/he is speculating about it (e.g., *It is possible that... / I think that... / I believe that...*)
- (2) s/he is presenting it as a deduction (e.g., *It is concluded that... / I conclude that...*)
- (3) s/he is sure about it (e.g., *I am confident that... / I am sure that...*)
- (4) s/he does not fully commit to it (e.g., *perhaps, maybe, probably...*)
- (5) s/he has been told about it (e.g., *It is said that... / X said that...*)
- (6) it is a matter only of appearance, based on the evidence of (possibly fallible) senses (e.g., *It appears that.../ It seems that.../ It is likely that...*)

Therefore, judgement can be seen as a subcategory of epistemic modality indicating the speaker's degree of confidence in the reality of the proposition. Evidentiality is a form of epistemic modality showing that the speaker has prior knowledge or evidence for his/her assertion. This is an important property of epistemic modality since it shows the speaker's signals of certainty about the content of his/her utterance.

In sum, modality can be seen as a linguistic category with many facets. There have been different approaches to categories and pragmatic functions of this domain. However, it may be possible to identify the principal categories of epistemic, deontic and dynamic as the framework for the analysis of modality expressions. As presented above, although the theoretical analysis of modality encompasses a range of notions, categories and subcategories, the domain of modality can be seen to be concerned with epistemic senses such as certainty, probability and possibility; deontic sources of influence on the speech events as permission and obligation; and dynamic senses of volition, ability, intention and willingness. These will be inserted into the analyses of MMs found in samples of ambassadorial speeches in Chapters 5, 6 and 7 of this thesis.

## **2.6 Differences between British English and American English in modal use**

### **2.6.1 An overview of grammatical differences between BrE and AmE**

BrE and AmE are considered as the two major varieties of native English which are used by a large proportion of native speakers of English; this has been estimated at 83 per cent in the world (see Svartvik and Leech, 2006: 150). These two varieties of native English, as Algeo (2006: 1) claims, “have a special status as the two principal national varieties of the language simply because there is more material available in them than in any other variety”. Although the two varieties seem to be similar, they are actually different in several aspects and have changed considerably over time.

A range of studies on the linguistic changes in BrE and AmE have provided a large number of differences in several fields including pragmatics (Precht, 2003); word choice and modality use (Collins, 2007); pronunciation and speech patterns (Shackleton, 2005); spelling (Schachtebeck, 2007); and numerous specific differences in word and grammar patterns (Algeo 1988, 2006; Leech 2003; Leech and Smith 2006, 2009). Among these fields, as stated in Schachtebeck (2007), the most prominent differences between BrE and AmE are found in pronunciation and lexis, whereas only some minor differences are identified in spelling. From a different view, Algeo (1988) pays considerable attention to grammatical differences between BrE and AmE. As the author claims “even a comprehensive grammar cannot be complete [...] and so there is still need for a detailed examination of the grammatical differences between British and American English” (1988: 2).

It can be seen from the literature that most of the prior studies on grammatical differences have made use of comparable corpora of British English, i.e., LOB and F-LOB; and of American English, Brown and Frown (see 2.3.2) to search for particular grammatical changes and examine the differences between the two varieties of English. The common thing that can be gleaned from most studies on grammatical differences between British and American English is that they have been conducted mainly to serve the scholars’ individual discussions on particular grammatical issues in which one variety is taken as the basis for a contrastive analysis with the other.

Among a wide range of corpus-based contrastive studies on differences between these two major varieties of English, Algeo (1988), Hundt (1997), Krug (2000), Leech (2003), Leech and Smith (2006, 2009) are the seminal studies showing grammatical differences in general

and specific issues in the domain of modality in particular. Krug (2000) introduces grammatical changes in terms of “emerging modals and emergent grammar” suggesting that the change in the English modals is under way, the quasi-modals have become modalised and are assuming the typical features of central modals. Leech (2003), in a corpus-based study on the changes of modal auxiliaries in the two British corpora (LOB and F-LOB), claims that “the English modal auxiliaries as a group have been declining significantly in their frequency of use” (2003: 223). Leech and Smith (2009: 175-195) propose the explanation for grammatical changes in BrE and AmE in terms of determinants such as “grammaticalization” (diachronic change in grammar), “colloquialization” (colloquial influence in language use), “Americanization” (AmE in the lead of an ongoing change compared with BrE) and “densification” (the tendency for more compact expressions).

As a matter of fact, even the most in-depth study on grammatical differences between British English and American English cannot be expected to adequately cover all issues in current grammar since there has been a wide range of practical matters emerging in authentic communication while particular research merely focuses on specific matters of concern. Therefore, Algeo (1988) points out several grammatical patterns and lexical items used differently in BrE and AmE, although the author still admits that his study is “incomplete, limited and tentative” (1988: 4). As such, even a minor field in the study of grammar would still be worth detailed comparative research on the differences between these two major varieties of English.

This study is an investigation into the pragmatic functions of MMs as politeness strategies in samples of British and American ambassadorial speeches. MMs collected from the research corpora of ambassadorial speeches (see chapter 3) are categorised and analysed. Such an analysis will lead to a comparison of differences between the British and American ambassadors in the use of MMs as politeness strategies. Therefore, a discussion on differences in modal use between these two major varieties of English is essential. The analysis presented in the next section will clarify the tendency that AmE is leading BrE in the frequency change of the core modals, whereas BrE is leading AmE in the case of semi-modals. In sum, the difference in modal use between BrE and AmE is expected to shed light on the comparative analysis of MMs used as politeness expressions in samples of British and American ambassadorial speeches (see Chapters 8 & 9).

### **2.6.2 Differences in modal use between British English and American English**

Corpus-based studies have shown a large number of changes in modal frequency use in BrE and AmE (see also 3.7). Bybee et al., (1994), Biber et al., (1998), Krug (2000), Leech (2003), Leech and Smith (2006, 2009) are among the seminal references for corpus-based studies on modal frequency in BrE and AmE. For instance, Leech (2003) investigates the frequency change of the English modal verbs occurring in the four corpora including BrE: LOB (Lancaster - Oslo/Bergen) and F-LOB (Freiburg - Lancaster - Oslo/Bergen); and AmE: Brown and Frown (Freiburg-Brown). Each of these corpora contains a million words in 500 text samples from 15 different genres. The four corpora are built according to the same design and sampling method. The LOB and Brown corpora contain data collected in 1961; The F-LOB and Frown corpora consist of data collected in 1991 and 1992 as shown in Leech (2003: 226) of modal auxiliary frequencies across a generation gap.

Leech (2003) claims that the total frequency of modal verbs shows a significant decline in both American and British corpora “across the generation gap”. According to Leech (2003: 226), during the 30 year period the modal frequency dropped even significantly in both British and American corpora. In BrE, the occurrences of modal verbs declined from 14.6 instances per thousand words in LOB to 13.3 in F-LOB. The situation is the same in the two corpora of AmE with a decrease from 13.2 instances per thousand words in the Brown corpus to 11.9 in the Frown corpus over the same time-span.

Leech (2003) also suggests that the overall percentage of the modal frequency has decreased sharply within the 30-year period. The frequency of modal verbs in AmE can be seen to decline more steeply than its counterparts in BrE, with the decrease being -12.2% and -9.5%, respectively. Moreover, in AmE the decrease occurs in every single case from the Brown to the Frown. This is the general picture of the modal frequency decrease in written English over the 30-year period. The question is whether the situation of modal use in spoken English provides a similar picture (Leech 2003: 228).

It is regretted that there are no corpora of spoken English available for the purpose of comparing the frequency use of modal verbs in the two varieties, as claimed by Leech (2003: 230) “nothing is available for American English and even for British English” for such a comparison. However, Leech (2003) proposes some differences in the frequency of modal verb forms through research on two small corpora of speech, the Survey of English Usage

(SEU), collected during the period 1959-1965 and the International Corpus of English (ICE-GB) collected during the period 1990-1992 (Leech 2003: 231).

Leech (2003: 231) states that the frequencies of the modals *may* and *must* in spoken BrE decrease drastically, at -54.1% and -60.7%, respectively. Conversely, the two modal verbs that increase considerably in frequency are *will* at +23.8% and *can* at +17.1%. This can be explained as compensation for the decrease of *would*, at -34.7% and *could*, at -42.8%. Other modal verbs i.e., *shall* and *ought to* have been more infrequently used. The overall picture of modal use in spoken English also indicates that modal frequency decreases sharply through time, at -17.3%. This is also in line with Biber et al's (1998) claim that modal verb forms have expanded in earlier modern English but that in modern English they have started to decline.

However, other studies indicate that there has been an increase in the frequency of the semi-modals *have to*, *need to*, *be going to*, and *want to*. Bybee et al. (1994), Krug (2000), and Leech and Smith (2009) among others employ grammaticalization theory to provide an explanation for the increase of semi-modals. Accordingly, there has been a tendency for a progressive emergence of a new generation of modal auxiliaries in modern English as a supersession for some of the core modals (modal auxiliaries). Leech (2003) also claims that if the core modals are gradually decreasing, there seems to be a tendency for semi-modals to be taking the place of the core modals in both AmE and BrE. However, the difference between these two varieties, as claimed in Leech (2003: 236), is that “the frequency of semi-modals as a whole is lower in the American English than in the British English corpora”. Palmer (1986: 4-5) also provides an explanation for the grammatical changes in the English modal verb forms in terms of “grammaticalization” in which the development of MMs can be seen to depend on the restriction of their syntactic systems. He states:

A modal system (or any other grammatical system) will develop gradually over time, and at any one point in time will have reached a particular stage of development and so show a particular degree of grammaticalization.

Leech and Smith (2009: 175-195) propose explanations to grammatical changes in terms of “determinants” including *colloquialization*, *grammaticalization*, *Americanization* and *densification*. These are considered as elaborative explanations for grammatical differences

in the two major varieties of English. However, it can be seen that any occurrence of grammatical change is not caused by a single determinant but by their integration. This can be clarified through changes and differences of the modal verbs used in BrE and AmE. For instance, the increase in the frequency of semi-modals in the two varieties, as presented above, is obviously the consequence of grammaticalization. Leech (2003) suggests that the increase of semi-modals can be seen as a tendency to compensate for the decline of the core modals. In addition, the increase of semi-modals such as *have to*, *have got to*, *need to* as alternatives to *must* can also be considered as the consequence of colloquialization. As we can see, the sense of obligation expressed by *must* is particularly strong and thus other corresponding semi-modals can be used as alternatives to indicate the speaker's avoidance in showing his authoritative role (that is colloquialization) as in the following examples:

[11] I think ***we need to*** do, we diplomats, journalists, and average Americans ***need to*** do a better job of explaining what the United States is doing and why [A03Y].

[12] ***we need to*** build consensus about emerging issues, such as the appropriate role for biofuels to ensure their use is environmentally and socially sustainable. [B04N]

As seen in [11] and [12] *need to* is used as a replacement for *must* to attenuate the sense of strong obligation imposed on the addressee(s). With the pattern *we need to* the speaker can express his exhortation to hearers rather than impose an obligation on hearers as in *we must* or *you must* (see also 8.2.3.1).

Moreover, the changes in modal use may also be seen as a sociological matter. For instance, the decline in the frequency of the modal auxiliaries reveals important changes in the tendency of the preference in modal meanings affected by the development of social life. This is similar to Leech's (2003: 237) claim that the increase of *should* in the weak obligation use and the replacement of *need to* or *have to* for *must* can be seen as compensation for the decrease of *must* in its sense of strong obligation. Therefore, it can be argued that there is a tendency in the social life of the speaker or writer to avoid expressions which overtly claim strong obligation and they are tactfully replaced by others in the sense of weak obligation. Similarly with *must*, the modal *may* has also witnessed a drastic decrease in AmE. While the epistemic sense of *may* still remains in use, the other senses of possibility and permission (see 4.3.1) seem to have lost their ground to the colloquial use of *can* (see also Leech, 2003).

In sum, it can be argued that the drastic change in the use of modal verbs in BrE and AmE is indicated through the decrease in the use of core modals and the increase of semi-modal use. The tendency of grammatical differences in BrE and AmE can partly be explained in terms of grammaticalization, Americanization and colloquialization. There seems to be a tendency for AmE to be leading BrE in the frequency change of core modals while BrE is leading AmE in the case of semi-modals. Such important findings will be integrated in the comparative analysis of modal use between British and American ambassadorial speeches as the characteristic features of their politeness strategies (see Chapter 9).

### **2.7 An overview of corpus-based research on modality**

Corpus-based methods have been employed to provide data for comparative analysis of frequencies and semantic categories in studies on the English modal verb forms. However, such studies, as Kennedy (1998: 195) claimed “have been rare because of difficulties in getting corpora which contain similar text types or were compiled at a similar time”. Thus, in this section an overview of some corpus-based research on modality is presented as a guideline for the analysis of MMs in the next chapters.

Among the early corpus-based studies on modality, Coates (1983) provides a comparative analysis of the frequencies and semantics of ten modal auxiliaries occurring in the London-Lund corpus of spoken British English and the LOB corpus of written British English. Collins (1991) compares modality in an Australian English corpus with that in British and American English corpora based on parts of the LLC, LOB and the Brown corpora. Kennedy (1998) considers the use of modal verbs in the London-Lund corpus and the LOB corpus claiming that while some modal verb forms like *need*, *ought*, *must*, *should* and *can* are the most frequently used in root meanings expressing obligation, necessity and possibility, others such as *may*, *will*, *would* and *could* are mainly used to express epistemic meanings (i.e., degrees of certainty) and hypothetical meanings. The common factor that can be gleaned from such studies is in the comparative analyses of the frequency use of modal verbs in categories of root, epistemic and hypothetical meanings in different varieties of English.

Recent corpus-based studies on modality, i.e., Krug (2000), Leech (2003), Leech and Smith (2006, 2009) have been central to changes in the English modals. Krug (2000) in his study on “emerging modals and emergent grammar” suggests that a change in the English

modals is under way, the quasi-modals have become modalised and are assuming the typical features of central modals. Leech (2003), in a corpus-based study on the changes of modal auxiliaries in the two British corpora (LOB and F-LOB), claims that “the English modal auxiliaries as a group have been declining significantly in their frequency of use” (2003: 223). Leech and Smith (2009: 175-195) propose an explanation for grammatical changes in BrE and AmE with the main focus being on the English modal verbs.

In sum, prior corpus-based studies on modality, as discussed above, will provide important guidelines for the semantic and pragmatic analysis of MMs in this research. In the following chapters modality markers in categories of deontic, dynamic and epistemic modality will be analysed with excerpts taken from the research corpora as illustrations. These will be the background for the comparative analysis of the frequency use and pragmatic functions of MMs as politeness strategies in the two variables of ambassadorial speeches.

## 2.8 The framework of modality used in the research

As discussed above, it is difficult to set up an adequate and relevant frame of meanings for specific research on modality, and even more difficult to provide a definition in which there is a consensus among the different approaches to modality. This is because the division of modality categories has been proposed in different organisations which make this domain very diverse.

Table 2.1 Relations of modality meanings

Other alternative divisions of modality	The basic semantic categories of modality			Authors
	Epistemic	Deontic	Dynamic	
Discourse-oriented		obligation, permission		Palmer (1986)
Subject-oriented			ability, volition desirability	Palmer (1974)
Intrinsic		obligation, desire, ability, intention,	permission, volition, willingness	Quirk (1985)
Extrinsic	certainty, possibility,		Ability	



	probability, likelihood, prediction			
Theoretical	certainty, possibility, probability, likelihood, prediction			James (1986)
Practical		wish, regret, obligation, permission, ability, desire, intention, willingness		
Agent- oriented		obligation, root possibility ability, desire		Bybee and Fleischman (1995)
Speaker- oriented		Imperatives, permissives, Optatives		

However, it can be seen from the theoretical analysis above that no matter which ways of reorganisation are suggested for modality categories, the common factor is that modality can be viewed as a device in spoken communication conveying the three basic dimensions of modality including: (1) the speaker's attitude in assessing the truth value of the proposition in degrees of certainty, possibility, probability, and likelihood; (2) the speaker's intervention in the speech event by imposing obligations, giving or declining permission; and (3) the speaker's emotional expressions such as wish, regret, desire, ability, intention, and willingness. As such, the alternative divisions of modality (as presented above) can be seen to originate from the basic dimensions of epistemic, deontic and dynamic modality. These are combined to form an overall picture which shows the relations of modality meanings as shown in Table 2.3.

It can be seen in Table 2.3 that although there are a variety of ways in approaching other alternative divisions of modality, the distinction of modality meanings in such divisions is not clear-cut because there is overlap in the elements of the theory. Therefore, it can be argued that these proposed dimensions of modality (as discussed in 2.4.2) cannot be used as a replacement for the basic categories of *epistemic*, *deontic* and *dynamic* modality.

As observed in these theoretical elements, the sense of epistemic modality remains unchanged whereas the other alternative divisions are mainly proposed merely to cover the meanings of modality in paired comparisons and within each pair there is an overlap of the

dimensions with each other. As such, there is no consensus on how the set of modality dimensions should be characterised and each of them is identified separately with specific meanings which are not in themselves sufficient to replace the basic dimensions of modality. Therefore, it can be argued that the three basic dimensions of modality remain more prominent than the other alternative divisions. The *epistemic-deontic-dynamic* scheme can be considered as the framework for the analysis of MMs collected from ambassadorial speeches.

With regard to linguistic forms of modality, there seems to be a tendency for most accounts of modality in English to be central to the use of the modal auxiliaries (see Coates, 1983; Perkins, 1983; Quirk et al. 1985; Leech, 2003) and semi-modals (see Bybee et al. 1994; Krug, 2000; Leech and Smith, 2009). However, the linguistic expression of modality is actually marked through a wide range of other syntactic structures and lexical items (see Hoyer, 1997; Nuyts, 2001). Consequently, the sense of modality is expressed not only by the main verbs (including modal auxiliaries or other modal lexical verbs) but also by other non-auxiliary modals such as modal adverbs, modal adjectives or modal nouns. In addition modality is expressed through the whole sentence (see Palmer, 1986: 2) or a finite or non-finite clause (see Halliday, 1994: 89; Nuyts, 2001: 29).

However, it is regretted that the formal realisations of modality collected from the ambassadorial speeches and coded as the data sets of MMs for this research do not cover all the modal forms as presented above. While modal auxiliaries expressing all the meanings of epistemic, deontic and dynamic modality are found in the research corpora, patterns of MMs with other non-auxiliary modal forms collected from the ambassadorial speeches merely express the sense of epistemic modality. Therefore, in Chapters 5 and 6 of this thesis, illustrations of MMs expressing a sense of deontic and dynamic modality are modal auxiliaries only, whereas Chapter 7 consists of analyses of MMs expressing epistemic meanings including both modal auxiliaries and other patterns with non-auxiliary modals such as modal lexical verbs, nominal modals, adjectival modals and adverbial modals.

## CHAPTER 3: SPEECHES AND POLITENESS THEORIES

### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter sets out a theoretical overview on issues closely related to the objectives of the research including components of spoken communication and a critical overview of major theoretical approaches to the study of politeness. Section 3.1 is an introduction to the outline of the chapter. Section 3.2 is a discussion on major components in spoken communication in which I present an overview to speech act theory, speech functions and relations between political speeches and ambassadorial speeches. Section 3.3 consists of a review of politeness theories with a critical analysis on some seminal approaches to politeness. Although these approaches have laid an important foundation for the development of studies on politeness, no language patterns have been provided to illustrate the principles or rules of politeness discussed. Therefore, the analysis of MMs as politeness expressions collected from British and American ambassadorial speeches (see 4.2) in this research is expected to illustrate the practical usage of language as specific politeness theories.

Central to the theoretical analysis of spoken communication are the two major functions of speech acts: *representational* and *instrumental* (see 3.2.2). The former elucidates speech acts as a device for making assessments or judgements on the propositional content of the utterance and the latter as a tool for causing effects on hearers in communication. Interestingly, these functions roughly correspond to the semantic categories of epistemic and deontic modality (see 2.4.1) and will be used as the theoretical framework for the analysis of MMs as politeness strategies.

The pragmatics of MMs as politeness strategies in ambassadorial speeches is the main focus of this research since ambassadors are expected to be polite in their speech delivery. Accordingly, they may perform their politeness strategies by using linguistic devices to redress potential face-threatening acts (see 3.3.2.3) or to sustain intercultural communication for the accomplishment of their diplomatic missions. Therefore, discussions on issues of speech communication, differences in modal use between British English and American English, and critical analysis on major approaches to linguistic politeness will provide a theoretical framework for the analysis of MMs as politeness strategies in ambassadorial speeches.

## 3.2 Components of speech acts

### 3.2.1 On Speech Act Theory

The term ‘speech acts’ is literally related to the speaker’s acts as verbal behaviours. In communication, a speech act can be seen as the stating of something as a fact or the presenting of an opinion or judgement. This is considered as the performance of an act insofar as the speaker attempts to influence hearers’ reactions to the truth of what is said or hearers’ action in relation to morality. Speech Act Theory (hereafter SAT) was introduced by Austin (1962) in terms of a three-dimensional distinction as “locutionary”, “illocutionary” and “perlocutionary” acts which constitute the three-stage process of making a speech (cf. 2.3.5). A *locutionary act*, understood as what is being said, is treated as the denotative meaning expressed in a meaningful utterance. An *Illocutionary act* refers to the force that the speaker intends to create in making an utterance. That is to say when we perform a speech act, i.e., making a statement, the declaration in the content of our utterance is considered as its “illocutionary force”. A *perlocutionary act* is established when we make an utterance to achieve an effect on our addressee(s). These can be treated as perlocutionary effects of the utterance.

Functions of utterances, as Searle (1979) reproducing Austin (1962) suggests, are categorised into two broad types: “constative” (or non-performative) and “performative” utterances. Constative utterances are types of descriptive statements that can be analysed in terms of “truth-values”, whereas performative expressions are not held to be “truth-bearing”. Searle (1983) reproducing Austin’s (1962) SAT considers language as a practical means of communication with its major purpose of causing an effect on hearers. As such, it can be claimed that the purpose of communication is not only the transmission of descriptive statements but also to influence the action of, or transfer the speaker’s attitude to the hearers. This is in line with what Hoyer (1997: 55) who stated that:

We want our opinions recognised, if not endorsed, our assertions to be supported, our requests, orders or commands to be complied with, our advice taken, our apologies accepted, our questions answered and so on. Whatever the motivation for a communicative act may be, the goal is frequently to influence the beliefs, attitudes or behaviour of our interlocutor(s).

Therefore, SAT can be considered as the basis which indicates the two principal uses of language in communication. On the one hand, language is used as a tool for making assessments or judgements on the world while on the other, it is used as an instrument that the speaker employs to cause a certain effect on the hearer(s) or to change the world. These major uses of language give way to the analysis of speech functions.

### **3.2.2 Speech functions**

Although there have been various approaches to the classification of speech functions, the consensus may be seen to focus on the two principal functions. Austin (1962) makes a distinction between constative and performative utterances. Davies (1979: 15) suggests two types of meanings: the “interpersonal meaning” which shows the way in which the world is interpreted; and the “interactional meaning” which shows how social relations and interactions are established and manipulated. Perkins (1983) reproduces Searle’s (1979) five major categories of illocutionary acts (see 2.3.5) into two major speech functions, namely “representational” and “instrumental” which correspond roughly to the two basic uses of language. The representational function, an essentially static view of the world, involves the speaker’s commitment to what s/he says. The specific varieties of representational functions are *Assertives and Expressives* (see 3.2.2.1). The instrumental function, a dynamic world view, involves “the speaker’s expression of his attitude towards potential action by him- or herself and others” (Hoye, 1997: 56). The specific varieties of instrumental function are *Directives, Commissive and Declarations* (see 3.2.2.2).

Hence, it can be argued that these two major speech functions are closely related to the semantic categories of epistemic and deontic modality. The only difference is that Declarations are least concerned with modality. This is because a descriptive declaration simply provides a description of facts and thus, only represents a proposition. Modality, on the contrary, conveys the speaker’s cognitive, emotive or volitional qualification of the event presented in the proposition (cf. 2.3.5). The other four dimensions of speech functions are analysed in pairs in the following sections. The excerpts taken from ambassadorial speeches are used to illustrate the functions of MMs in different types of speeches.

#### **3.2.2.1 Assertives and Expressives**

Assertives are illocutionary speech acts concerned with the speaker’s subjective assertion of a proposition to be true on the basis of his or her belief or commitment. This type of

illocutionary speech act, as Palmer (1986: 13) states, “must be concerned with the whole of epistemic modality”, involving kinds of illocutionary points of asserting something as shown in the following example:

[13] ***I strongly believe that*** the MOU on labor cooperation signed last November reinforces these efforts, and ***I am confident that*** the MOU will facilitate further progress in Vietnam towards meeting international labor standards and towards insuring Vietnamese enjoy the full range of workers' rights. [A01E]

In addition to statements of fact, the speaker uses expressions of assertion to show his view. In [13] the speaker is fully committing himself to the truth of what he asserts by using expressions such as *I strongly believe that...*, *I am confident that...* This is in line with Lyons' (1977: 809) claim that “there is no epistemically stronger statement than categorical assertions” because in this type of speech act, the speaker is strongly committed to the content of the utterance.

The category of assertion is indicated by the distinction between declaratives and utterances with MMs. On the one hand, with declaratives, assertion is indicated by the way the speaker signals his maximum commitment to the truth of the proposition. Declaratives can be seen as epistemically unmarked, and provide no direct indication of the epistemic status of the proposition (see Palmer 1986: 86). On the other hand, with the use of MMs, the speaker shows different degrees of commitment to the assertion of the declarations. However, a difference has been found in the recognition of MMs in Assertives. According to Lyons (1977: 809), “the fact of introducing *must*, *necessarily*, *certainly*, etc. into the utterance has the effect of making our commitment to the factuality of the proposition explicitly dependent upon our, perhaps, limited knowledge”. Palmer (1986: 87), on the contrary, points out that MMs “strengthen the commitment rather than weaken it after a declarative statement”. For example:

[14] Challenges ***certainly*** remain and we recognise that ***we must*** do an even better job protecting the lives of our families and other citizens. [A03V]

While the illocutionary point of assertives is to emphasise the speaker's commitment to the truth of the declaration expressed, that of expressives is to cover the emotional state that the content of the proposition specifies. That is to say the expressive illocutionary point is a

communication of attitude or emotion about the state of affairs described in the utterance as shown in the following example:

[15] ***I would be happy*** to take a few of your questions. [A03B]

The use of *would* in the excerpt above implies that there is no direction of ‘fit’ with the category of expressives since the truth of the proposition is presupposed. In this case, *would* is hypothetical expressing the speaker’s tentative attitude. In other words, the hypothetical *would* is used to show the speaker’s tentativeness rather than a demand for hearers *to put questions*. Therefore, expressives are included in the representational function of language (see Perkins, 1983: 14).

### 3.2.2.2 Directives and Commissives

The illocutionary speech acts of directives and commissives are similar to assertives in terms of the feature of non-factuality and subjectivity according to the deontic source. Directives defined as “we try to get our hearers to do things” and commissives as “we commit ourselves to do things” are concerned with deontic modality in so far as the speaker tries to make reality conform to his or her requirements (see also Palmer 1986) as shown in the following excerpts:

[16] I think my main parting thought would be that ***the people of Vietnam must*** work for the kind of country they want. [A03Y]

[17] ***I would*** tell people who ask me about Vietnam to go and see it for themselves. ***I would*** urge them to come and ***I would*** urge American businesses to come too. [A03Y]

With the use of *the people of Vietnam must* as in [16], the speaker emphasises what he thinks is the hearers’ duty *to work for the kind of country they want*, while patterns of *I would* as in [17] indicates the speaker’s commitment to doing things promised to avoid expressing an obligation. As such, we can see the major difference between the functions of these two types of speech acts in that: directives are related to actions which impose an obligation or requirement on the addressee, whereas commissives are closely related to the sense of making a promise.

In sum, the dimensions of speech functions as presented above can be seen to be closely related to the distinction between epistemic and deontic modality meanings. These will be used as the framework for the analysis of MMs found in British and American ambassadorial

speeches as signals of the speaker's judgement or effect on hearers as discussed in the next chapters.

### **3.2.3 Relations between political speeches and ambassadorial speeches**

#### **3.2.3.1 Definition of a speech event**

A speech event can be considered as a highly structuralised and conventionalised unit of language that is delivered for the specific purpose of communication. Speeches are normally presented in different styles with speakers employing a wide range of linguistic components and language use to accomplish the speech acts of expressing their views and convincing the audience with specific purposes, as Reisigl (2008: 243), reproducing Schmitz (2005: 698), claims:

A speech is a structured verbal chain of coherent speech acts uttered on a special social occasion for a specific purpose by a single person, and addressed to a more or less specific audience.

Speeches exist in a wide range of genres (see Swales, 1990; Bhatia, 1993) and differ from each other in terms of length, style and structure. Speeches are different with respect to major features such as time, place, topic, and purpose; the relations between the speaker and addressee(s); and the degrees of preparedness. A speech can be considered as a highly structured discourse unit of coherence which makes it not only an information-bearing unit but also a stylistic and persuasive language unit. Bakhtin (1986: 60) states that "thematic content, style and compositional structure are inseparably linked to the whole of the utterance". A speech has to be prepared and delivered in a deliberate way to show the speaker's stature and meet the audience's expectation. Therefore, a speech is considered an important assignment, especially in mediating relationships in our intercultural world. Charteris-Black (2005: 4-8) explains this process as "the art of speech making".

Since this research is an investigation into the use of MMs as politeness expressions in British and American ambassadorial speeches, the relation between ambassadorial speeches and political speeches should be analysed. In the next section a general characterisation of political speeches compared with ambassadorial speeches will be discussed to show how ambassadorial speeches are a sub-set of political speeches (3.2.3.2). In addition, such a comparison is an attempt to point out that ambassadorial speeches also serve the speaker's specific political activities and communicative purposes. Following this, a pragmatic



perspective of ambassadorial speeches is included in the analysis of modality expressions as signals of the ambassadors' politeness strategies (discussed in chapters 8 and 9 of this thesis).

### **3.2.3.2 Ambassadorial speeches as a subset of political speeches**

Political speeches is a type of discourse which can be considered as highly risky in its nature. As claimed in Obeng (1997: 58), "political discourse is full of conflicts and synergy, contestations and acquiescence, praise and dispraise, as well as delicate criticism and unmitigated support". Political speeches are normally designed to serve the speaker's specific political goals. According to Schaffner (1997), this type of discourse has its particular functions which depend on specific political activities and communicative purposes. Nevertheless, whatever the goal is, the major function of political speeches is to persuade the audience and make them believe what is being said. Therefore, Wilson (1990) refers to political speech delivery as the 'pragmatic behaviour' which is sensitive to the context of production.

What is important in the organisation of political speeches, as Charteris-Black (2005: 4) claims, is the distinction between their "structure" and "style". Structure refers to the important steps in delivering a speech that the speaker makes to attract the hearers' attention and participation. These steps have been termed as "heurisis" (or "discovery") and "taxis" (or "plan"). Style is the selection of the particular language used and the linguistic components corresponding to the communicative purpose of the speech. These factors together with the speaker's performance contribute to the success of political speech delivery.

Schaffner (1997), Charteris-Black (2005), and Reisigl (2008) among others point out important dimensions such as settings, genres and functions in the organisation and delivery of political speeches. Ambassadorial speeches, as observed under the umbrella of these dimensions, are closely related to political speeches. The analysis of these dimensions to prove that samples of ambassadorial speeches collected for the research (see Chapter 3) can be considered as a subset of political speeches is presented as follows.

(1) Ambassadorial speeches are one of the settings of political speeches:

In the delivery of a political speech the speaker has to take into account different settings of the speech to select relevant strategies. Schaffner (1997: 2) points out three principal settings of political speech delivery: (i) "internal political communication" where the speaker, normally in the role of the leader, addresses other candidates of the party or

members of a political group; (ii) “external political communication” where the speaker addresses the public; and (iii) “inter-state political communication” where the speaker addresses other politicians or the public in a diplomatic visit abroad.

In these settings of political speeches, the third one roughly corresponds to the genre of ambassadorial speeches in-so-far as the ambassador communicates in an inter-cultural and inter-ideological setting. That is to say the ambassador, as the speaker, does not simply act as an individual but represents a political party, a state or a government. Ambassadorial speeches are, therefore, characterised as one of the settings of political speeches with the underlying purpose of establishing good relations between states or nations. In their diplomatic mission ambassadors have to select a relevant style of language use to achieve their communicative purposes. As such, it can be argued that politeness expressions are among the decisive factors for the accomplishment of ambassadorial speech delivery and it is these that this study intends to investigate (see Chapters 8 and 9).

(2) Ambassadorial speeches are a genre of political speeches:

There are three genres associated with three main contexts in which political speeches could occur as Charteris-Black (2005: 4) suggests:

First is the genus *deliberativum* - a speech that needs to be persuasive because it deals with an important controversial topic within a public setting; next is the genus *iudicium* for making judicial decisions. Finally, there is the genus *demonstrativum* - or epideictic address that is undertaken for some form of display.

Of these classic rhetorical speech genres (see also Reisigl, 2008: 245) ambassadorial speeches are closely related to the deliberative genre (or the genus *deliberativum*). This genre of political speech, as claimed in Reisigl (2008: 244), “is especially related to differing opinions about political decisions in the ancient public sphere of the deliberative assembly or people assembly”. The rhetorical strategies of ambassadorial speeches are also the same in so far as the speaker has to take into account politeness strategies (see chapter 7) to obtain the communicative purposes of persuading others and accomplishing the diplomatic relations with his visiting nations.

(3) Functions of political speeches shown in ambassadorial speeches:

Political speeches diverge in a range of forms, types and functions relating to political dimensions of polity (i.e., commemorative speeches, memorial speeches, and ceremonial speeches); of policy (i.e., inaugural speeches, presidential speeches, speeches of appointment, and speeches of resignation) and of politics (i.e., election speeches, political advertising, and debate speeches) (see Reisigl, 2008: 246). Thus, it can be seen that different types of political speeches with their own rhetorical structures serve different interactional purposes. Nevertheless, although political speeches differ greatly in their purposes of communication, they may have their starting point from one or more of the following eight functions as Reisigl (2008: 247) points out:

- (i) the lawmaking procedure;
- (ii) the formation of public attitudes, opinions and will;
- (iii) the party internal formation of attitudes, opinions and will;
- (iv) the interparty formation of attitudes, opinions and will;
- (v) the organisation of international and (especially) interstate relations;
- (vi) political advertising;
- (vii) the political executive and administration; and
- (viii) the various forms of political control

These functions of political speeches are also reflected in ambassadorial speeches (of course in a different way as analysed below) under the umbrella of diplomatic contexts. For instance, compared with the first function of political speeches, there are ambassadorial speeches serving as a diplomatic relation establishing procedure i.e., welcoming speeches, opening remarks, and state visit speeches. It can be argued that ambassadorial speeches do not perform these functions separately but that they intertwine with each other. That is to say ambassadors' purposes in speech delivering is to develop the formation of attitudes, opinions and not only with regard to the audience but also in their inter-relation with their visiting countries. In other words, ambassadorial speeches do not simply indicate the speaker's mind but represent a nation's ideology in international and inter-state relations. Moreover, ambassadorial speeches also serve the ambassadors' duties of advertising their nations, obtaining negotiation goals and maintaining diplomatic relations with other countries.

In sum, like political speeches, ambassadorial speeches comprise a range of types and serve different functions in diplomatic relations. However, the major point that can be seen in

the functions of ambassadorial speech delivering is the underlying purpose of establishing good relations between nations. As such, central to ambassadorial speeches and as a subset of political speeches, are the speaker's politeness strategies utilised to accomplish the task of maintaining diplomatic relations. Therefore, the main focus of this investigation into ambassadorial speeches is to cover modality expressions used in samples of British and American ambassadorial speeches as markers of their politeness strategies (see Chapters 8 and 9).

### **3.3 An overview of Politeness Theories**

#### **3.3.1 Introduction**

It is important that ambassadors maintain relations in their diplomatic missions and thus, they are expected to show politeness in their speech delivering. Amongst the signals of politeness in samples of ambassadorial speeches are linguistic devices used to perform the speakers' politeness strategies in order to redress potential FTAs or to maintain the floor of intercultural communication (see 3.3.2.3). Therefore, in this section I will begin with a discussion on politeness theories, and then critically analyse certain major approaches related to the research as an overview of politeness. A critical analysis will be followed by a pragmatic analysis of MMs as politeness expressions in samples of British and American ambassadorial speeches in the next chapters. An introduction to politeness theories follows.

It is quite easy to understand or realise *polite* behaviour such as greeting others or holding the door open for someone. Although there are cultural differences, people may think of a polite person as someone acting in "a refined courteous manner" (Márquez, 2000), who knows how to preserve not only his 'face' but also the other's in interaction. Therefore, a polite person may also be characterised as one who minimises 'benefit' for him- or herself and maximises it for others (see Leech, 1983). However, these are just a few among thousands of performances considered as polite behaviour. Politeness, in its broad sense, has been a major concern in pragmatics where one expects to learn how to behave linguistically politely.

Actually, it is difficult (if not impossible) to present a statement that can cover all the criteria of polite behaviour and even more difficult is to provide an adequate and appropriate definition of *politeness* (see Fraser 1990). Moreover, what has been observed as polite behaviour in normal social communication is just the social aspect of politeness in general.

Another important dimension of politeness is our evaluation on polite language usage in interaction as linguistic politeness. I would argue that politeness has been widely developed not only in describing polite behaviour or good manners in social life but also in modelling language usage in terms of linguistic politeness. The term ‘politeness’ has been approached from a variety of perspectives. Consequently, the struggle over the reproduction and reorganisation of linguistic politeness has long been in progress theoretically. As Watts et al. (1992: 1) claim:

Questions about how politeness should be defined, the ways in which it is realised in different cultural frameworks and the validity of a universal theory of politeness are of interest to a wide range of social science researchers.

Politeness has been a major concern in pragmatics since Lakoff’s (1973) work on “the logic of politeness”. The issue has been developed into a theory and used as a framework for studies in pragmatics since Brown and Levinson’s first publication in 1978. However, although Brown and Levinson’s (1978/1987) Politeness Theory has been considered as the most influential publication on politeness, “the concept is never actually defined” in their entire book, as claimed in Meier (1995: 346).

Essentially, as seen from research on the development of politeness theory, there are four principal views, as Márquez (2000: 5) reproducing Fraser’s (1990) view points out:

One can effectively distinguish four clearly different views of politeness: the ‘social norm’ view, the ‘conversational maxim’ view, the ‘face-saving’ view and his own ‘conversational contract’ view.

These are the four major views that have been referred to as the framework for a number of studies on politeness. However, there has been a large number of publications approaching the issue from different angles. All of these have their own contributions to politeness theory and propose changes, amendments or critiques. Therefore, I would like to review the most well-known approaches to politeness in an overview of politeness theories. In addition, the critical analysis of these major approaches will be reflected in the analysis of the pragmatic aspect of MMs as politeness strategies in British and American ambassadorial speeches (see Chapter 8).

### **3.3.2 Major approaches to politeness**

#### **3.3.2.1 The ‘social-norm’ view**

The very first question in approaching politeness through the ‘social-norm’ view is why politeness has been considered as a social entity while polite behaviour is in fact performed by an individual. Márquez (2000: 2) explains that “it is socially determined in the first place and it is geared towards the structuring of social interaction”. That is to say the social-norm view to politeness shows the public’s general understanding of the issue.

Politeness, in its common sense, can be viewed as what has been accepted socially as proper behaviour and structuralised in language as styles of speech expressing etiquette, courtesy and degrees of formality. that individuals in a social group are requested to follow. Once these behaviours and speech styles are socially standardised as principles, they constitute social rules which furnish devices of communication in terms of politeness. These have been considered under the viewpoint of the ‘social-norm’. However, since politeness is socially established and prescribed as social rules, the concept of politeness is different from one society to another. Even within a society, politeness is codified into different etiquette elements and expressed differently in different sub-cultural contexts. Moreover, as society develops to a certain level, cultural elements, social concepts, and communication will also change to adapt to such social development which makes the social-norm view changeable through time.

As seen in our current age of international integration, once intercultural contacts increase, it is important to pay attention to components of politeness in communication, otherwise cultural conflict may easily emerge. Politeness, as in the ‘social-norm’ view with different social rules from one culture to another, has to be viewed together with its social and cultural characteristics. For instance, it is common for Europeans to maintain distance in communication as politeness. Conversely, the modern American performance of politeness “tends towards camaraderie” (showing sympathy and friendliness), while the Asian way “tends to be deferential” (giving options to the other in communication) (see Eelen, 2001; Beeching, 2002). It can be inferred from this approach that politeness is associated with a speech style to indicate that an utterance with a higher degree of formality exemplifies a higher level of politeness.

In sum, the social-norm view of politeness represented in various cultures indicates that politeness follows conventions in communication, i.e., using standard forms in interaction, avoiding swearing and stigmatised expressions, avoiding conflict, showing respect to others, and following social orders. As such, the social aspect of politeness is expressed through the interactional relationship between individuals within a social group. However, the problem facing the social norm view is that it may vary from one culture to another. As such, this view can be summarised by stating that as far as inter-cultural communication is the norm, there are no universal social norms because they are more or less culture-specific (see Fraser, 1990). This may be a reason why the social-norm view of politeness seems to attract few adherents among current researchers.

### **3.3.2.2 The ‘conversational maxim’ view**

The ‘conversational maxim’ view with its Politeness Principle is derived from Grice’s Co-operative Principle (CP) with which interactants are expected to comply in communication. Grice (1975) provides four conversational maxims: (1) Quality: “be non-spurious” (being true, or speaking the truth); (2) Quantity: “be brief” (do not communicate more than is necessary); (3) Relevance: “be relevant”; and (4) Manner: “be clear” (avoid ambiguity and obscurity). These maxims can be stated differently by saying that one should say the right thing, at the right time, with the right content and in the right way. Jaworski and Coupland (2006: 67), reproducing Grice (1975) also propose that you should make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, and by the accepted purpose or direction of talk exchange in which you are engaged. Among the major adherents to the development of Grice’s CP are Lakoff (1975, 1989), Leech (1983), and Brown and Levinson (1978/1987). Grice’s CP and its maxims are principally reliable and significant in the English-speaking world as ‘principles’ which provide necessary guidance to appropriate language use.

In her early work on politeness, Lakoff (1973: 296)<sup>(9)</sup> claims that “it is considered more important in a conversation to avoid offense than to achieve clarity”. She proposes two ‘pragmatic competence’ rules: (1) Be clear; and (2) Be polite. As such, it can be inferred from Lakoff’s view that politeness is the avoidance of offence. In her later work, Lakoff

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<sup>(9)</sup> Eelen (2001) considers Lakoff as “the mother of modern politeness theory”.

(1975) points out that politeness is developed through ways of expressing proper manners and behaviour “in order to reduce friction in personal interaction”. She proposes three rules of politeness: (1) “Formality: keep aloof”; (2) “Deference: give options”; and (3) “Camaraderie: show sympathy” (see Lakoff, 1975: 64-5).

The first rule indicates that when there is an inequality between the speaker and the hearer(s), politeness is performed in the way interactants maintain the distance between them. In order to follow this rule in communication, the speaker may use expressions to communicate distance or to imply that there is no emotive features to the proposition. However, in actual interactions there are situations when speakers attempt to be close to hearers, showing solidarity with hearers as a signal of politeness. Therefore, it can be argued that maintaining distance may be more polite in a culture oriented to negative politeness, whereas showing solidarity with hearers can be seen to be more polite in a culture oriented to positive politeness. (See also 3.3.2.3 for the discussion on politeness strategies in the face-saving view.)

The second rule normally appears in contexts when there is distance in terms of the power relations of the addressee(s) over the speaker or when the speaker is not confident or responsible for the truth of what is said. Even if “the speaker knows very well that he has the power to enforce a decision” (Lakoff, 1975: 66), he may use politeness markers to show his hesitancy or lack of confidence in terms of hedges, or tags. In this way, the speaker implies that he would allow hearers the right to make judgements or evaluations on the proposition presented or he would not impinge on the hearers’ freedom. As such, this rule is closely related to negative politeness (see 3.3.2.3).

The third rule which shows the signal of friendliness in communication is included in the category of politeness which, as Lakoff suggests, is popular in American society. She points out that “the purpose of Rule 3 is to make the addressee feel that the speaker likes him and wants to be friendly with him, is interested in him and so on” (1975: 67). This rule of showing the speaker’s friendliness roughly corresponds with positive politeness (see 3.3.2.4). In her later work, Lakoff (1990: 34) reviewed in Eelen (2001: 2), defines politeness as:

a system of interpersonal relations designed to facilitate interaction by minimising the potential for conflict and confrontation inherent in all human interchange.



Although Lakoff's rules can be seen to be present in interaction, showing the speaker's politeness in communication, they are performed and emphasised differently in different cultures. Politeness will, therefore, be viewed differently in intercultural communication. In sum, it can be inferred from Lakoff's rules that politeness is not penetrating the addressees' territory but making them feel good, and leaving them free to make their own decisions. Lakoff's rules of politeness can be interpreted as the interactants' attempt to avoid conflict by using linguistic devices concerning strategies, i.e., impersonality, hesitancy and formality. (These are also developed in Brown and Levinson's (1987) negative politeness strategies as discussed in 3.3.2.3.) In this research the inferences and implicatures of Lakoff's conversational rules will be examined through the analysis of MMs as signals of the speakers' politeness through British and American ambassadorial speeches in the next chapters.

Leech (1983) also adopts Grice's CP to set out maxims and sub-maxims of politeness in conversations. Central to Leech's framework is the distinction between the speaker's *illocutionary goal* and *social goal*. The illocutionary goal is the speech act at which the speaker aims. The social goal represents the speaker's position in expressing politeness through his or her utterance. Leech (1983) proposes four types of illocutionary function in establishing and maintaining comity: (1) the 'competitive' function expressing acts such as ordering, asking, demanding, begging; (2) the 'convivial' function as offering, inviting, greeting, thanking, congratulating; (3) the 'collaborative' function as asserting, reporting, announcing, instructing; and (4) the 'conflictive' function as threatening, accusing, cursing, reprimanding. On the basis of these four types, Leech (1983) defines *politeness* as the forms of behaviours expressed in the first two illocutionary functions which are mainly related to negative and positive characters of politeness, respectively. However, I would propose the third function be included in the domain of politeness, that is the speaker's commitment to the content of his utterance through the use of politeness markers to announce or assert events presented in the proposition.

With regard to the Politeness Principle (PP), Leech (1983) claims that Grice's four conversational maxims of quality, quantity, relevance and manner are necessary but insufficient and he suggests six interpersonal maxims: *Tact*, *Generosity*, *Approbation*, *Modesty*, *Agreement* and *Sympathy* (1983: 132). Each of Leech's maxims of politeness has

its pair of sub-maxims and a set of scales. For instance, the scale of *cost-benefit* can be explained as the speaker being required to gain more cost to ‘self’ (the speaker him- or herself) and give more benefit to the ‘other’ (the addressee and also the third person). Márquez (2000: 9), following Leech’s (1983) maxims of politeness, reproduces the set of scales including *cost/benefit*, *optionality*, *indirectness*, *authority* and *social distance*. In viewing these scales, we can see that the scales of cost/benefit, authority and social distance are similar to Brown and Levinson’s (1987) variables of D, P, and R<sup>(10)</sup>, respectively; optionality is related to Lakoff’s rule 2: “give options”; and indirectness can be explained as the way of expressing idea in the utterance so that words are not imposed on hearers.

Another dimension that Leech (1983) proposes in the PP is the ‘Irony Principle’ (IP). According to Leech, the Irony Principle is “the second-order principle” because it depends on the CP and PP. The IP functions in the way the speaker expresses his view ironically using formal expressions in situations that just require informal or intimate formula of the utterance. The IP is the principle that “enables a speaker to be impolite while seeming to be polite” (Leech 1983: 142). Politeness in Leech’s view can be seen as a combination of Grice’s Co-operative Principle, the Politeness Principle and the Irony Principle.

In sum, the conversational maxim view can be seen to have its starting point with Grice’s CP which creates a significant influence on other adherents. Grice’s CP, Lakoff’s rules and Leech’s maxims and sub-maxims are seminal to modern politeness theory. However, it is regretted that there have been no structures or patterns illustrated to clarify the principles, rules and maxims of politeness. Therefore, this research will reflect such principles, rules and maxims of politeness theories in practice through the analysis of MMs as signals of the speakers’ politeness strategies in samples of British and American ambassadorial speeches.

### **3.3.2.3 The ‘face-saving’ view**

Brown and Levinson’s (1978/1987) politeness theory has been considered one of the most influential theoretical frameworks relevant for studies on the pragmatic aspect of language (see Eelen, 2001). Although the term *politeness* is not defined in the entire book, Brown and Levinson (1987: xiii) indirectly claim the domain of politeness by stating that:

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<sup>(10)</sup> These are identified in Brown and Levinson (1987) as interpersonal elements representing the social distance between the speaker and hearers, D; the relative power of hearers over the speaker, P; and the ranking of imposition, R (see 2.4.2.3 in this thesis).

Politeness is basic to the production of social order, and a precondition of human cooperation, so that any theory which provides an understanding of this phenomenon at the same time goes to the foundations of human social life.

Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory is central to interlocutors' *face* which is derived from Goffman (1967: 5) as:

The positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact. Face is an image of self delineated in terms of approved social attributes-albeit an image that others may share, as when a person makes a good showing for his profession or religion by making a good showing for himself.

On such a basis, Brown and Levinson (1987: 61) consider *face* as "something that is emotionally invested, and that can be lost, maintained or enhanced, and must be constantly attended to in interaction". Face is similar to something private, something that every interactant wants to preserve and claim for himself/herself as the "public self-image". The two types of face presented in the theory are: "negative face" - that is the interactant's desire to protect the freedom to act and being unimpeded by others; and "positive face" - the interactant's expectation of obtaining approval from or being liked by others. According to Brown and Levinson, *face* has to be the attentive object of politeness because in communication any speech act may potentially contain "face threatening acts" (FTAs). FTAs as stated in Brown and Levinson (1987: 65-8) are:

- (i) acts that put pressure on the hearer, threatening the hearer's negative face: orders and requests; suggestions and advice; reminding; threats, warnings and dares;
- (ii) acts that show the speaker's negative evaluation or ignorance of the hearer's positive face: disapproval, criticism, complaints, violent emotions, mention of taboo topics, divisive topics;
- (iii) acts that offend the speaker's negative face: acceptance of the hearer's thanks or apology, acceptance of offers, unwilling promises or offers;
- (iv) acts that damage the speaker's positive face: apologies, acceptance of a compliment, confession, admissions of guilt or responsibility.

It can be inferred from Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory that speech acts may have potential elements that can threaten either the speaker's or the addressee's face-wants.

Therefore, politeness is the utilisation of expressions which compensate for such face-threats. Such expressions collected from samples of ambassadorial speeches in this research are MMs used to indicate the ambassadors' politeness strategies. In other words, MMs are linguistic devices that ambassadors use in their speeches to redress FTAs. As such, the analysis of MMs as signals of the speakers' politeness strategies will also reflect this theory in practice and in return this will contribute to politeness theories.

Brown and Levinson (1987) state that there are "super-strategies" of politeness including positive politeness, negative politeness and 'off-record' strategies (see below for definitions). In the case of the occurrence of any FTA in interaction, the speaker employs redressive actions to the FTA. Such actions, as Brown and Levinson (1987) distinguish are *positive politeness* and *negative politeness* redressing the hearer's *positive face* and *negative face*, respectively.

Positive politeness as Brown and Levinson (1987: 70) state:

[...] is oriented towards the positive face of the hearer, the positive self-image that he claims for himself. Positive politeness is approach-based; it "anoints" the face of the addressee by indicating that in some respects, the speaker wants the hearer's wants (e.g. by treating him as a member of an in-group, a friend, a person whose wants and personality traits are known and liked). (1987: 70)

Positive politeness can be interpreted as the strategies in which the speaker takes the hearer's wants into account, gets closer to hearers, and creates solidarity with hearers. Brown and Levinson (1987) have organised their fifteen positive politeness strategies into three broad mechanisms namely: (1) claiming common ground, (2) conveying that the speaker (S) and the hearer (H) are co-operators, and (3) fulfilling H's wants. Using these strategies, S expresses intimate politeness by showing that H's wants (i.e., interests, or goals) are also interesting to him/her.

Negative politeness as claimed by Brown and Levinson's (1987: 70):

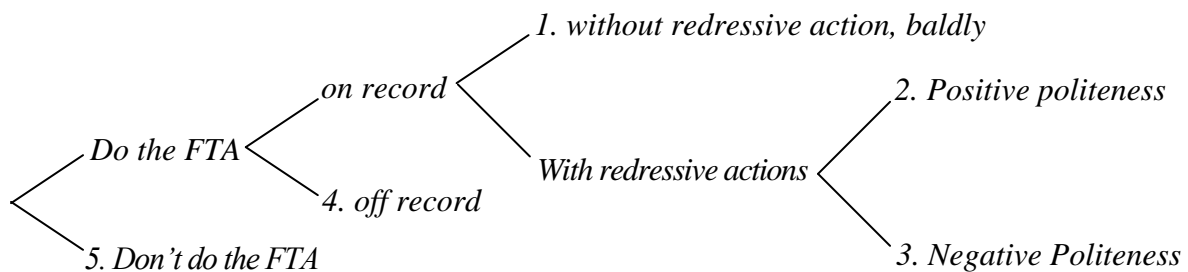
[...] is oriented mainly toward partially satisfying (redressing) H's negative face, his basic want to maintain claims to territory, self-determination. Negative politeness, thus, is essentially avoidance-based, and realisations of negative politeness strategies consist in assurances that the speaker recognises and respects the addressee's negative-face wants and will not (or will only minimally) interfere with the addressee's freedom of action.

As such, negative politeness can be understood to appear in speech acts of negative protocols in which the hearer expects to be “unimpeded”. S has to pay attention to strategies of redressing FTAs such as apologising, showing deference to H’s wants, using hedges, and keeping a certain distance from H. Negative politeness strategies are ways of using devices that help to soften the speech act, and give H a face-saving feel of not being imposed upon or obligated.

Brown and Levinson (1987) also characterise three variables in relation to the ‘weightiness’ of the speech act. These interpersonal elements are listed as: (1) the social distance (D) between S and H - that is when there is a large power separation between S and H, and at that point the level of politeness has to be increased correspondingly; (2) The relative power (P) of H over S is where S has to use politeness expressions when he has to address more powerful hearers; and (3) the ranking (R) of imposition (how ‘threatening’ or ‘dangerous’) in a specific culture. These are variables that S has to consider in order to select relevant politeness strategies in interaction. At that juncture, when FTAs have to be performed (or in case of potential FTAs), S has to use appropriate strategies to minimise FTAs. These will be analysed and illustrated through the analysis of MMs as politeness strategies in chapters 7 & 8 of this thesis.

In addition to these two major strategies of positive and negative politeness, Brown and Levinson (1987) propose two other strategies in terms of *bald-on-record* and *off-record*. However, bald on record is not popular as a politeness strategy since this is the way of presenting an FTA without a mitigated form. Off-record is the way the speaker attempts to avoid committing an FTA by using hints or indirectness in his utterance. Brown and Levinson (1987: 69) summarise politeness strategies in a set of different levels in “the risk of face loss” and possible strategies for doing face threatening acts as in the following figure:

Figure 3.1: Communicative selections of politeness strategies



Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory has been considered one of the seminal theoretical frameworks for the study of linguistic politeness. For instance, Eelen (2001: 2) claims that the names Brown and Levinson "have become almost synonymous with the word *politeness* itself". Kerbrat-Orecchioni (1997: 11), in viewing politeness in interaction, also points out that "as it is well-known, it is impossible to talk about it without referring to Brown and Levinson's theory". However, their face-saving view has also become the central topic for a number of critiques in recent years.

Thomas (1995: 176) argues against Brown and Levinson's description of an FTA as threatening the face of either the speaker or the hearer. While Brown and Levinson (B and L) claim that positive and negative politeness are mutually exclusive, Thomas points out that in a single utterance both positive and negative face may be threatened simultaneously. Thomas (1995) appears to be correct because whether a speech act is considered as an expression of positive or negative politeness depends both on the speaker's communicative intention and the hearer's interpretation. In fact, sometimes politeness expressions still exist with some fuzziness at the border between positive and negative politeness as in the following excerpts:

[18] **I am confident that** we will be able to take our relationship into a new, deeper phase leading to closer ties in a wide range of areas. [A03P]

[19] **I know that** you will continue to do great things toward achieving mutual understanding between our two countries. [A03F]

Expressions like *I am confident that...* in [18] and *I know that...* in [19] are used to assert the information in the proposition or to express the speaker's attitude that s/he pays attention to the hearer's expectation. These expressions are identified as markers of the speaker's positive politeness since they "assert or presuppose S's knowledge and concern for H's want" (Brown and Levinson, 1987: 125). However, these expressions can simultaneously be interpreted from the speaker's negative politeness as hedges because they indicate that the speaker "does not take responsibility for the truth of his assertion" (1987: 155). It can be argued that Brown and Levinson's model does not always work with particular patterns or structures expressing politeness in specific languages or cultures. Therefore, instead of a positive-negative politeness distinction, this research is central to a comparative analysis of MMs expressing politeness in terms of hedges, downtoners, committers, intensifiers, and mitigation markers between British and American ambassadorial speeches (see Chapter 8).

Mills (2003) also argues against Brown and Levinson's view that politeness is necessarily 'a good thing' by citing Watts' (1992: 45) comparison of politeness as "a velvet glove to hide one or another kind of iron fist". According to Mills, it is more crucial to assess the degree of sincerity or commitment of politeness or impoliteness. Mills considers the FTAs that B and L point out (e.g. asking a stranger to pass you the salt at dinner must be mitigated by the use of *Can you ...* or *Please*) as being perverse and claims that "if such acts are considered to be FTAs, then the view of society as a whole is particularly negative one" (2003: 60).

Kerbrat-Orecchioni (1997) makes a more incisive criticism suggesting that the model must undergo a certain number of revisions. Like Thomas (1995), Kerbrat-Orecchioni (1997: 12) points out that the limitation in Brown and Levinson's theory is "the extreme fuzziness that surrounds the negative/positive notions". She points out that the term 'negative face' was derived from Goffman's term of 'territory' and that negative politeness tends towards redressing the addressee's negative face, while Brown and Levinson indicate that this form of politeness is 'avoidance-based'. Kerbrat-Orecchioni argues that 'positive face' has been derived from the ordinary language in terms of 'face' which relates to the preservation of desire, whereas Brown and Levinson "put a stress particularly on its propensity to be enhanced, assimilating positive face and positive politeness". Kerbrat-Orecchioni (1997: 13) provides modifications to the theory:

- (i) negative politeness towards the addressee's negative face (e.g. softening of an order);
- (ii) positive politeness towards his/her negative face (e.g. a gift);
- (iii) negative politeness towards his/her positive face (e.g. softening of a criticism or disagreement);
- (iv) positive politeness towards his/her positive face (e.g. compliment, expressions of agreement).

Kerbrat-Orecchioni (1997) also introduces a new term, Face Enhancing Acts (FEAs), expressing politeness in interaction by producing more acts to soften potential FTAs. Such modifications will be applied to the analysis of MMs as politeness strategies in terms of hedges, downtoners, committers, and intensifiers in samples of ambassadorial speeches.

#### **3.3.2.4 The 'conversational contract' view**

Fraser (1990) characterises politeness in terms of the 'conversational contract' view. The authors claim that when people enter into a given conversation, they are involved with a

particular conversational contract referring to their understanding about their ‘rights’ and ‘obligations’ which determine what they expect from each other in their interaction.

According to Fraser (1990) the establishment of these rights and obligations varies over the course of time depending on different contexts of communication. He suggests four dimensions including: (1) the ‘conventional’ dimension, normally indicated by rules, i.e., turn-taking, levels of loudness or softness in speaking; (2) the ‘institutional’ dimension, imposed by institutions concerned with rights of speaking, i.e., in court or duties of maintaining silence e.g., in church; (3) the ‘situational’ dimension, determined by particular speech situation in terms of factors such as the power of the participants, the role of the speaker and the perception of hearers; and (4) the ‘historical’ dimension indicating that the conditions of any new interaction is determined by contracts established in the previous interaction. These will be used as guidance for the analysis of MMs as politeness expressions, especially those expressing the speaker’s avoidance of an imposition on hearers as mitigation markers (see Chapter 8).

These dimensions, in general, are negotiable and can be readjusted. However, in some situations, the conventions of participants’ rights and obligations are imposed by some institutions of a social kind (e.g., in the court or the church). Politeness in the ‘conversational contract’ view, therefore, can be understood as that of obeying and maintaining conventions. Therefore, the violation of these conventions is viewed as an impolite behaviour. It can be seen from Fraser’s (1990) view that politeness is not involved with strategies in interaction but the task of following terms and conditions of the conversational contract, or “within the negotiated constraints”. Fraser (1990: 233) claims that:

Being polite does not involve making the hearer ‘feel good’, à la Lakoff or Leech, nor with making the hearer not ‘feel bad’, à la B & L. It simply involves getting on with the task at hand in light of the terms and conditions of the CC.

It can be inferred from Fraser’s view that there are neither polite nor impolite structures of language, there are no arguments for a language to be more or less polite. Politeness is the way the speaker follows what is negotiated in the conversational contract. Supporting this view, Eelen (2001: 14) also stresses that:



Politeness is totally in the hands of the hearer. No matter how (im)polite a speaker may attempt to be, whether or not he or she will be heard as being (im)polite ultimately depends on the hearer's judgement.

Although Fraser's conversational contract view emanates from a sociolinguistic view of politeness compared to that of Leech's or Brown and Levinson's view, this model of politeness is rather sketchy. That is to say it is difficult to predict how Fraser's approach to politeness might work in practice. For instance, Fraser (1990) points out that the conversational terms occur in an actual speech situation and can be readjusted or renegotiated but he fails to state clearly in which ways or in what conditions. Moreover, he does not provide any foundation for the consideration of what participants' rights and obligations are or any patterns used to express these dimensions.

### 3.3.3 The framework of different views to politeness used in the research

It can be seen from the theoretical analysis of politeness in this chapter that no matter which way of politeness is approached, the common factor is that politeness can be seen as proper behaviour expressed in communication through principles, rules, maxims or strategies. Table 3.1 below is an overall picture of the major approaches to politeness.

Table 3.1: Major approaches to politeness

Approaches	Components of politeness	Behaviour	Authors
Social-norm view	Proper behaviour	Use standard forms Avoid conflict Show respect Follow social order	Marquez (2000)
Conversational maxim view	Co-operative principle	Be non-spurious Be brief Be relevant	Grice (1975)
	Rules of politeness	Formality: keep aloof Deference: give options Camaraderie: show sympathy	Lakoff (1975)
	Interpersonal	Tact, generosity, approbation,	Leech

	maxims	modesty, agreement, sympathy	(1983)
Face-saving view	Positive politeness strategies	Take H's want into account Get close to H(s) Create solidarity with H(s)	Brown and Levinson (1987)
	Negative politeness strategies	Apologise Show deference to H's wants Use hedges Keep a certain distance from H(s)	
	Off-record strategies	Avoid committing an FTA Use hints or indirectness	
Conversational contract view	Rights and obligations	Conventional dimension Institutional dimension Situational dimension Historical dimension	Fraser (1990)

Table 3.1 provides an overview of the most influential approaches to politeness which can be seen as a seminal theoretical framework for the investigation into the semantic and pragmatic aspects of MMs as politeness levels in samples of British and American ambassadorial speeches. As observed in these major theoretical approaches to politeness, it can be argued that although there have been some critique of Brown and Levinson's (1987) 'face-saving' view (i.e., Thomas 1995, Orecchioni 1997, Eelen 2001, Mills 2003), this approach can be seen as a development of Grice's co-operative principle, Lakoff's rules and is similar to Leech's maxims of politeness. Consequently, it is expected that politeness levels expressed through linguistic components in spoken communication can certainly be examined under the umbrella of politeness strategies. I would argue that Brown and Levinson's approach to politeness still has an influential impacts on the analysis of politeness strategies. Even Eelen (2001), who has a suitable and apposite "critique of politeness theories", still concedes that "Brown and Levinson's theory is certainly the most influential [...] The names Brown and Levinson have become almost synonymous with the word politeness itself" (2001: 3). Moreover, the point is that even though certain critiques (as presented above) have pointed out the limitations of Brown and Levinson's theory, they

should be seen as merely modifications to the theory and do not replace the theory as a whole. Therefore, Brown and Levinson's 'face-saving' view is relevant in representing the concept of politeness. As such, this study will rely on Brown and Levinson's model together with the modifications by others to shed light on the analysis of MMs as politeness strategies in samples of British and American ambassadorial speeches in the next chapters.

## CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY

### 4.1 Outline

Most current research tends to approach language issues by investigating authentic data of language use through the method of corpus-based analysis (see Altenberg 1991, Aijmer and Altenberg 1991, Kennedy 1998, Biber et al. 1998, Hunston 2002, Baker 2006). This method can be seen as an objective way of examining data which are motivated and structured by interactants' natural wording rather than the researcher's intuition. Thus, corpus linguistics (see 4.2) has become a popular approach to language study as Hunston (2002: 1) claims: "corpora and the study of corpora have revolutionised the study of language, and of the applications of language".

The aim of my thesis is to investigate the pragmatic functions of MMs as specific politeness strategies through data collected in British and American ambassadorial speeches. Central to data collection is the selection of speeches made by native English ambassadors as the data source for the research. After reviewing the data collection methods in prior corpus-based studies (see 4.5), I decided to collect samples of British and American ambassadorial speeches to build the corpora for the current research. Ambassadorial speeches are selected as the data source for this research because these speeches are expected to contain linguistic devices such as MMs that the ambassadors use to redress the FTAs (see 3.3.2.3) that may exist in their speech delivery. MMs collected will be used as data for the analysis of politeness strategies in the particular discourse of ambassadorial speeches.

Therefore, this research is mainly based on corpus analysis to investigate the functions of MMs collected from the research corpora of ambassadorial speeches as expressions of politeness strategies. The mixed method of quantitative and qualitative analyses is utilised in this research where the results of a quantitative corpus analysis will provide an empirical basis for the qualitative analysis of MMs as particular politeness strategies in the selected utterances extracted from British and American ambassadorial speeches. Particular steps in the research method are described as follows.

Firstly, with support from staffs at the UK Embassy in Vietnam and the Embassy of the USA in Vietnam, samples of British and American ambassadorial speeches were collected. (I spent almost a week in each of the embassies to search for ambassadorial speeches

transcribed and stored in their archives.) Then, the samples of ambassadorial speeches collected in each group were also examined carefully to identify and code patterns of MMs as data for the research. In fact, I performed manual coding for all whole data sets in this research by investigating every single ambassadorial speech. Then the software package of WordSmith was used to confirm the data of MMs coded and provide statistical information for a quantitative analysis. The keyword lists and concordance line tools in this software package helped to indicate the contexts in the corpora where particular MMs occur. In this way specific utterances are selected as illustrations for qualitative analyses of categories of MMs and politeness strategies. These analyses also provided the background for a comparative analysis between British and American ambassadors in their use of MMs in major categories of politeness markers (see Chapters 8 and 9).

However, since the research is mainly based on corpus methods, this chapter on methodology will begin by presenting an overview of corpus linguistics, and the pros and cons of corpus-based methods as guidelines for the research methods. The next sections include the process of collecting samples of ambassadorial speeches and designing the corpora of ambassadorial speeches. The reason I decided to select samples of British and American ambassadors' speeches as the data source for the research is also explained. Since the research corpora are built from the two major varieties of native English, the British national corpus (BNC) and the corpus of contemporary American English (COCA) are also employed as the reference corpora for the study.

In this research MMs manually coded through careful investigation into specific ambassadorial speeches are collected as the data sets of the research. The corpora of British and American ambassadorial speeches are used to provide statistical data and specific utterances for illustrations of MMs in dimensions of deontic, dynamic and epistemic modality as presented in Chapters 5, 6 & 7. Statistical data of MMs collected are used for the quantitative analysis of MMs as positive and negative politeness strategies in British and American ambassadorial speeches as presented in Chapter 8. Finally, the quantitative analysis of MMs provides data for a comparison between British and American ambassadors in the use of MMs as major categories of politeness markers in Chapter 9. For such steps in methodology to be undertaken, let me first present an overview of corpus linguistics and corpus-based methodology.

## 4.2 An overview of corpus linguistics

Corpus linguistics, a field of language study on the basis of corpora (corpuses), has become a fast-growing approach to language studies. The development of corpus linguistics, as Aijmer and Altenberg (1991: 1) claim, originates from two major events:

One was Randolph Quirk's launching of the Survey of English Usage (SEU) with the aim of collecting a large and stylistically varied corpus as the basis for a systematic description of spoken and written English. The other was the advent of computers which made it possible to store, scan and classify large masses of material.

Meyer (2004: xi) defines a corpus as "a collection of texts or parts of texts upon which some general linguistic analysis can be conducted". A research corpus, as Stubbs (1996: 4) points out, is "an instance of language in use, either spoken or written: a piece of language behaviour which has occurred naturally, without intervention of linguists". It contains data from which particular language features can be identified and analysed. As such, corpora as huge computer-readable bodies of texts not only contain large amounts of data but are also easily accessible. With the assistance of specialised software, research corpora have "introduced incredible speed, total accountability, accurate replicability, statistical reliability and the ability to handle huge amounts of data" (Kennedy, 1998: 5).

The school of corpus linguistics developed over recent decades with new computational generations has considerably influenced linguistic studies. In a discussion on the historical background of corpus linguistics, Leech (1991) highlights the 'first generation corpora', as early as Randolph Quirk's plan for the Survey of English Usage (SEU) Corpus in 1959, and soon afterwards with the Brown Corpus compiled by Nelson Francis and Henry Kucera in 1961. These were followed by the Lancaster-Oslo/Bergen (LOB) Corpus 1970-1978, and the London Lund Corpus (LLC) 1975. In the 1980s and 1990s 'second generation mega-corpora' were available. Among these are the Cobuild Corpus, the Longman Corpus Network (LLELC, LSC and LCLE), the British National Corpus<sup>(11)</sup> (see also Aston and Burnard 1998, Leech et al. 2001), and the International Computer Archive of Modern English<sup>(12)</sup>. Types of

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<sup>(11)</sup> <http://www.natcorp.ox.ac.uk>

<sup>(12)</sup> <http://www.hd.uib.no>

access to large corpora of written and spoken English can be seen in Aijmer and Altenberg (1991: 315); Hunston (2002: 217); and Meyer's (2004: 142-50) corpus resources among others. In addition, Leech (1991) suggests using 'third generation' corpora, claiming that "it would not be impossible to imagine a commensurate thousand-fold increase to one million million word corpora before 2021".

Corpus linguistics, as a popular data set for language studies, has widely been employed in several areas including dictionary compilation, e.g., Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English 3<sup>rd</sup> edition (1995), Collins COBUILD English Dictionary (1995); in writing grammar reference books by giving accurate statistical descriptions of the research issues based on frequencies provided by corpus analysis, e.g., Biber et al.'s (1999) Longman grammar of spoken and written English; and in comparative analyses of grammatical features in teaching materials, e.g., Wicken (1998). Specialised corpora have been designed from newspaper articles or political texts as in Charteris-Black (2004), and Chilton (2004) to study specific language features {see also Hunston (2002: 96-123) for a summary in the popular use and applications of corpora}. The following section is an analysis of corpus-based methodology.

### **4.3 Corpus-based methodology**

Any corpus-based research relies on research corpora and reference corpora as authentic sources of data for analysis. The former is compiled to explore a particular genre (for instance, in this research it is related to the discourse of ambassadorial speeches) and the latter is used to explore the language in general and to provide data for comparison with results collected from the former. Corpus-based research can essentially be seen as a way of studying real-life language via a computerised collection of texts. A corpus-based method, as claimed in Biber et al. (1998: 4), consists of four essential characteristics:

- (i) it is empirical, analysing the actual patterns of use in natural texts;
- (ii) it utilises a large and principled collection of natural texts, known as a 'corpus', as the basis for analysis;
- (iii) it makes extensive use of computers for analysis, using both automatic and interactive techniques;
- (iv) it depends on both quantitative and qualitative analytical techniques.

Altenberg (1991), Aijmer and Altenberg (1991), Kennedy (1996, 1998), Biber et al. (1998), and Baker (2006) are among typical studies on the historical development of

computerised corpora, statistical tools, computer programmes and specialised software packages for corpus-based studies on authentic language. A corpus-based approach has also been applied to the analysis of linguistic features in political texts (see Van Dijk, 1991; Fairclough, 2000; Charteris-Black, 2004). It can be claimed that corpus-based methodology grants an essential insight into authentic language use. The method is applied to this research because it has its own advantages as analysed below.

Firstly, findings from corpus-based research are objective and authentic. Corpus-based studies identify real-life occurrences of language use via the tools of keyword analysis and collocation patterns. As such, a corpus-based method has its advantages in using authentic data of language use which are more reliable than others which create models to serve the researcher's intuition. As Charteris-Black (2004: 30) claims:

The notion of attested language is very important in corpus linguistics and implies that data are not invented for the benefit of a model but rather that the model emerges from large and representative samples of language.

Secondly, a corpus includes information about the use of particular linguistic features in different contexts and language situations. Moreover, since a corpus is 'representative' of language-users, we may find different patterns used to express the same function and vice versa. That is to say one function of language can be expressed in several forms and in return one form of language can be used to express different meanings. Among the best ways to consider the potentiality of attested language is to investigate language features in a research corpus or to compare them in research corpora. In other words, a research corpus can provide information which can be used to reflect what has been claimed in theoretical analyses of the issues. A corpus-based method is one of the best methods to conduct this research on MMs expressing the speakers' politeness strategies in the discourse of ambassadorial speeches.

Thirdly, with the utility of computer-aided tools, corpus-based studies are not only objective but also automatic because corpora are computerised sources of empirical data, providing the frequencies of variables expressing particular language features. These computerised data are the objective source of information used to resolve issues of language study very quickly, this previously took a long time to do by hand and of course errors were inevitable. Furthermore, this corpus-based method provides objective and accurate data for



analysing the language issue of concern since it is associated with specific research stages of studying such as (1) corpus compilation referring to text collection and preparation for description and analysis; (2) software development concerning tools for computerising data for analysis; (3) text processing and linguistic analysis relating to the work of linguistic description of the computerised data; and (4) application of findings consisting of suggestions for putting results of the study into practice.

Therefore, with the implementation of a corpus-based method, this research on MMs used as speakers' politeness strategies in the discourse of ambassadorial speeches is expected to reflect issues of attested language into the theories of modality and politeness. The tools for corpus-based analysis and the stages of the research as mentioned above will be applied to the collection and compilation of the research corpora of ambassadorial speeches (see 4.5). The research corpora designed are an authentic source which provides statistical data for the quantitative analysis of patterns of MMs emerging from samples of British and American ambassadorial speeches as their politeness strategies. With the utilisation of software packages, contexts of particular MMs are identified to select specific utterances for the qualitative analysis of categories of MMs as politeness strategies. The following section is an analysis of the procedures conducted in this research in relation to principal issues in designing a research corpus, building the research corpora of ambassadorial speeches and using software packages for data collection and analysis.

#### **4.4 Principal issues in designing a research corpus**

The key component in any corpus-based study is to design its research corpus (or corpora) which determines the effect of any corpus-based analysis. For a research corpus to be effectively designed, basic principles have to be considered, careful collection and planning for the organisation of the corpus has to be undertaken. The two groups of criteria to be considered in designing a corpus, as Aston and Burnard (1998: 21) state, are: "on the one hand the size of a corpus and of its component parts and on the other the material actually selected for inclusion". These are similar to Hunston's (2002: 25-31) four principal issues adopted in the design of the research corpora for this study and which are *size*, *content*, *balance and representativeness*, and *permanence* as analysed below.

It has been observed that corpora are designed in a variety of sizes with a diverse range of uses for various purposes of language studies. Some small-size corpora are compiled by

individual researchers for their particular purposes of study (i.e., research corpora of ambassadorial speeches), other large-size corpora are designed by major publishers as 'general corpora'. As such, there are different points of view on sizes of corpora. For instance, Leech (1991) claims that the *size* of a corpus is not all-important whereas Sinclair (1996) emphasises the importance of corpus size stating that the bigger the better. Charteris-Black (2004: 31) also suggests that "a corpus should be as large and as balanced - that is, containing as many registers and types of text - as possible". Baker (2006: 31), on the contrary, claims that to investigate a specific use of language, it is not necessary to collect millions of words as data. However, it can be stated that the size of a corpus is more or less an important criterion to be considered for the validity of findings and research claims.

The *content* of a corpus is determined by the researcher's purpose. Kennedy (1998: 3) states that "corpora have been compiled for many different purposes, which in turn influence the design, size and nature of the individual corpus". A corpus consists of a body of texts which linguists analyse to seek for answers to particular questions about vocabulary, grammar and discourse structure. Therefore, types of texts to be collected play a key role in the compilation of a corpus and the researcher has to make decisions in selecting sources of texts to be included in the corpus. For instance, texts of written language can be collected from books, press editorials, periodicals, essays, and letters in a diverse range of subjects and within particular periods of time. Texts of spoken language are selected and transcribed from public conversations, debates, interviews, speeches, demonstrations, and broadcast news.

With regard to representativeness, although there is a wide range of sources for texts to be collected for research, it would be misleading to consider a corpus as a random collection of texts. In order for a corpus to be relevant for the objectives of study, the researcher has to attempt in the building of it to ensure that it is *representative* for attested language use. For instance, in research on the language of newspapers, Hunston (2002) claims that for the research corpus to be designed a decision has to be made to include a range of newspaper types (e.g. broadsheet and tabloid) and a range of article types (e.g. hard news, human interests, editorials, letters, and advertisements). Hunston (2002: 28) claims that "a balanced corpus might be said to consist of an equal number of words in each categories". Adopting the same view as Hunston's in relation to content and text types of a corpus, Meyer (2004: xi) points out that:

The Brown Corpus is balanced because it is divided into 2,000-word samples representing different types (genres) of written English, including press reportage, editorials, government documents, technical writing and fiction.

*Permanence* is another aspect to express the representativeness of a corpus in terms of up-to-date information. A corpus whose text content is out of fashion is no longer the representative of language in the category in which the research is conducted. Unrepresentativeness also appears in relation to the size and time of a corpus. A small corpus, for example, with inadequate information to cover the diachronic aspect of the study is also unrepresentative. Therefore, in order for a corpus to become representative, careful selections should be made with texts and text types to meet the particular criteria for compiling a specific corpus for research. As Biber et al (1998: 246) claim:

We do not know the full extent of variation in languages or all the contextual variables that need to be covered in order to capture all variation in texts. However, attention to certain issues will ensure that a corpus is as representative as possible, given our current knowledge of language.

In sum, the major concerns when designing a corpus are whether the corpus is synchronic or diachronic, whether it includes spoken or written texts or both, what category/categories will be included, and how large, representative and balanced the corpus should be. The principal issues mentioned above are considered as the essential guideline for the steps of collecting samples of ambassadorial speeches to design the research corpora for data collection and analysis as described in the following section.

#### **4.5 Collecting ambassadorial speeches and building the research corpora**

Typical methods of corpus design and the process of data collection for corpus-based analysis are related in Biber et al. (1998, 1999, 2002); Keck and Biber (2004); and Baker (2006) among others. On the basis of prior studies on data collection and particularly on the research questions of this study, the steps of collecting samples of speeches made by British and American ambassadors to Vietnam and building the research corpora for analysis are undertaken as follows.

Firstly, British ambassadors' speeches collected from the UK Embassy in Vietnam and American ambassadors' speeches from the Embassy of the USA in Vietnam (see 4.1) are

examined carefully so that patterns of MMs are coded. Then, selected speeches are compiled into two research corpora. One corpus is built from a sample of speeches made by the British ambassadors to Vietnam (BAC) and the other is from speeches delivered by American ambassadors to Vietnam (AAC). These two research corpora are used to provide data for quantitative analysis of MMs while qualitative analysis will be used on selected utterances from these research corpora. Tables 4.1 and 4.2 below show details of the two machine-readable text corpora used in this research. The two research corpora consist of speeches that British and American ambassadors delivered to a public audience of Vietnamese.

Table 4.1: Data on the corpus of American ambassadorial speeches (The AAC)

<b>Ambassador</b>	<b>Date range</b>	<b>No. of speeches</b>	<b>% of corpus</b>	<b>No. of words</b>	<b>% of words</b>
A01	2000-2003	13	19.25%	19,763	18.91%
A02	2003-2005	17	23.61%	26,910	25.76%
A03	2005-2008	25	35.22%	33,267	31.84%
A04	2008-2011	15	21.32%	24,544	23.49%
Total		70	100.00%	104,484	100.00%

Table 4.2: Data on the corpus of British ambassadorial speeches (The BAC)

<b>Ambassador</b>	<b>Date range</b>	<b>No. of speeches</b>	<b>% of corpus</b>	<b>No. of words</b>	<b>% of words</b>
B01	2002-2004	20	28.52%	29,599	28.19%
B02	2004-2006	17	23.38%	23,638	22.51%
B03	2006-2008	17	23.38%	24,920	23.73%
B04	2008-2010	18	24.72%	26,845	25.57%
Total		72	100.00%	105,002	100.00%

As seen in Table 4.1, the AAC consists of 70 speeches made by four American ambassadors to Vietnam in the period 2000 to 2011, with a word size of 104,484. The highest proportion of speeches contributing to the compilation of this corpus is from those made by

ambassador A03, accounting for 25 speeches, at 35.22% of the corpus and 31.84% of total words. The number of speeches delivered by ambassador A01 is the fewest in this corpus, with 13 speeches, at 19.25% of corpus and 18.91% of total words. The number of speeches made by ambassadors A02 and A04 collected for this corpus are 17 and 15 respectively, at 23.61% and 21.32% of the corpus, and 26.76% and 23.49% of the total words.

Table 4.2 shows details of the BAC compiled from samples of speeches made by British ambassadors to Vietnam. The corpus consists of 72 speeches selected from those made by four British ambassadors to Vietnam in the period 2002 to 2010, with a 105,002 word size. Ambassador B01 contributes the highest proportion of the BAC, accounting for 20 speeches, at 28.52% of the corpus and 28.19% of total words. The number of speeches made by ambassador B04 follows, accounting for 18, at 24.72% of the corpus and 25.57% of the word size. The speeches made by ambassadors B02 and B03 are equal, with 17 speeches each, at 23.38% of the corpus and 27.73% of total words. In general, the size and synchronic range of these transcribed speeches are approximately equal. Therefore, they are expected to be relevant in the collection of data and analysis of MMs as politeness strategies that the British and American ambassadors engage in their speech delivery.

Actually, the population of ambassadorial speeches selected for the compilation of each research corpus is not very large (70 speeches in the AAC and 72 in the BAC) and the size of the research corpora is also small (over 100,000 words each). However, the two research corpora can be seen as representative since they contain similar text types of general speeches delivered by British and American ambassadors to general audiences of Vietnamese users of English at similar times and are, therefore, expected to provide spontaneous data for the research analysis and interpretation.

Investigations into the selected ambassadorial speeches show that there are lexical items and syntactic structures as MMs which express the speakers' attitudes, opinions, knowledge, beliefs, and evaluation. These are closely related to the main objective of the research on the pragmatic functions of MMs as the speakers' politeness expressions. Therefore, each of the ambassadorial speeches is examined carefully to code the patterns of MMs and particular speeches are selected to compile the research corpora.

The research corpora designed can be seen as representative of the speech genre of the study. Moreover, the two research corpora are expected to provide attested data for this study

since they are compiled from speeches made by native-English speakers and are excluded from the researcher's intuition. That is to say these corpora provide data which "have occurred naturally in a real social context without the intervention of the analyst" (Stubbs, 1996: xv). Therefore, data collected from the research corpora can be seen to originate from "naturally occurring language use" (see Blum-Kulka et al. 1989; Aijmer, 1996; Marquez Reiter, 2000). Since the corpora are small, I did manual coding for MMs throughout the 142 speeches and used software to confirm the data sets collected.

However, it is honestly recognised that the research corpora are not wholly representative for the discourse of ambassadorial speeches in terms of varieties. Actually, samples of ambassadorial speeches for this genre of discourse could be collected from more varieties of English other than only those made by British and American ambassadors. Nevertheless, speeches delivered by non-native English speakers would make this genre of discourse more complicated and thus cause the research corpora to be less representative. A further point is that it would be more effective if more samples of speeches made by British and American ambassadors to other countries could be selected. However, since this research is central to MMs as politeness strategies, a study on such a linguistic issue must be undertaken on specific speeches made by ambassadors of native English. For the reasons presented above together with the restriction on the scope of this research, only samples of speeches made by British and American ambassadors to Vietnam were selected.

It can be seen that ambassadorial speeches selected for the compilation of the research corpora are spontaneous since they are exactly what British and American ambassadors said. The speeches are expected to provide attested data for the research purpose without any intervention from the researcher into what and how they have been expressed. Consequently, the data collected will be an authentic source for an investigation into MMs used in ambassadorial speeches as politeness expressions.

For the research corpora to be built, it is important to plan their size and the types of ambassadorial speeches to be collected as presented above. Moreover, samples of British and American ambassadors' speeches used to build the research corpora for this study are not randomly but specifically selected under the research objectives. As Baker (2006: 26) states "researchers have produced a range of recognizably different types of corpora, depending on the sorts of research goals that they have had in mind". Furthermore, a corpus is quite

different from an archive of texts in that “a corpus is designed for a particular ‘representative’ function” (Leech 1991: 11). Since the main objective of this research is on the pragmatic functions of MMs as politeness expressions, important issues for the building of research corpora have to be carefully considered in terms of size and population of samples (as shown in Tables 4.1 and 4.2).

To summarise, although the research corpora, the British Ambassador corpus (BAC) and the American Ambassador corpus (AAC), are small and the population of ambassadorial speeches is not very large, the selected speeches made by British and American ambassadors are expected to be adequate for the research goals of investigating the semantic and pragmatic functions of MMs as the speakers’ politeness expressions. The research corpora can be seen to cover the principal issues of corpus building and represent the genre of ambassadorial speeches for analyses of MMs as politeness strategies.

#### **4.6 The use of control corpora**

A “control corpus” or “general corpus”, as Baker (2006) defines it is “a large corpus (usually consisting of millions of words from a wide range of texts) which is representative of a particular language variety”. The best way to clarify the findings in a corpus-based research is to make a comparison between those findings of the research corpus and those of a general corpus. In such cases a general corpus plays an important role as the control corpus (see Charteris-Black, 2004: 31).

The control corpora employed in this study are the British National Corpus (BNC) and the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA). The spoken part of the COCA with about 90 million words is used as the representative of American spoken English and the spoken part of the BNC with about 10 million words as the representative for British spoken English (see Table 4.3). These control corpora are reference corpora since they cover a wide range of genres, subject fields and registers and are widely accessible for the research purposes (see also Kennedy, 1998). As such, the BNC and COCA<sup>(13)</sup>, used as the control corpora, will provide data as a reference for the comparative analysis with findings from the research corpora of ambassadorial speeches. The corpora employed for the current corpus-based research are shown in Table 4.3 below.

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<sup>(13)</sup> These large general corpora are accessible on the website <http://corpus.byu.edu>

Table 4.3: The corpora used in the research

Name of corpus	Abbreviation	No. of speeches	Corpus size	Time
British Ambassador Corpus	BAC	72	105,002 words	2002 – 2009
American Ambassador Corpus	AAC	70	104,484 words	2000 - 2009
British National Corpus (Spoken part)	BNC	-	10 mil. words	1980 - 1993
Corpus of Contemporary American English (Spoken part)	COCA	-	90 mil. words	1990 - 2009

In sum, in this corpus-based research the mixed method of qualitative and quantitative analyses is used. The qualitative method is implemented in the analysis and interpretation of MMs found using the quantitative method. In a mixed method as such, quantitative techniques will provide the statistical data of frequencies and patterns of MMs in the research corpora of British and American ambassadorial speeches whereas the qualitative approach is used as the functional interpretation of MMs in selected utterances. Software packages such as WordSmith 5.0, W-matrix and CHAT & CLAN<sup>(14)</sup> are used to search for words and patterns of MMs to confirm the data coded, and investigate and compare the frequencies of MMs occurring in the two research corpora. The tools used to undertake these tasks are word frequency, keyword lists, concordances or collocation (see also Sinclair, 1991; Hunston, 2002; Baker, 2006).

These tools will be employed to identify and describe instances of MMs occurring in the research corpora of ambassadorial speeches. The tool of concord provides statistical data on MMs coded when searching the ambassadorial speeches. (In fact, as I mentioned above I did the coding of MMs manually throughout the 70 American ambassadorial speeches and 72 British ambassadorial speeches.) The tool of concord is used to confirm the data coded. Data on MMs collected are used for quantitative analyses of MMs in the two research corpora and identify contexts in which particular MMs occur for the qualitative analyses of selected utterances to indicate politeness strategies in British and American ambassadorial speeches.

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<sup>(14)</sup> I am grateful to my Director of studies, Professor Jonathan Charteris-Black for instructing me how to use WordSmith tools and W-matrix software; and Professor Jeanine Treffers-Daller for the use of CHAT and CLAN.



## CHAPTER 5: DEONTIC MODALITY MARKERS

### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter is an investigation into deontic MMs via the method of corpus-based research in which different naturally occurring tokens of MMs in the deontic sense collected from the research corpora are considered and characterised. Distributions and frequencies of MMs occurring in ambassadorial speeches are analysed in terms of subcategories of deontic modality. Deontic MMs are expressions of modality showing the obligation or permission for the act presented in an utterance to be performed. In other words, deontic MMs indicate the speaker's interest in the performance of actions such as obligations, commands, and permission. Deontic modality (see 2.4.1.2) is basically performative since it is concerned with the performance of an action by the speaker her/himself or by others.

This chapter contains the discussion of major deontic modality meanings relating to the speaker's intention in imposing an obligation, giving or declining permission, and making a demand which are all treated as subcategories of deontic modality. It has been observed in the research corpora that each of the MMs conveys a diversity of meanings and in turn each subcategory of modality is indicated by a range of MMs. The subcategories of deontic modality are semantically analysed in the following sections in terms of obligation, permission and command.

### 5.2 Deontic modality markers of obligation

#### 5.2.1 Deontic *must*

The modal *must* is basically used to express two meanings in terms of *Obligation* and *Logical Necessity*.

Table 5.1: Distribution of the modal *must* in the research corpora

	<b>Deontic <i>Must</i></b>	<b>Epistemic <i>Must</i></b>	<b>Total</b>
The AAC	81 (87%)	12 (13%)	93 (100%)
The BAC	151 (89%)	17 (11%)	168 (100%)
Log likelihood	21.11	0.84	21.49

The former is an example of deontic modality since it expresses an obligation or responsibility imposed on an agent. The latter is characterised as epistemic modality because

it conveys the sense of a conclusion or an inference that something is certain (or very likely) based on evidence derived from the context of the utterance by the speaker (see 7.2.1).

As shown in Table 5.1, the majority of instances of *must* collected from the research corpora of ambassadorial speeches are in the deontic sense of obligation, accounting for 87% of *must* in the AAC and 89% in the BAC. Observations of these instances of deontic *must* indicate that different levels of obligation are not simply expressed by the sense of *must* itself, but by its co-occurrence with other linguistic elements in the utterance. Normally, the speaker's involvement in the performance of the action uttered indicates the weight of obligation. Patterns of deontic *must* co-occurring with other linguistic features collected from the research corpora have been investigated and characterised in eight subcategories of *must obligation* as shown in Table 5.2 below.

Table 5.2: Subcategories of *must* obligation<sup>(15)</sup> in the research corpora

	<b>Subcategory of <i>must</i> obligation</b>	<b>AAC</b>	<b>BAC</b>	<b>Total</b>	Log likelihood
1	Exhortative obligation	19 (23.46%)	55 (36.43%)	74 (31.89%)	18.10
2	Objective obligation	19 (23.46%)	31 (20.53%)	50 (21.55%)	2.85
3	Specific obligation	20 (24.69%)	17 (11.26%)	37 (15.95%)	0.26
4	General obligation	14 (17.29%)	17 (11.26%)	31 (13.35%)	0.28
5	Non-performative obligation	7 (8.64%)	19 (12.58%)	26 (11.23%)	5.69
6	Non-agentive obligation	0 (0%)	10 (6.62%)	10 (4.30%)	13.81
7	Performative obligation	1 (1.23%)	2 (1.32%)	3 (1.29%)	0.33
8	Subjective obligation	1 (1.23%)	0 (0.00%)	1 (0.44%)	1.39
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>81 (100%)</b>	<b>151 (100%)</b>	<b>232 (100%)</b>	<b>21.11</b>

It can be seen in Table 5.2 that instances of *must* obligation collected from the BAC are nearly double those from the AAC, accounting for 151 compared with 81, respectively. This

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<sup>(15)</sup> See also Coates (1983: 32-46)

situation almost stays the same throughout the individual subcategories of *must obligation* found in the research corpora, except for that of *specific obligation*. This seems to indicate that British ambassadors use this deontic modal more frequently and they are also more diverse in their strategies of conveying the sense of obligation to hearers than American ambassadors are (see 9.3.5). The subcategories of *must obligation* are arranged in the sequence of frequency (as shown in Table 5.2) with instances of *exhortative obligation* as the most frequent and those of *subjective obligation* as the least frequent as analysed in the following sections.

### 5.2.1.1 Exhortative obligation

Exhortative obligation is a subcategory of deontic modality normally expressed via the use of first person plural subject ‘*we*’ combined with deontic *must*. The pattern ‘*we must*’ is identified as conveying the sense of exhortative obligation since with the *we* pronoun inclusively used, this pattern includes both the speaker (*I*) and hearers (understood as ‘*you*’) in the responsibility for performing the act uttered. That is to say the pattern ‘*we must*’ is used as the speaker’s avoidance of imposing an obligation directly on hearers. (It is actually used as a replacement for the pattern ‘*you must*’.) In other words, the pattern ‘*we must*’ can be seen as the speaker’s strategic way of hearer-orientation and at the same time mitigating the force of imposition on hearers. Moreover, with the use of inclusive *we* in this pattern of obligation, the speaker shows his solidarity with hearers as an exhortation rather than an obligation. Exhortative obligation is the way the speaker urges her/himself and hearers to perform the action involved in the utterance (but actually reminds hearers of their responsibility) as seen in the following excerpts:

[20] **We must** find ways to eliminate it and **we must** ensure that no child living with HIV/AIDS suffers from it. [A03M]

[21] ***I***, like many people, experienced the flooding in Hanoi. This follows other floods in the North of Vietnam in the past couple of months. **We must** ask whether this is a result of climate change. [B02F]

[22] Given this knowledge, **we must** envisage a future when wars are fought not for land, but for water. [B04G]

In the case of expressing prohibition with the use of the negative form of *must not* (or *mustn’t*), the situation of using inclusive *we* has no difference as in [23] below.

[23] ***We must not*** accept traffic injury as an unavoidable consequence of economic development. [A03V]

As shown in Table 5.2, *must* in the sense of *exhortative obligation* has the highest proportion of the total instances of *must obligation* collected in the research corpora, at 31.89% (nearly one third while the remaining instances are distributed in the other 7 subcategories). The highest frequency of the pattern *we must* expressing exhortative obligation indicates that the ambassadors are cautious and reserved in expressing the sense of obligation in their speech delivering.

As seen in the excerpts above, although the sense of obligation is intrinsically imposed on hearers, with the use of inclusive *we* the speaker can mitigate the attitude of imposing obligation. (This may be considered as the reason for the infrequency of the pattern *you must*, with only one instance found in the AAC, as analysed in 5.2.1.8 below). In addition, a higher frequency of the pattern *we must* found in the BAC than in the AAC, accounting for 55 instances (at 36.43%) compared with 19 instances (at 23.46%) respectively, indicates that the British ambassadors are more reserved and cautious than the American ambassadors through the use of inclusive *we* combined with deontic *must* to mitigate the attitude of imposing an obligation on hearers.

#### **5.2.1.2 Objective obligation**

Basically, deontic *must* expressing the sense of strong obligation potentially contains FTAs when being used in interaction. Therefore, in ambassadorial speech delivery the speaker may use other linguistic features combined with deontic *must* to mitigate its illocutionary force making it more objective and less imposed. As observed in the research corpora, patterns of deontic *must* used in passive structures or combined with impersonal subjects occur frequently to convey the sense of objective obligation as analysed below.

##### **(i) In passive structures:**

When used in passive structures, the force of *must* obligation is attenuated because there is no overt subject for the obligation to be imposed on. In other words with the use of *must* in passive structures, the speaker intentionally addresses an unspecified active subject to avoid the direct impact of an obligation on hearers as in [24] and [25] below.

[24] In addition, *Vietnam's national savings rate*, at just over 20 percent in 1998, is among the lowest in East Asia and *must be raised* to fund much needed public investment. [A01B]

[25] First, we know that for any *peace process* to work, *it* *must be nationally owned and led*. [B03F]

We cannot see who is overtly responsible for the act of raising *Vietnam's national savings rate* as in [24], or owning and leading the *peace process* as in [25]. The message to the hearer in the utterance is that it is an objective obligation for the act presented to be performed. As such, it can be argued that deontic *must* used in the passive structure conveys the sense of objective obligation which mitigates the force of imposition on hearers.

(ii) With the *we* pronoun as an impersonal subject:

The *we* pronoun as discussed in 5.2.1.1 is used inclusively to involve both the speaker and hearers in the performance of the act uttered. Essentially, the boundaries between objective and exhortative obligation are fuzzy. However, as observed in samples of ambassadorial speeches, there are situations in which the *we* pronoun is used as an impersonal subject to indicate *people, human beings* or as an indefinite pronoun like *ones* or *everybody*. In such cases the pattern *we must* conveys the sense of objective obligation for the performance of the act uttered as in the following excerpts:

[26] *We must* do an even better job protecting the lives of our families and other citizens. [A03V]

[27] So in tackling climate change, *we must* ‘think global act local’. *We must* ‘think global act regional’. [B04O]

Although it is not very clearly distinguished from exhortative obligation (see 5.2.1.1), the pattern *we must* in the excerpts above can be interpreted as conveying the sense of objective obligation since there is no overt agent responsible for the performance of the act uttered. With the use of this pattern, the speaker just implies an appeal to the addressee as a moral or a necessity for a community to perform the act uttered without any overt subjects.

(iii) With impersonal subject ‘*It*’:

The impersonal subject *It* is also used with deontic *must* to convey the sense of objective obligation since there is no specific subject responsible for performing the act uttered as in the following excerpts:

[28] To do all this, it needs a transparent, predictable business climate based on the rule of law, and *it must* move decisively from a centrally planned to a market economy. [A01B]

[29] Increased trade alone will not lift millions out of poverty – *it must* be accompanied by peace and security, by appropriate economic policies, good governance, investment in health and education. [B04A]

With the use of the impersonal subject *it* the sense of obligation in excerpts [28] and [29] can be understood as being imposed on an unspecified agent. However, it is implicitly intended to impose on hearers. Deontic *must* combined with impersonal *it* can be seen as a formal way of expressing obligation.

As shown in Table 5.2, *must* of *objective obligation* is the second most frequently-used among the subcategories of *must obligation*, at 21.55%. It is more interesting to see that instances of *objective obligation* occur with a higher frequency than that of *subjective obligation* (see 5.2.1.8), accounting for 50 instances (at 21.55%) compared with only 1 instance (at 0.44%), respectively. It can be explained that in samples of ambassadorial speeches, patterns of objective obligation are preferred because they are used as markers of mitigating the sense of obligation while subjective obligation is strong.

In sum, objective obligation is expressed in conditions when the speaker attempts to impose an obligation on no overt subject (but implies the hearer's responsibility) paraphrased as it is objectively obligatory for the act uttered to be performed.

### 5.2.1.3 Specific obligation

There are other instances of deontic *must* combined with third person subjects found in the research corpora but characterised as expressing a sense of a specific rather than general obligation. The difference is that the third person subjects found in these patterns are specific. Although the speaker uses a specific third person subject, this is one of the ways the speaker avoids displaying authority over the addressee (see Coates, 1983: 33-7). Actually, the specific third person subject is used as a metonym for the other addressee as analysed below.

[30] *Vietnam must* invest in the infrastructure improvements that foreign investors demand, while also protecting this beautiful country's environment. [A03I]

[31] *Vietnam must* create a financial system that allows capital to flow to those who will manage it effectively. [A03J]

[32] ***Vietnam must*** improve the quality of its economic governance. [B01G]

As seen in the excerpts above, with the pattern ‘*Vietnam must...*’ the speaker does not intend (or has no authority) to impose an obligation on the subject ‘*Vietnam*’. In other words, although the subject ‘*Vietnam*’ is specific, it is actually used as a metonym for *the Vietnamese Government*. With this strategy the speaker can avoid displaying authority over the addressee (*the Vietnamese Government*) but at the same time convey the sense of obligation. This is considered one of the speaker’s politeness strategies when imposing an obligation on others (see chapter 8 for discussions on specific politeness strategies using MMs).

Instances of deontic *must* occurring in patterns of *specific obligation* as such are found with the highest frequency in the AAC, accounting for 20 instances (at 24.69%). In the BAC the raw count of deontic *must* in patterns of specific obligation is 17 instances (at 11.26%). Such statistical data are obviously not adequate for any conclusion to be withdrawn (and it is also too early for conclusions to be discussed in this section) but from the subcategories of *must* obligation as discussed above it can be argued that the American ambassadors seem to be more specific and straightforward while the British ambassadors appear to be more cautious and reserved through the use of patterns expressing general and objective obligation. (These will be discussed in chapter 9 in the comparison of ambassadors’ politeness strategies.)

#### **5.2.1.4 General obligation**

The pattern of deontic *must* combined with a third person inanimate subject is identified as conveying the sense of general obligation. This pattern of *must* obligation is general in that the speaker intentionally avoids aiming at hearers and tries to minimise the impression of imposing an obligation. Although the third person subject is inanimate and makes no imposition on anyone making the sense of obligation general, it is implicitly imposed on hearers for the performance of the act uttered as shown in the following excerpts:

[33] To achieve the first goal, ***the international community must*** keep in place firm, focused controls to prevent Baghdad from re-establishing its conventional, ballistic missile, nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons programs. [A02B]

[34] Secondly, ***the international community must*** ensure that we provide aid in order that developing countries can invest in the capacity necessary to grow. [B04J]

As seen in the examples above, the subject ‘*the international community*’ is general and does not specify any specific agent responsible for performing the action presented but it is intended to involve all hearers’ responsibility for the performance of the act uttered making the sense of obligation general. Observations of deontic *must* occurring in the pattern of general obligation show that their difference in frequency use is not very large, accounting for 14 instances (at 17.29%) in the AAC and 17 instances (at 11.26%) in the BAC.

### 5.2.1.5 Non-performative obligation

When deontic *must* is combined with a non-agentive or stative verb, the pattern is characterised as conveying the sense of non-performative obligation. This is because the subject of the utterance is not the one who performs the act presented. Data collected from the research corpora also show that the subject combined with this pattern of *must* obligation is an inanimate third person. Non-performative obligation is also characterised as non-subjective (Palmer, 1990) since there is no sense of the speaker’s involvement and the obligation is imposed on no overt agent as shown in the following excerpts:

[35] As economic growth is the single most important factor affecting poverty reduction, it’s clear that *investment must be* a central factor in Vietnam accomplishing its development goals. [A02E]

[36] *Our first priority must be* to agree a global limit for greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. [B04G]

In [35] and [36], the sense of obligation is not clearly imposed and neither is a specified active agent for the performance of the action involved. With the use of third person subject followed by a stative verb the speaker intentionally avoids a direct imposition of obligation by hiding the performer of the act uttered. This type of meaning as claimed in Palmer (1990: 113) conveys a neutral sense of dynamic necessity, although the writer admits that “there is no clear dividing line between the two meanings”. The pattern of non-performative obligation can be seen as a formal way of stating a task paraphrased as *it is necessary for the action involved to be performed*. Thus, it can be understood as the speaker’s suggestion rather than obligation as in the following excerpt:

[37] Due to deepening poverty as well as stigma and discrimination, these children may have inadequate access to health care and may be excluded from education and



other social opportunities critical to their healthy development. ***This must*** change.  
[A03M]

Patterns of non-performative obligation collected from the research corpora accounting for 7 instances in the AAC (at 8.64%) compared with 19 instances in the BAC (at 12.58%) also indicate that the British ambassadors appear to be more reserved and cautious than the American ambassadors in expressing obligation.

#### **5.2.1.6 Non-agentive obligation**

The sense of non-agentive obligation is identified in the pattern of deontic *must* combined with an inanimate third person subject. The agent responsible for the performance of the act presented in the utterance is normally hidden. The pattern of non-agentive obligation can be interpreted as it is obligatory for the event uttered to be performed. The speaker uses non-agentive obligation to avoid the attitude of imposing a direct obligation on hearers as in the following excerpts:

[38] Any deal ***must*** find a way of reducing greenhouse gas emissions that is fair and equitable. [B04O]

[39] Yet this recognition ***must*** lead to action, rather than despair. [B04G]

Deontic *must* combined with inanimate third person subjects as in [38] and [39] are identified as conveying the sense of non-agentive obligation since there is no agent referred to as the doer of the action uttered. The pattern of non-agentive obligation is used to express the sense that it is necessary for the related action to be performed. Patterns of non-agentive obligation are preferred in the BAC with 10 instances found (at 6.62%) whereas none was found in the AAC.

#### **5.2.1.7 Performative obligation**

The sense of performative obligation is identified in patterns of deontic *must* combined with performative verbs such as *admit*, *say*, *confess*, and *warn*. This pattern is normally used to emphasize the speaker's firm commitment to the content of the proposition presented as in the following excerpts:

[40] ***I must admit that*** I am stealing an idea of my former boss in Beijing, Ambassador Sandy Randt, who has convened similar meetings there for the past several years.  
[A03D]

[41] ***I must say that*** you are doing better than us in exporting. [B01I]

The pattern of performative obligation combined with the *I* pronoun is used to show the speaker's commitment to the event presented in the complement clauses of the utterance. This pattern indicates the speaker's imposition of an obligation on himself to perform the action uttered. '*I must say*' is meant to affirm '*I say*' in order to send a strong commitment to hearers. In other words, although the speaker imposes an obligation on himself, the pattern of performative obligation is actually used to express his commitment. The infrequency of this pattern of *must* obligation, with only 1 instance found in the AAC (at 1.23%) and 2 instances (at 1.32%) in the BAC may indicate that for the subtle nuance of ambassadorial speeches, the speakers are not interested in the use of the *I* pronoun with patterns of *must* obligation in their speech delivery. This can be explained as being unwise to admit or affirm strong commitment in such a way. Therefore, the speaker employs other pronouns to avoid the sense of strong commitment.

#### 5.2.1.8 Subjective obligation

Deontic *must* is characterised as expressing the sense of subjective obligation when the context of the utterance indicates the speaker's involvement in imposing an obligation on the addressee. The feature of subjectivity (see 2.5.2) can be seen to strengthen the sense of obligation in that it is the speaker who imposes an obligation on the hearer to perform the action presented through the use of the *you* pronoun. Subjective obligation is strong and commonly expressed through the pattern '*you must...*' followed by an agentive verb. Patterns of subjective obligation '*you must...*' as observed in the research corpora are rare, accounting for only 1 out of 81 in the AAC (at 1.23%) and none in the BAC. The only instance of '*you must...*' found in the AAC is illustrated in the excerpt below.

[42] ***You must*** strengthen it at every opportunity in every aspect, and that's what we're trying to do. [A03Y]

As seen in [42] with the pattern '*you must*', although the *you* pronoun is generic, it still expresses the sense of strong obligation that the speaker imposes on the hearer(s) for the performance of the action presented. In the BAC, one instance of *must* as strong obligation was found but it is identified as non-subjective (see 5.2.1.5) as we cannot see the speaker's involvement in imposing an obligation as in [43] below.

[43] There is no British government order to say that I or any other Ambassador ***must*** do this. [B02I]

As shown in Table 5.2, subjective obligation is the least frequent among the subcategories of *must obligation* found in the research corpora. The infrequency of patterns conveying the sense of subjective obligation reveals that this sense of deontic *must* may not be of interest (if not an avoidance) in the ambassadorial speeches, accounting for only 0.44% of all instances of *must obligation* found in the research corpora. This can be explained by stating that in ambassadorial speeches the speaker intentionally avoids giving an order or showing his authority over the addressee(s). It is also for this reason that the ambassadors turn to other ways to attenuate the sense of obligation and make less of an imposition on hearers (as presented in the other subcategories above).

## 5.2.2 Deontic *should* obligation

### 5.2.2.1 *Should* subjective obligation

Although deontic *should* also conveys the sense of obligation, it is somewhat different from that of *must*. With the *must* of subjective obligation, the speaker’s intention is to impose a command on the subject of the utterance to perform an action. Deontic *must* is strong in that the speaker expects the command to be obeyed. With *should* obligation, the speaker’s implication can be interpreted as a suggestion for the event to be performed rather than to give an order to the hearers. Therefore, *should* in the deontic sense of obligation is weaker than that of *must* and can be interpreted as ‘*It is a good idea to...*’ as illustrated in the following excerpts:

[44] ***You should*** also know that there were numerous (approximately 60) private and public strikes during the year, primarily against foreign-owned or joint venture companies, but a number also involved state-owned and private firms. [A01D]

[45] Vietnam is moving forward in the right direction, and many experts think that it is building a firm grounding for strong development. However, ***you should*** “run” even faster. [B01O]

Table 5.3: Distribution of modality meanings of *should* in the research corpora

	Subjective obligation	Objective obligation	Quasi-subjunctive obligation	Epistemic probability	Total
The AAC	15 (23.80%)	18 (28.57%)	19 (30.17%)	11(17.46%)	63 (100%)
The BAC	34 (25.95%)	43 (32.83%)	42 (32.06%)	12 (9.16%)	131 (100%)
Log Likhd	7.47	10.43	8.78	0.04	24.01

Although *should* in these cases conveys the sense of subjective obligation, it is actually not as strong as that of *must*. In the excerpts above, *should* co-occurs with the second person subject to mean that ‘*it is your duty to...*’. Consequently, it can be argued that *should* is normally used to express the meaning of moral obligation or that the speaker thinks it is good idea to perform the action. The sense of obligation is stronger when *should* is combined with a second person subject which is more subjective than combined with a third person subject which is more objective (see 5.2.2.2).

In addition, in its co-occurrence with first person subjects, *should* also conveys the speaker’s attitude of showing subjective obligation as in the following excerpts:

[46] ***We should*** do all we can to support those who favor economic liberalization. [A01B]

[47] ***I should*** add that the reputation of British firms has been helped by the solid performance, high-quality management and far-sighted professional development initiatives of current British players in the Vietnamese market. [B01K]

In [46] *should* is combined with the first person plural subject ‘*we*’ to indicate the meaning of moral (or exhortative) obligation paraphrased as ‘*it is essential to...*’. In [47] the speaker uses first person singular subject ‘*I*’ to show his/her recommendation as ‘*it would be a good idea to...*’ but still maintains the sense of performative obligation.

Another way of showing the speaker’s emphasis of obligation is in the use of intonation in speech delivering. For instance, the rising tone is not simply used to express a question but a rhetorical question to indicate the speaker’s implication of putting her/himself in the role of the addressee to appeal for the performance of the act uttered as in the following excerpts:

[48] Once an entrepreneur has developed a new product, often at considerable risk and expense, ***should*** the legal system not protect his rights to that intellectual property? [A03K]

[49] In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, ***should*** strength not be measured by what we can build together? [B04D]

As seen in examples [48] and [49] above, the rising tone is not just related to it being a question but it is interpreted as the interaction of intonation with the modal form to determine the strength of obligation. However, this is just a single account for the usage of intonation, for as Perkins (1983: 113) claims “the whole issues of the range of modal attitudes which intonation may be used to express is extremely complex”. Therefore, with the restriction in

the scale of this thesis, intonation is just partially mentioned as a message of the speaker's appeal for the addressee as mild obligation. As observed in the research corpora, *should* as subjective obligation is found with a higher frequency in the BAC than in the AAC, accounting for 34 out of 131 instances of *should* in the BAC, at 25.95% compared with 15 out of 63 instances of *should* in the AAC, at 23.80% (see Table 5.3). The frequency use of *should* subjective obligation is higher than that of *must* (see 5.2.1.8). It could be explained by stating that the speaker may find it easier to convey the sense of subjective obligation through the use of deontic *should* rather than the deontic *must* of strong obligation.

### 5.2.2.2 *Should* objective obligation

As presented in the *must* of objective obligation, there are syntactic features that make the meaning of obligation objective and less strong. For instance, with the use of other subjects rather than the *you* pronoun, the speaker's purpose is to avoid addressing hearers directly. There are also other syntactic features combined with deontic *should* to convey the sense of objective obligation as follows:

(1) The passive structure makes the attitude of obligation become weaker as there is no overt subject indicated as being responsible for the performance of the action presented.

[50] The poorest countries ***should be allowed*** to maintain tariff protection on products that are important to food security, rural development and livelihoods. [B04A]

The speaker avoids a direct imposition to make the sense of obligation objective as in [50] we cannot see who will be responsible for *allowing the poorest countries to maintain tariff protection on products*.

(2) The speaker may use a third person subject referring to a general agent to avoid a direct imposition on hearers as in [51].

[51] ***Vietnam should*** develop and expand its commercial banking system, not its postal savings system. [A03H]

As seen in [51] the pattern *Vietnam should* conveys a weaker and less direct sense of obligation than *you should* and thus makes it objective.

(3) The impersonal subject '*It*' weakens the sense of *should* obligation as in [52].

[52] ***It should*** be no surprise therefore that a recent Gallup poll found that 8 out of 10 global citizens want to live in democracies. [B03I]

(4) Indefinite pronouns combined with *should* to make the sense of obligation more objective and less strong as in the following examples:

[53] We believe that *everyone should* have the right to freely express their political views. [A04B]

[54] Not everyone agrees that we need a target, but I find it hard to see how *anyone should* disagree with a target that will challenge us to reduce the needless killing of innocent people. [B03D]

With the use of indefinite pronouns combined with *should* as in the excerpts above, the speaker would convey the deontic sense of mild obligation paraphrased as ‘*it would be a good idea to...*’.

In the research corpora, it is interesting to find that instances of *should* occurring in such patterns of objective obligation are higher in the BAC than in the AAC, accounting for 43 out of 131 instances at 32.82%, compared with 18 out of 63 instances at 28.57% (see Table 5.3). It can be inferred from such frequency comparisons that the British ambassadors are more objective than the American ambassadors in conveying a sense of obligation.

### 5.2.2.3 Quasi-subjunctive *should* weak obligation

As discussed with in deontic *must*, the sense of obligation is not determined by the deontic modal itself but in the co-occurrence of the modal verb and other elements in the syntactic structure of the utterance. Instances of *should* obligation collected from the research corpora show that the modal *should* in its deontic sense of obligation is often oriented by a comment clause preceding it. In other words the modal is embedded in another construction as in the following examples:

[55] It is important that *we should* work together to overcome these problems with as little social fallout and market disruption as possible in both Vietnam and the EU. [B01E].

[56] And so today it is right that *we should* acknowledge what everyone in this room has already achieved [A03C].

*Should* in [55] and [56] is identified as a quasi-subjunctive as it is embedded in a *that*-clause to indicate the speaker’s attitude or orientation towards levels of deontic sense presented in the complement clause. The *that*-clause normally includes a certain adjective,

noun or verb indicating the speaker's attitude towards the deontic sense presented by *should* in the complement clause as analysed in the following frames:

**(1) *It + be + Adj + complement clause (that-clause):***

The comment clause in this frame with the impersonal subject '*It*' combined with the auxiliary '*Be*' and a predicative adjective shows the speaker's view towards the importance, necessity, and righteousness for the performance of the event presented in the complement clause as in the excerpts below.

[57] Trade is vital; that is why *it is so important that* Vietnam *should* join the World Trade Organisation. [B01A]

[58] *It is only right that* Vietnam *should* turn to its international partners for help in these areas. [B01P]

In [57] the emphasis on the necessity for *Vietnam to join the World Trade Organisation* is not just expressed in the deontic sense of *should* but it is also intensified through the comment clause '*it is so important that*'. Likewise, in [58] '*It is only right that*' emphasises the necessity for *Vietnam to turn to its international partners...* and at the same time makes deontic *should* a quasi-subjunctive of weak obligation.

**(2) *It + Be + Noun phrase + complement clause (that-clause):***

In this pattern the subject of the comment clause is also the impersonal *It* but the emphasis is on an issue represented by a noun phrase. It is the emphasis on this issue that leads to the suggestion on the performance of the event presented in the proposition as in the following excerpt.

[59] *It is also one of our principles that* journalists *should* be free to report without fear of violence or repression. [B02C]

In [59] the speaker emphasises principles that he relies on in his suggestion for journalists to *be free to report without fear of violence or repression*.

It is interesting that examples of the two frames above are only found only in the BAC and none in the AAC. This supports the argument (presented in 5.2.1.4) that the American ambassadors are more specific and straightforward. Conversely, the British ambassadors use comment clauses more frequently which indicates that they are more reserved and cautious in expressing a sense of obligation in their speeches.

(3) *The comment clause with first person subject followed by a lexical verb* indicates the speaker's view towards the *should* obligation for the performance of the event presented in the complement clause as in the following excerpts:

[60] *I would suggest that* the reform process *should* address accountability of the Bank itself. [B04P]

[61] *We believe that* the internet *should* be completely free and open and you should be able to go to any site that you want to. [A04B]

It can be seen in [60] and [61] that the structure of the comment clause that determines the use of deontic *should* in the complement clause is a quasi-subjunctive modal of weak obligation. Such patterns of MMs are identified as “embedded modality” (Gabrielatos, 2010: 82) in which a modalised statement is embedded in a modal expression (*‘we believe’*).

In sum, modal expressions in patterns of embedded modality are used to show the speaker's formal attitude and interest in the performance of the event presented (see also 7.3.1 and 7.3.2). Instances of Quasi-subjunctive *should* weak obligation occur in rather similar frequencies to those of objective obligation, accounting for 42 out of 131 in the BAC, at 32.06% compared with 19 out of 63 instances in the AAC, at 30.17% (see Table 5.3).

### 5.2.3 Ought to obligation

The modal *ought to* is used to convey the sense of both deontic and epistemic modality in which the former expresses weak obligation and the latter for drawing an inference. In this section *ought to* in its deontic sense of weak obligation is discussed. *Ought to* as weak obligation is quite similar to that of *should* obligation and “this view of closeness appears to be shared by most linguists” (Perkins, 1983: 55). Palmer (1986) also states that *ought to* and *should* are associated with weak obligation. However, this does not mean there is no need to identify the difference between the deontic sense of these two modal verb forms.

Although these two modal verbs are almost similar in expressing weak obligation, *ought to* is less frequently used. It is also the most infrequent in the distribution of the modal verbs as observed in the corpora of this research, with only 4 instances in the AAC and none in the BAC (see Appendix 3). It could be claimed that the sense of *ought to* seems to come within the suggestion/advice use of *should*<sup>(16)</sup> and the obligation use of *must* (see also Palmer, 1990).

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<sup>(16)</sup> Palmer (1990: 122) also states that “*should* is more common than *Ought to*”.



*Ought to*, on the one hand is close to *should* in the sense of advice or suggestion which can be paraphrased as ‘*It is a good idea to...*’. On the other hand, it can be used to express the sense of strong obligation as that of deontic *must* which can be paraphrased as ‘*It is necessary/obligatory that...*’. Then to some extent it can be seen as a combination of the other two modal verbs. The following excerpts are illustrations of very few instances of *ought to* found in the AAC.

[62] We also believe that there ***ought to*** be program activity to strengthen rule of law and good governance in Vietnam. [A03Y]

[63] Maybe it's something we ***ought to*** raise with the Vietnamese. [A02I]

In [62] *ought to* is combined with the impersonal subject ‘*there*’ to express the sense of objective necessity. However, when combined with the *we* pronoun, as in [63], the pattern indicates the subjective necessity involving the speaker and hearers in performing the action presented. To summarise, the combination of *ought to* with an impersonal subject or the *we* pronoun forms the pattern expressing the deontic sense of weak obligation.

#### **5.2.4 Need to obligation**

Although *need to* is closely related to *must* and *have to* in expressing the deontic sense of obligation, it differs pragmatically from these two deontic modal verb forms. *Must* and *have to* are distinctive in terms of the speaker’s involvement. That is to say *must* involves the speaker’s authority over the subject of the utterance (see 5.2.1) while with the use of *have to* (see 5.2.5), “the speaker is disassociating himself from the obligation” (Palmer, 1986: 103). *Need to* “indicates a compulsion which comes from within” (Perkins 1983: 62). In other words *need to* is similar to *have to* (see below) in expressing an obligation for the event to be performed but the source of obligation is out of the speaker’s control. The speaker just shows that he is interested in the performance of the action presented rather than imposing an obligation on hearers as in the following excerpts:

[64] Now, ***we need to*** use these openings to build a deeper, more productive working relationship. I am confident that, over time, Vietnamese law enforcement officials will see the merits of working with us. [A03C]

[65] And ***we need to*** ensure that rich countries do not misuse protection for so-called “sensitive products” to continue to exclude developing country goods. [B04A]

Instances of *need to* collected from samples of ambassadorial speeches reveal that the circumstance of the utterance makes it necessary for the performance of the action presented. In its combination with the *we* pronoun *need to* conveys the sense of an appeal to hearers and with the *you* pronoun a request. As observed in the research corpora, a higher frequency of the former than the latter were found (see Table 9.11). In the AAC the frequency of ‘*We need to*’ accounts for 49.76 of the instances per 100,000 words compared with the such a frequency of ‘*you need to*’ at 3.82 instances per 100,000 words. Interestingly, in the BAC the frequencies of these two patterns are extremely different, with 94.28 instances of ‘*we need to*’ per 100,000 words whereas that of ‘*you need to*’ is only 0.95. It could be argued that in ambassadorial speech delivery the *we* pronoun is of more interest than the *you* pronoun in combination with deontic expressions. The higher frequency use of these patterns in the BAC than in the AAC also supports the claim that the British ambassadors are more reserved and cautious than the American ambassadors in expressing obligation (as discussed in 5.2.1.2 and 5.2.2.3).

In addition, the discussion of *need* obligation would become inadequate without any illustration of the token of *need* as a noun. This obligation marker is also found with a higher frequency in the BAC than in the AAC, accounting for 27 instances (at 25.71 per 100,000 words) and 15 instances (at 14.35 per 100,000 words), respectively. The meaning of obligation indicated in the use of *need* as a noun is similar to that of a verb, although it conveys a more objective sense of obligation. *Need* as a noun is normally used in the pattern ‘*There is a need that/to...*’ as in the following excerpts:

[66] Obviously **there is a need** to make the information that’s contained in the Vietnamese media available in English, otherwise your leadership is going to be very limited. [A03Y]

[67] Because population growth continues around and downstream from these areas, **there is a need** to address the potential human exposure to dioxin in those areas. [A03Q]

The pattern of ‘*There is a need that/to...*’ is more objective than the pattern of ‘*We need...*’ in that the speaker does not commit himself to the obligation for the performance of the event presented while with the use of inclusive *we*, the implication is in both the speaker’s and hearers’ responsibility for the performance of the act uttered.

### 5.2.5 *Have to* obligation

*Have to* obligation is different from *must* obligation in that *must* expresses the sense of strong obligation involving the speaker’s authority over the subject of the utterance (see 5.2.1) whereas *have to* conveys the sense of mild obligation (or necessity). That is to say it involves the subject of the utterance in the necessity for the event presented to occur. It can be seen that *have to* is normally used to express necessity in a general sense, i.e., rules, and regulations. Moreover, it can be seen as a way to attenuate the sense of strong obligation imposed on hearers as expressed by deontic *must*. As a result *have to* is identified as a marker of the speaker’s avoidance of authority over the addressee and a mitigation marker expressing the sense of obligation as more subject-oriented as shown in the following excerpts:

[68] **You have to** let the information in, **you have to** trust your people to be able to decipher what is good information for them and what is not. [A03Y]

[69] I would argue that **we have to** simultaneously be fighting to end poverty, to secure trade justice, and to tackle conflict and climate change as well as working to defeat terrorism and ensure the preservation of our security. [B04D]

The distribution of *have to* in samples of ambassadorial speeches is in the same vein as that of deontic *must*. (As shown in 5.2.1 there are more instances of objective than subjective *must* obligation found in the datasets.) There are very few instances of the *I* pronoun co-occurring with *have to*. Interestingly, more instances of ‘*we*’ than ‘*you*’ were found to co-occur with *have to*. This accounts for the ambassadors’ attitude in their preference of objective and exhortative to subjective obligation as shown in Table 5.4.

Table 5.4: Distribution of pronouns combined with *have to* in the research corpora

	AAC	BAC	Total	Log likelihood
First person singular ‘I’	2 (1.18%)	2 (1.05%)	4 (1.11%)	0.00
Second person ‘you’	40 (23.67%)	22 (11.52%)	62 (17.23%)	5.39
First person plural ‘We’	52 (30.77%)	72 (37.69%)	124 (34.44%)	3.14
Third persons	75 (44.38%)	95 (49.74%)	170 (47.22%)	2.26
Sub-total	169 (100%)	191 (100%)	360 (100%)	1.24

As shown in Table 5.4 of the distribution of pronouns combined with *have to* collected in the research corpora, the highest frequency is in the use of third person subjects, followed by the first person plural subject ‘*we*’ and second person ‘*you*’ while the first person singular subject ‘*I*’ has the lowest frequency in combination with *have to*. We can characterise the circumstance of obligation use by stating that whether the obligation meaning is strong or weak, subjective or objective depends on the subject combined with the obligation marker. Thus, it can be argued that in expressing obligation the second person subject is stronger than the first person subject and the first person plural subject is stronger than third person subject (cf. 5.2.1.2).

### 5.2.6 *Had better obligation*

Unlike other modal verb forms, *had better* is only used to convey the sense of deontic modality (Perkins, 1983). This type of quasi-auxiliary modal seems to be similar to *should* and *ought to* in expressing mild obligation. However, the deontic use of *had better* differs from those of the other two modal verbs in its sense of warning rather than obligation. That is to say *should* and *ought to* are used in the utterance with the speaker’s purpose of making a suggestion for the act presented to be performed. *Had better* implies a sense of more than just an advice, it indicates the speaker’s warning to hearers that without the performance of the event uttered, there would be unexpected consequences.

However, it is surprising that in searching the corpora no instance of *had better* (or ‘*d better*’) could be found. Perhaps because of the subtle nuances in ambassadorial speech delivering, the speakers are cautious in choosing expressions revealing their attitude in the language of diplomacy (see Kurbalija and Slavik, 2001) while this modality expression actually conveys the sense of serious warning which may cause FTAs. The following examples are taken from the few tokens of *had better* occurring in the BNC and the COCA spoken parts.

[70] Bright clear days when the Alps can be seen are rare, (and the more pleasurable for being so), and if you want such days you ***had better*** come in spring or autumn when the heat haze is reduced. [BNC]

[71] If a police officer orders you to do something, you ***had better*** do that until he tells you to do something different. [COCA]

In [70] the speaker's purpose is to warn hearer(s) that without coming '*in spring or autumn*' they would not have opportunities to see the Alps on 'bright clear days'. Example [71] can be paraphrased as '*the best selection is to do what the police officer orders you or else you will easily get into trouble*'. These are obviously understood as the speaker's warning to hearers of the performance of the consequence of the event presented. In sum, *had better* indicates the speaker's subjective concern with unpleasant consequences that may happen rather than pure advice as in *Should* or *Ought to*.

### 5.3 Deontic modality markers of permission

#### 5.3.1 *May* permission

In the domain of deontic modality a contradiction can be identified between the use of *must* and *may* in expressing *Obligation* and *Permission*. The distinction is that while *must* is used to impose obligation on the subject of the utterance (5.2.1), *may* is used to grant permission (or ask for permission) as in the following excerpts:

[72] And if I may even offer a personal opinion, and that is that America needs to watch its foreign affairs more closely. [A01C]

[73] May I begin, therefore, by welcoming you all to the wonderful surroundings of Lancaster House. [B01N]

Table 5.5: Distribution of *may* in the research corpora

	Epistemic possibility	Dynamic possibility	Permission	Aspiration	Total
The AAC	32 (66.68%)	11 (22.92%)	4 (8.32%)	1 (2.08%)	48 (100%)
The BAC	34 (57.63%)	17 (28.81%)	7 (11.86%)	1 (1.70%)	59 (100%)
Log likelihood	0.05	1.27	0.81	0.00	1.08

*May* permission can be paraphrased as '*X is allowed/permitted to...*' or '*X is granted the authority to...*'. The deontic source of *may* permission can be seen to come from (1) laws or morality, (2) the external circumstance, and (3) the speaker her/himself. Actually, observations of the ambassadorial speeches show very few tokens of *may* permission, only 4 out of 48 in the AAC (at 8.32%) and 7 out of 59 in the BAC (at 11.86%) as shown in Table 5.5. All instances of *may* permission found in samples of ambassadorial speeches are in the pattern of *may* combined with the '*I*' pronoun. As such, the pattern *May I* can be seen as expressing the ambassadors' attitude of modesty as politeness (see Chapters 8 and 9).

Example [72] can be interpreted as ‘*if I am allowed to...*’ and the interrogative form as in [73] can be paraphrased as ‘*Do you allow me to...*’ or ‘*Please allow me to...*’. No co-occurrence of second person subject ‘*you*’ with *may* permission was found in the ambassadorial speeches. The absence of the pattern ‘*you may*’ discloses the fact that the speaker avoids the attitude of displaying authority by granting permission to hearers. As we can see in the implication of ‘*you may*’, the deontic source is the speaker alone, thus ‘*you may*’ can be interpreted as ‘*I allow you to...*’. The avoidance of ‘*you may*’ can be considered as one of the ambassadors’ politeness strategies in their ambassadorial speeches (see chapter 8). In sum, it can be argued that *may permission* is speaker-oriented rather than hearer-oriented since the speaker would display his/her modesty in asking for permission using ‘*If I may...*’ or ‘*May I...*’. These are popular patterns of deontic *may* in its permission use, making it more formal than *can* permission (see 5.3.3).

### 5.3.2 *May aspiration*

Deontic *may* was also found in samples of ambassadorial speeches combined with first person subjects in the interrogative pattern as ‘*May I/we...*’. However, these patterns are not used to ask for permission but to express the sense of aspiration. That is to say the speaker uses such patterns to wish hearers kindness in the event uttered as in the following excerpts:

[74] ***May we*** continue to deepen our friendship! [A04J]

[75] ***May I*** wish our Scottish contingent a happy St Andrews Day tomorrow and to you all a happy Christmas and prosperous New Year. [B01P]

Examples like [74] may be characterised as expressing the sense of permission in which the deontic source is not overtly expressed. However, it is not possible to paraphrase this as ‘*Are we allowed to...*’ but it is better interpreted as ‘*Hopefully our friendship will continue to deepen!*’. In [75] the pattern *may I* combined with *wish* modifies its use of expressing the sense of an aspiration. *May* in the sense of aspiration is infrequently used in the research corpora, with only one instance found in the AAC and one in the BAC (Table 5.5). As such it can be claimed that *may* aspiration is not preferred in ambassadorial speeches.

### 5.3.3 *Can permission*

The modal *can* is essentially used to convey three modality meanings: *permission*, *possibility* and *ability*. Coates (1983) categorises these meanings as “root modality” including

both their deontic and dynamic meanings. The deontic sense of *can* permission is discussed as follow.

Deontic *can* is characterised as conveying the sense of permission when it is used in the following conditions: (1) the context of the utterance indicates the deontic source which allows the subject to perform the action presented; (2) the subject of the utterance is animated; and (3) the verb is agentive, as analysed in the following excerpts:

[76] I just wonder whether you can say anything about oil exploration in Vietnam.

[A04F]

[77] This extension will expand the amount of garments that can be sold in the United States by allowing companies to borrow from next year's quota. [A03B]

[78] We like to see a number of ways in which the people can have free and open participation in the affairs of the government. [B03J]

[79] But we hope that peaceful and mutually acceptable solutions are found and that people can peacefully express their views at all times. [B02C]

In the examples above the modal *can* expressing the sense of permission can be paraphrased as 'be allowed to'. It can be inferred from [76] that the secret of oil exploration in Vietnam is the source of authority and the paraphrase questions whether one is allowed to say anything about it. The context of [77] shows that with the extension of the garment quota the number of garments which are allowed to be sold in the United States will be expanded. The deontic source in [78] may come from the government and that of [79] from laws. As such, *can* is identified as conveying the deontic sense of permission when the utterance indicates the deontic source, i.e., authority, rules or regulations allowing the subject to perform the action presented.

Table 5.6: Distribution of *can* in the research corpora

	<b>Permission</b>	<b>Possibility</b>	<b>Command</b>	<b>Ability</b>	<b>Total</b>
The AAC	21 (8.34%)	183 (72.62%)	2 (0.79%)	46 (18.25%)	252 (100%)
The BAC	5 (1.25%)	362 (90.95%)	3 (0.75%)	28 (7.05%)	398 (100%)
Log likelihood	10.67	59.01	0.20	4.51	32.36

Table 5.6 shows the distribution of *can* in its deontic and dynamic uses in the two research corpora. It is clear that tokens of *can permission* are collected with quite small amounts in

both the AAC and the BAC, accounting for 21 instances (at 8.34%) and 5 instances (at 1.25%), respectively. It is also interesting to see that this is in line with the situation of *must* in the sense of strong obligation with very few tokens found in the research corpora (see 5.2.1.8). The explanation could be that the speaker would avoid the attitude of showing his authority (of granting permission) over the subject of the utterance to express politeness in the utterance.

Therefore, it is interesting to realise that *can* permission and *must* obligation have some characteristics in common. *Must* obligation has its deontic sense of ‘*imposing obligation*’ whereas *can* permission conveys the meaning of ‘*giving permission*’. Both of these modals indicate the speaker’s attitude of showing authority over the subject of the utterance and thus are rarely used in the ambassadors’ speeches especially in association with the second person subject ‘*you*’. The difference between the deontic senses of these two modals is that *must* obligation is subjective since the speaker is involved in the addressee’s performance of the action; whereas with *can* permission, the speaker merely believes that the addressee is *allowed/permitted* to perform the action presented.

In addition, there seems to be an overlap between *may* and *can* in the domain of permission which can be paraphrased as ‘*X is allowed/permitted to...*’. However, the difference found in these deontic meanings is in the levels of formality and ways of expressing permission. *May* is more formal and normally used to ask for permission whereas *can* is more informal and used to grant permission for an action to be performed. As Coates (1983: 106) claims:

MAY and CAN both express permission but they are not interchangeable. Where MAY is used either it signals formality, and CAN cannot be substituted for it without losing the formal marking, or it is used in fixed phrases where CAN cannot occur.

Actually, *can* appears to be easily substituted for *may* (the effect of formality will be downgraded though) as Palmer (1990: 71) claims “*may* is far more formal than *can*”. However, it is not possible for the reverse alternation to occur since the marking of formality and politeness will be deformed, especially when *may* is in fixed expressions.

With regard to the negative forms of these two modal verb forms, instances of *cannot* and *may not* collected from samples of ambassadorial speeches are actually not enough to prove



their difference. However, it can be argued that ‘cannot’ (or ‘can’t’) is impossible to substitute for ‘may not’ and vice versa. The reason is that the negative forms of modal verbs are polysemous. Thus *cannot* and *may not* are quite different in their deontic meanings as shown in the following excerpts:

[80] But if they fail to reach out to the rest of the world economically, they won't make it any other way. They can't make it. No nation can make it. America can't make it if it doesn't reach out to its foreign friends. [A02I]

[81] I can't remember the speech with great detail. [A01E]

In [80] *can't* indicates that it is not possible for them *to reach out to the rest of the world economically*. In [81] *can't* is used to convey the sense of ‘subject oriented possibility’ which can be paraphrased as ‘*I am not able to remember the speech with great detail*’. Only 6 instances of *can't* were found in the AAC and they all express this sense of possibility while none was found in the BAC.

In case of the negative form of *may*, *may not* expresses two different negative meanings of permission. On the one hand, it indicates that the speaker refuses permission for an action to be performed (‘*not allowed*’, ‘not permitted’). On the other hand it gives permission for not to perform an action (allowed/permitted not to...). It is regretted that all of the 12 instances of the negative form of *may* collected in the research corpora are in the epistemic sense of probability and no instance of *may not* in the deontic sense is found. This can be explained as a subtle nuance as in ambassadorial speech delivery the ambassadors avoid expressions in the sense of granting or refusing permission.

## **5.4 Deontic modality markers of command**

### **5.4.1 *Can* command**

The distinction between the *permission* and *possibility* use of *can* (as discussed in 5.3.3) reveals that the specific meaning of the modal *can* may be determined by the context of the utterance. *Can* is specified as covering the meaning of *permission* when the context of the utterance shows a permission-granting authority. *Can* is characterised as conveying the sense of *possibility* when there is no authority or regulation indicated but the circumstance of the utterance makes it possible for the action to be performed. *Can command* is identified when the context of the utterance implies that the speaker wants the action to be performed. This sense of *can command* as Palmer (1990: 71) claims is “a brusque or somewhat impolite

kind”. Although *can command* does not cover the courteous attitude of permission but of a demand to hearers, it can be seen as a formal replacement for an imperative as analysed below.

[82] In Cambodia, in 2003, there were more than 300 donor missions, but less than 10% were done jointly. Again you can imagine the problems this causes for government. [B03C]

[83] You can imagine the impact this has had on our collective goal of strengthening the state in Afghanistan. [B02G]

[84] I'm not going to mention the companies, but you can guess who they are. [A02C]

[85] You can see, from some of the popular films that have been produced in the United States, the talents that they have for producing first-class films, and they're doing it right now. [A01I]

In [82] and [83] the speakers show their intention of urging hearers to ‘*imagine the problems that the issue causes for government*’, ‘*imagine the impact this has had...*’ these are seen as commands. In the same vein, [84] can be interpreted as meaning that the speaker seems to be forcing hearers to ‘*guess who they are*’ rather than his prediction on the possibility of the hearers’ guessing and [85] as the speaker intends to force hearers to *see the talents that they have for producing first-class films*.

It can be argued that although these sound like commands, they are actually used to exemplify the speakers’ positive politeness as an encouragement for hearers to perform the act suggested (cf. 8.2.1.5) which is for the hearer’s benefit. As in the excerpts above, imagining, guessing and seeing could be treated as beneficial in the sense that they make hearers more aware of what is advised. The pattern of the *can* command combined with the second person subject (*you can...*) is used as a replacement to make the sense of command more polite than an imperative. However, it could be for the ambassadors’ purpose of undertaking politeness in their speech delivering that very few instances of the *can* command were found in the research corpora, accounting for only 2 out of 252 instances of *can* in the AAC (at 0.79%) and 3 out of 398 instances of *can* in the BAC (at 0.75%).

#### **5.4.2 Could request**

In a comparison between the sense of *command* and *request*, the former sounds like a brusque order whereas the latter is more polite. In the previous section, it could be observed

that a command is normally expressed by *can*. When the context of the utterance requires a more polite attitude than that of a command, the modal *could* is used to substitute for *can* as a polite request. Therefore, *could* in this case is not a past form of *can* but a formal signal of request replacing *can*. This is in line with what Coates (1983: 121) who claims that “when making a request, it is conventional to substitute *could* for *can* as a mark of politeness” as in the following excerpts:

[86] The first Chevening Biodiversity Scholars who cover a wide range of countries and are drawn from Armenia, Mongolia, the Maldives, Indonesia, Chile, Colombia and Tanzania, are with us here tonight. Could you please give them a warm welcome. [B01N]

[87] I wonder if you could elaborate a little bit on that and why you feel that's so, and that only the United States could do that. [A01E]

Excerpts like [86] and [87] are typical examples of expressing polite requests with the use of the deontic *could* in the interrogative pattern as ‘*Could you...?*’ or in positive form as ‘*I wonder if you could...*’. However, these patterns are rarely used in ambassadorial speeches, only 1 out of 49 instances of *could* request was found in the AAC, at 2.04% and 2 out of 84 instances in the BAC, at 2.38%. This infrequency is because patterns of *could* request may occur more frequently in conversations while the texts currently investigated in this research contain more monologues (ambassadorial speeches) in which the speakers use other linguistic features rather than the *could* request to display their politeness strategies (as discussed in Chapters 8 and 9 below).

In sum, this chapter consists of discussions on MMs collected from the research corpora of British and American ambassadorial speeches in major deontic modality meanings expressing the speaker’s intention in imposing an obligation, giving or declining permission and making a command. Distributions and frequencies of deontic MMs found in the ambassadorial speeches reveal that the subcategories of deontic modality meanings are expressed through the use of modal auxiliaries. This research is intended to investigate other non-auxiliary modal forms (e.g., modal lexical verbs, modal nouns, modal adjectives and modal adverbs) expressing deontic modality meanings. However, it is regretted that very few instances of other non-auxiliary modals of deontic sense are found in the ambassadorial speeches (see example [167] for some nominal modals). It can be normally seen that higher

frequencies of modal auxiliaries expressing deontic senses of obligation, permission and command are found in the BAC than in the AAC as discussed in the preceding sections of this chapter. In instances of deontic MMs collected, it can also be seen that the speakers use a range of structures and patterns combined with the deontic modals in the utterance in order to mitigate the sense of strong obligation imposed on hearers to show their politeness strategies. Such strategies of using MMs to express politeness strategies will be analysed in detail in Chapters 8 and 9.

## CHAPTER 6: DYNAMIC MODALITY MARKERS

### 6.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, we investigated MMs of deontic meanings relating to the speaker's intention in imposing obligation, giving (or declining) permission, and making a demand almost solely through the use of modal auxiliaries. This chapter continues to analyse another category of MMs in terms of dynamic modality meanings. Dynamic MMs collected from the research corpora of ambassadorial speeches are expressions conveying the senses of ability, quality, disposition, intention and volition. Dynamic modality is different from deontic modality in that the former is "subject-oriented", whereas the latter is "discourse-oriented" (see 2.4.2.3). Dynamic MMs characterised in terms of possibility, volition, intention and willingness are analysed in the following sections.

### 6.2 Dynamic modality markers of possibility

#### 6.2.1 Dynamic *can* possibility

The modal *can* is used to convey the senses of both deontic and dynamic modality. Deontic *can* in the sense of permission is used when the context of the utterance indicates some authority or regulation which allows the subject to perform the action presented (cf. 5.3.3). Deontic *can* is identified as conveying the sense of command when the context of the utterance implies that the speaker just wants the action to be performed (cf. 5.4.1). In this section we continue to discuss the dynamic senses of *can* as circumstantial possibility and subject-oriented possibility.

##### 6.2.1.1 Dynamic *can* circumstantial/neutral possibility

There are instances of *can* found in the research corpora expressing the possibility for the performance of the event presented. However, these are not deontic *can* of possibility (see 5.3.3) because the deontic source is not definitely identified. The context of the utterances in such instances indicates that it is possible for the subject of the utterance to perform the action rather than being permitted by any overt authority. These instances are identified as dynamic *can* expressing the sense of circumstantial/neutral possibility for the event presented in the utterance to occur (see also Palmer, 1990), as discussed in the following excerpts:

[88] I've just returned from Ho Chi Minh City where I chaired the second of my education conferences, and I can tell you it was a tremendous success. [A04I]

[89] In addition to those pledges, I **can** announce today that the United Kingdom will provide a further \$66 million to provide humanitarian relief and social protection in Mozambique, Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Sierra Leone – four of the countries most affected by rising food prices. [B04M]

Instances of *can* such as in the excerpts above are identified as expressing the dynamic sense of circumstantial possibility. [88] can be interpreted as ‘*the context of the conference makes it possible for me to tell you that...*’ and [89] as ‘*with all those pledges it is possible for me to announce today that...*’. Dynamic *can* in possibility use is neutral because it is just inferred from the circumstance of the utterance that there is a possibility for the event presented to occur. Palmer (1990: 84) also points out that “circumstantial possibility is more appropriate if there is a clear indication of the circumstances in which an event is possible”. This dynamic sense of *can* is also suggested in Coates (1983) in a wider category as “root possibility” which lies in the overlapping peripheral area of the two core meanings of *can* as permission and ability.

Patterns of MMs with the use of dynamic *can* as circumstantial possibility such as ‘*I can say with pride that...*’, ‘*I can assure you that...*’ or ‘*I can tell you that...*’ occur quite frequently in the research corpora. These patterns convey the sense of circumstantial possibility since the circumstances of the utterances make it *possible (for the subject) to say/assure/tell (you) that...* A majority of instances of *can* collected from the ambassadorial speeches convey the sense of circumstantial possibility, accounting for 183 out of 252, at 72.62% in the AAC and 362 out of 398, at 90.95% in the BAC (see Table 5.6). Such instances of dynamic *can* of circumstantial possibility indicate the speaker’s politeness in avoiding authority over hearers and standing on neutral ground expressing the fact that the circumstance of the utterance makes it possible for him to perform such actions.

#### **6.2.1.2 Dynamic *can* subject-oriented possibility**

When the modal *can* is used to express the ability of the subject to perform the action presented in an utterance, this ability use of *can* is identified as the dynamic sense of “subject-oriented possibility” (see Palmer 1990: 85). Dynamic *can* with subject-oriented possibility has a broader sense than that of ability because it indicates the possibility for the subject to make the event presented in the utterance occur as discussed through the following excerpts:

[90] I can speak Japanese and I can speak Chinese, and Chinese also has tones. Chinese only has four tones; Vietnamese, of course, has six or more, depending on how you speak it. [A04B]

[91] After I learned how to speak French they sent me to Australia, so I really have never used my French and I can't speak French any more at all. [A04B]

[92] The UN can point to the establishment of UNAIDS, for instance, as an example of how its different parts can agree to adapt and modernise when the changes needed are clear – and where the external pressure is great enough. [B03B]

Instances of *can* in [90] and [91] simply indicate the subject's ability to speak Japanese, Chinese or French. However, dynamic *can* of subject-oriented possibility is not always intended to convey the subject's ability but the subject's quality to make the event presented occur. In [92], *can* indicates the nature of UN's tasks to undertake the event presented in the utterance other than the subject's ability. This is in line with what Palmer (1990: 85) claims:

subject orientation should not, however be simply and strictly defined in terms of ability. Only animate creatures may have ability, but subject orientation is possible with inanimates, where it indicates that they have the necessary qualities or 'power' to cause the event to take place.

Thus, dynamic *can* of subject-oriented possibility indicates that the subject of the utterance has the ability to perform the action or the nature to make the event presented occur. In the research corpora, the frequency of *can* as subject-oriented possibility is ranked after that of circumstantial possibility (see Table 5.5). However, in comparison with the occurrence of *can* as deontic possibility (21 instances, at 8.34% in the AAC and 5 instances, at 1.25% in the BAC), *can* as subject oriented possibility (ability) occurs with higher frequencies in both research corpora, accounting for 46 out of 252, at 18.25% in the AAC and 28 out of 398, at 7.05% in the BAC.

In sum, among the three basic meanings of *can*, the sense of neutral possibility is the most frequently used while the other two senses have very low frequencies (see Table 5.5). The reason for these infrequencies may be due to the ambassadors' politeness in avoiding issues related to their own ability (subject-oriented possibility) or in granting them permission (as deontic possibility).

### 6.2.2 Dynamic *could* possibility

The modal *could* is identified as conveying the sense of dynamic possibility when it is interpreted as being possible for the subject to perform the action presented in the utterance. Dynamic *could* of possibility indicates that there is no sense of authority (permission) given for the performance of the event presented but the circumstance of the utterance made it possible for the event to occur, as in the following examples:

[93] Also at that time the relationship between our two countries was very narrow. We *could* only talk about the issue, the important issue of accounting for those missing from the war and how American NGOs might help Vietnamese citizens in need. [A03Y]

[94] What I *could* possibly say that would be as eloquent a tribute to Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO) as what we've just seen and heard from those volunteers. [B04I]

In [93] *could* expresses the meaning of dynamic possibility created by the circumstance of *the relationship between the two countries*. Thus, this utterance can be interpreted as '*for the circumstance at that time, it was only possible for us to talk about the issue...*'. It will be unreasonable to paraphrase this as '*We were only allowed to talk about the issue...*'. Similarly, [94] can be interpreted as there is no authority but *the circumstance made it possible for me to say...* Observations of the ambassadorial speeches show that *could* possibility seems to replace *could* permission when the speaker is not concerned with the authority for the performance of the event uttered. Instances of *could* possibility are also found in utterances with conditional patterns as in the following examples:

[95] I wish I *could* spend a few extra days exploring the beautiful, natural environs of this vibrant area. I certainly will be back next time with my wife. [A03N]

[96] African banana exports *could* increase by \$410 million a year if the EU used internationally accepted standards on pesticide residue, rather than their own. [B04A]

In [95] *could* occurs in a hypothetical form covering the conditional meaning as '*I wish it would be possible for me to spend a few extra days...*'. *Could* in [96] also indicates the hypothesis for the increase of banana exports from Africa. However, very few instances of conditional *could* have been found in the two research corpora, accounting for 3 out of 49, at 6.12% in the AAC and only 1 out of 84, at 1.19% in the BAC. It appears that for the subtle



nuance of their diplomatic missions, the ambassadors attempt to avoid expressing ideas of unreality.

### 6.2.3 Dynamic *may* of possibility

*May* is mainly used to express the deontic sense of granting or asking permission (5.3.1) and the epistemic sense of indicating the speaker's lack of confidence in the truth of what s/he is saying (7.2.2). However, there are situations in which the speaker uses *may* to indicate that it is possible for the event presented to occur. Such instances of *may* are identified as conveying the dynamic sense of possibility as in the following examples:

[97] Like all lobbying groups everywhere, some of these people may sometimes overstate their case. However, they do all have legitimate points. [A02E]

[98] ASEM economies may see significant structural change. The UK for example is likely to see a consolidation in financial services, which previously accounted for 11% of GDP. [B02N]

In the excerpts above, there is no evidence for interpreting *may* as a marker of permission for *these people to overstate their case* as in [97] or for *ASEM economies to see significant structural change* as in [98]. It is not possible to interpret these examples in the epistemic sense as *perhaps* or *maybe...* because these instances of *may* are considered as conveying the dynamic sense of possibility. In particular, [97] can be interpreted as '*it is possible for these people sometimes to overstate their case*' and [98] as '*it is possible for ASEM economies to see significant structural change*'. Dynamic *may* of possibility occurs with a higher frequency in the BAC, accounting for 17 instances, at 28.81% than in the AAC with 11 instances, at 22.92% (see Table 5.4).

### 6.2.4 *Be able to* of dynamic possibility

The quasi-modal *be able to* can be used to replace *can* conveying the sense of subject oriented possibility. As Perkins (1983: 75) suggests, this modal verb form is regarded as a disposition of the subject of the sentence, and, furthermore, a property of an animated being. As such, this quasi-modal can be considered as closely related to dynamic *can* of possibility as in the following excerpts:

[99] And I was able to tell other donor members of the World Bank Development Committee on Sunday that we remain on track to reach our commitment – the first

such commitment given by a UK Government - to spend 0.7% of GNI on aid by 2013. [B04F]

[100] So when Vietnam joined the WTO in January of '07 and became the 150th member of the WTO, the United States and Vietnam were able to mutually exchange all of the benefits that we had worked so hard to negotiate. [A04B]

*Be able to* used in examples [99] and [100] has the general sense of possibility which can be paraphrased as there is nothing to prevent the subject from performing the act uttered.

Although *be able to* is considered as a paraphrase of *can* possibility, this quasi-modal as claimed in Palmer (1990: 89) “is a little more formal than *can*”.

[101] I'm very pleased to be able to have the chance to talk about how we can achieve trade justice. [B04A]

[102] Let me first just say how delighted I am to be able to congratulate UNEP (United Nations Environment Programme) on the launch of “Environment for Development” – the fourth Global Environment Outlook report. [B03M]

Observations of *be able to* occurring in the research corpora show that more instances in the sense of neutral possibility are found than those of subject oriented possibility, accounting for 28 and 13 instances (0.27 and 0.12 per 1,000 words) in the BAC and 25 and 14 instances (0.24 and 0.13 per 1,000 words) in the AAC, respectively.

Also, *be able to* is simply used as a substitution for *can* to provide other non-finite forms that *can* does not have (see Coates 1983, Palmer 1990). However, instances of *be able to* in non-finite form often co-occur with other modal verbs to mitigate the strong sense of *can* as seen in the following excerpts:

[103] Having long championed Vietnam's WTO entry, Britain strongly hopes that Vietnam will be able to complete all remaining formalities before the APEC Summit. [B01E]

[104] people need to be able to come together, take a viewpoint, and express that viewpoint freely. [A03Y]

In [103] the speaker's formal way of expressing his view can be felt in *will be able to* which sounds more formal than the use of *can* as in “*Vietnam can complete...*”. In [104] *be able to* is used to mitigate the strong sense as in “*people need to come together...*”.

One more important point that can be inferred from the comparison between *be able to* and *can* is that the former is used to convey the sense of possibility<sup>(17)</sup> at the time of speaking while the latter conveys the sense of future possibility.

[105] The vast majority of religious believers in Vietnam ***are able to*** practice their beliefs without interference, and that is good. [A03Y]

As seen in [105], the speaker presents the reality of *religious believers* practice in Vietnam at the moment of speaking. However, this utterance may be understood as a promise or a status in future if the modal *can* is used instead of *be able to*.

### 6.3 Dynamic modality markers of volition

In traditional grammar *will* and *shall* are basically used to express the sense of futurity in which *will* is prioritized (Palmer, 1990). However, in this research instances of *will* and *shall* expressing pure futurity collected in ambassadorial speeches were eliminated from the data sets because the research is only concerned with *will* and *shall* with modality meanings.

The modal *shall* is normally used to express the deontic sense of suggestion or demand (see 5.4.2) while the modal *will* is used to express both epistemic and dynamic meanings (as shown in Table 6.1).

Table 6.1: Distribution of modality meanings of *will* in the research corpora

	<b>Prediction</b>	<b>Intention</b>	<b>Willingness</b>	<b>Total</b>
The AAC	191 (57.88%)	124 (37.57%)	15 (4.55%)	330 (100%)
The BAC	162 (55.29%)	119 (40.62%)	12 (4.09%)	293 (100%)
Log likelihood	2.53	0.13	0.35	2.39

There are three basic meanings that the modal *will* is used to express. Epistemic *will* of prediction use will be discussed in 7.2.4. Dynamic *will* of volition including *intention* and *willingness* is discussed as follows.

#### 6.3.1 Dynamic *will* intention

Dynamic *will* is identified as expressing the sense of intention when it indicates the subject's involvement in the occurrence of the event presented. *Will* intention is found with a higher frequency in the BAC (accounting for 119 out of 293, at 40.62%) than in the AAC

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<sup>(17)</sup> Palmer (1990) calls this possibility use of *be able to* “actuality”.

(accounting for 124 out of 330, at 37.57%) (see Table 6.1). The instances of *will* collected express the speaker's intention in (1) committing himself to the performance of the action presented; (2) promising or planning; and (3) involving hearers in co-operating or agreeing with him about the act uttered. The common factor found in the two research corpora is in patterns of *will* intention combined with first person singular subjects in the pattern *I will* as in the following excerpts:

[106] ***I will*** emphasize support for US business to penetrate the Vietnamese market. ***I will*** look for new ways to expand the growth of people-to-people ties between Vietnam and the United States. [A03A]

[107] ***I will*** also meet various people in the UK government and society who are interested in relations with Vietnam and be an assessor at an FCO Assessment and Development Centre – where British diplomats are assessed on their suitability for promotion to Senior Management level. [B02C]

[108] ***I will*** chair a meeting at Number 10 to discuss the international community's response to rising food prices. [B04K]

With the pattern *I will* in [106], the speaker commits to emphasize support for US business to penetrate the Vietnamese market. This pattern is also used to convey the speaker's promise of meeting various people in the UK government and society... as in [107] and plan to chair a meeting at Number 10 to discuss... as in [108].

### 6.3.2 Dynamic *will* willingness

Dynamic *will* expressing the sense of willingness is similar to that of intention in conveying the speaker's involvement in the performance of the act uttered. The sense is also expressed through patterns of *will* combined with first person subjects. The difference between *will* willingness and *will* intention is that the former can be interpreted as the speaker being willing to perform the action presented whereas the latter just indicates the speaker's intention to do so. However, the dividing line between *will* in these two modality meanings, as Coates (1983: 173) claims, is a subtle one. Thus, these two dynamic senses of *will* may be distinguished by their actual use interpreted as the subject *is willing to* or *intends to* perform the action presented as in the following excerpts:

[109] ***I will*** participate in both the Prime Minister's meetings on education in the US, and ***I will*** continue to act as a leader in bilateral discussions after the visit. [A04E]

[110] I will retire from government service in October and then I will take a few months to consider what my options may be. [A03I]

[111] ***I will*** join business leaders from around the world at an event in May to discuss how the private sector can use its expertise to support growth and help developing countries to accelerate their progress towards meeting the Millennium Development Goals. [B04J]

It can be inferred from the pattern *I will* in these excerpts that the speaker is willing to go ahead in the performance of the act uttered. Thus, it can be argued that with dynamic *will* of willingness the speaker appears to be more insistent than with dynamic *will* of intention. The frequencies of dynamic *will* of willingness in the two research corpora are almost equal, accounting for 15 out of 330 instances, at 4.55% in the AAC and 12 out of 293, at 4.09% in the BAC and these are also the lowest frequencies among the categories of *will* found in the research corpora of ambassadorial speeches (as shown in Table 6.1). The explanation for the higher frequencies of dynamic *will* of intention than of willingness is because of the subtle nuance in diplomatic speeches and it would be unwise to be consistent with dynamic *will* of willingness. As such, it may be safer for the speaker to express the sense of volition to the extent of intention rather than of willingness.

In sum, this chapter consists of discussions on dynamic modality meanings characterised in terms of possibility, volition, intention and willingness. Instances of dynamic MMs found in the ambassadorial speeches show that the subcategories of dynamic modality meanings are expressed through the use of modal auxiliaries. No instances of other non-auxiliary modal forms (e.g., modal lexical verbs, modal nouns, modal adjectives and modal adverbs) expressing dynamic modality meanings are found (see 5.4.2). The frequency use of dynamic MMs occurring in the research corpora of ambassadorial speeches as analysed in this chapter will be used to illustrate the difference between British and American ambassadors in their politeness strategies as analysed in chapters 8 and 9 below.

## CHAPTER 7: EPISTEMIC MODALITY MARKERS

### 7.1 Introduction

This chapter contains the analysis of epistemic modality in the sense of ‘possibility’ and ‘necessity’ (see 2.5.1) which mainly focuses on MMs expressing the speaker’s commitment to, or confidence in, the propositional content of the utterance. Epistemic MMs collected in the research corpora are not only modal auxiliaries but also exhibit other patterns including modal forms such as modal lexical verbs, modal nouns, modal adjectives and modal adverbs. These patterns of embedded modality (see 5.2.2.3) are found in terms such as comment clauses, hedges, and harmonic phrases expressing epistemic modality meanings. It is probably for this situation that such patterns of non-auxiliary modal forms are not found for deontic (see 5.4.2) and dynamic modality (see 6.3.2). As such, epistemic MMs are expressions of the speaker’s confident assertion or assessment of the possibility or necessity of the event presented in the utterance occurring.

### 7.2 Modal verbs as epistemic modality markers

#### 7.2.1 Epistemic *must*

Semantically, when the modal *must* serves as a device connecting the evidence and the content of the utterance or an inference from the context of the utterance about the occurrence of the event presented, it indicates a sense of epistemic necessity. As such, the major characteristic of epistemic *must* is to convey “the speaker’s confidence in the truth of what he is saying, based on a logical process of deduction from facts known to him” (Coates, 1983: 41), as analysed in the following excerpts:

[112] ***You must*** acknowledge that Vietnam’s large population is highly energetic and entrepreneurial, devoted to education and training, and very young. [A03C]

[113] With the overall EC external budget, ***we believe that*** the proportion going to the Development and the Humanitarian Assistance Regulations ***must*** increase. [B03B]

Epistemic *must* in the excerpts above conveys an inference from the utterance or the speaker’s belief that the occurrence of the event presented is certain. As such, [112] can be paraphrased as ***I am confident / I am sure*** you will acknowledge that Vietnam’s large population is highly energetic... In [113], epistemic *must* indicating the speaker’s belief in

the occurrence of the event is also modified when embedded within the modal expression *we believe*.

Observations of instances of epistemic *must* collected in the two research corpora show that they indicate both senses of subjective and objective inference as shown in the following excerpts:

[114] Our partnership *must* be mutually reinforcing and mutually beneficial to our two countries. [A03P]

[115] To expand opportunities for US firms and to enhance its attractiveness as an investment destination, Vietnam *must* address a number of challenges. [A03E]

In [114], with epistemic *must* the speaker subjectively expresses his confidence which can be interpreted as (*To the best of my knowledge,*) ***I am confident that our partnership will certainly be mutually reinforcing...*** In [115], epistemic *must* conveys an objective inference as ***it is necessarily the case that Vietnam will address a number of challenges.***

As observed in samples of ambassadorial speeches, epistemic *must* occurs with lower frequencies than deontic *must*, accounting for 12 out of 93 (at only 13%) instances of *must* in the AAC and 17 out of 168 (at 11%) instances of *must* in the BAC (see Table 5.1). This significant difference between epistemic and deontic *must* (see 5.2.1) in the research corpora can be explained by the epistemic modality not only being expressed by the modal *must* itself but also by a range of other non-auxiliary patterns of epistemic modality. That is to say the speaker may show his confidence in the truth of the proposition or indicate the process of logical inference from the occurrence of the event presented through other expressions of epistemic modality such as comment clauses, hedges (see Crompton, 1997), and harmonic phrases (see Coates, 1983). as analysed in 7.3 below, as other modal forms expressing epistemic modality meanings (cf. 7.1).

With regard to the time reference of the event presented in an utterance, the specific characteristic of epistemic *must* is to provide an explanation at the time of speaking to the occurrence of the event presented. Epistemic *must* when combined with another syntactic construction is used to indicate the sense of time reference as present, past or future as in the following excerpts:

[116] I'm pretty sure we *must have paid* it cos I'm sure she would have phoned us. [KD5]

[117] I was cleaning out the room there the other day and he must be training, he must be weightlifting or something up in the bedroom but he's a health book, a big thick health book and there's bodies, you know, the human body. [KDS]<sup>(18)</sup>

Epistemic *must* followed by an infinitive form is similar to epistemic *will* referring to the occurrence of the event in the future. As in [114] and [115], the speaker means he is sure it will be the case.

When referring to activities or events in the past, epistemic *must* is combined with the perfective aspect (*Must Have + en*) to express the speaker's confident assertion that it has been the case as in [116]. In its co-occurrence with progressive aspect (*Be + ing*), epistemic *must* shows the speaker's confidence that the event is in progress at the moment of speaking as in [117]. However, it is regretted that patterns of epistemic *must* combined with perfective or progressive aspect are not found in the data of ambassadorial speeches. Therefore, the excerpts used as examples above are extracted from the spoken part of the British National Corpus.

It is a characteristic of the syntactic structures with perfective or progressive aspect that makes the epistemic sense of *must* distinctive. Epistemic *must* combined with these aspects indicates the speaker's confidence in the assertion that the event has occurred as in [116] or is occurring as in [117]. Therefore, it can be argued that in the case of an indeterminacy between epistemic and deontic *must*, if the insertion of the perfective or progressive aspect is appropriate, *must* is identified as an epistemic modal verb form.

### 7.2.2 Epistemic *may*

The main characteristic of epistemic MMs is to convey the speaker's levels of confidence or commitment to the content of the utterance presented. As in 6.2.1, epistemic *must* indicates the speaker's confidence in the occurrence of the event presented in the utterance. The epistemic sense of *may* is different in that it indicates "the speaker's lack of confidence in the proposition expressed" (Coates, 1983: 131). With epistemic *may* the speaker implies that he is not confident in the occurrence of the event or not responsible for the content of the utterance but there is a possibility for the event presented to occur as in the following excerpts:

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<sup>(18)</sup> KD5 and KDS are separated files taken from the spoken part of the British National Corpus (BNC).



[118] Some of you may know that I started my diplomatic career in Vietnam from 1970 to 1973. [A02E]

[119] Recent IMF research shows that as growth falls, efforts to reduce infant mortality will suffer – indeed they estimate that as many as 2.8 million extra children may die between now and 2015 if the crisis persists. [B04P]

It can be inferred from these excerpts that the speaker is not sure of (or does not commit himself to) the event presented. In other words, the speaker merely provides a weak commitment to the content of what he is saying. Therefore, epistemic *may* can be paraphrased as ‘*It is probable that...*’ or it is equivalent to other epistemic markers such as *perhaps, probably, and maybe*. (see 7.3.3). Hence [118] can be interpreted as ‘*Perhaps some of you know that...*’ and [119] as ‘*It is probable that...*’.

The frequency use of epistemic *may* is higher in the AAC than in the BAC, accounting for 32 out of 48, at 66.68% in the AAC and 34 out of 59, at 57.63% in the BAC. This epistemic sense is also found as the most frequently-used among the other meanings of *may* (see Table 5.5). The high frequencies of epistemic *may* in the research corpora reveal that the speaker appears not to be decisive or not to commit himself to the event presented in the utterance. Typical examples are shown as follows:

[120] It may also indicate that its leaders are now prepared to move forward with much-needed and long-delayed economic reforms in other areas. [A01B]

[121] Some of you may recall that I have talked before about our Security Information Service for Business Overseas, or SISBO for short. [B01P]

Another point is that *may* in its epistemic sense of possibility is normally included in expressions functioning as hedges such as *as some of you may know, as you may recall, it may also indicate that, and you may have heard that*. It can be claimed that epistemic *may* is used in these expressions as a politeness marker mitigating the speaker’s assertion (see Chapter 8). That is to say with epistemic *may*, the speaker would like to leave the right of determination in the event presented to hearers and does not urge them to follow his own opinion. Therefore, epistemic *may* can be seen as a MM mitigating the FTA in the utterance to express the speaker’s politeness.

[122] There's one last thing I want to talk about. You may have heard, but we're having an election in the United States and I have to say this is one of the most amazing elections that I have ever seen in the United States. [A04B]

[123] There are now signs that the Vietnamese may be moving to a unitary system of financial market supervision, rather along the lines of our own FSA. [B01G]

With regard to time reference (similar to epistemic *must*), epistemic *may* combined with the perfective aspect (*May HAVE + EN*) conveys the speaker's judgement on the possibility of a past event as in [122]. It is combined with the progressive aspect (*May BE + ING*) to express the possibility of an action in progress at the moment of speaking as in [123]. Instances of epistemic *may* in the negative sense (*may not*) are also found in the research corpora as shown in the following excerpts:

[124] Like any meeting between friends, the two may not agree on everything, but the relationship is such that they can discuss anything. [A04E]

[125] I don't expect everyone to agree with what I say (and I welcome different points of view and suggestions) and some people may not find it interesting. [B02I]

There are only 5 instances of *may not* found in each of the two research corpora and interestingly, they are all in the epistemic sense. This may lead to an argument that in the ambassadorial speeches *may not* is preferred in the epistemic to the deontic sense. This is because the deontic sense of *may not* is to show the speaker's authority over the addressee such as giving or declining permission and may thus be avoided (see 5.3.3).

### 7.2.3 Epistemic *might*

In the research corpora, the modal *might* is found in its epistemic sense of possibility with two variables. One is its primary use as a marker of epistemic possibility and the other is the past tense form of epistemic *may*. Epistemic *might*, as Coates (1983: 147) claims, "is superseding *may* as the main exponent of epistemic possibility" which can be paraphrased as 'it is possible that...' or *perhaps*. Basically, the probability use of *might* is similar to that of *may* with the time reference of future orientation. There are also situations in which *might* is found to occur as the past tense form of *may*. Among the 22 instances of *might* observed in the AAC, 5 of them are the past tense form of epistemic *may* as in [126] while the other 17 instances are in the primary use of *might* in its epistemic sense as in [127].

[126] Before opening our discussion of the current state of US Vietnam relations, I thought I *might* take a brief retrospective look at the history of our relationship. [A01D]

[127] You *might* find that you want to get more directly involved in building the relationship. There are many ways to do so, from academic exchanges to volunteer organizations to business opportunities. [A01F]

In the BAC it is interesting that all of the 18 instances of *might* collected are in the primary epistemic sense of probability and no instance of *might* in the past tense form of epistemic *may* was found. The following example is typical among instances of *might* in its primary epistemic sense of probability.

[128] Before looking at how our functions *might* change under the new strategy, it *might* be helpful just to remind you of the current structure of the UK Trade & Investment operation here. [B01P]

*Might* in its primary epistemic sense of probability does not refer to past time but has a future orientation. Excerpt [128] can be paraphrased as *it is probable that our functions will change under the new strategy*. As such, *might* is basically synonymous with *may* (see 7.2.2) in expressing subjective epistemic possibility which can be paraphrased as ‘*it is possible that*’ or is similar to modal forms such as *perhaps*, *maybe*, and *probably*. The basic difference between epistemic *might* and *may*, as claimed in Coates (1983: 147), is that “*might* is used both as a past form of *may* and as a ‘remote’ form of *may* to express hypothetical meaning”. Coates (1983: 153) also states that “*might* was becoming more common than *may* as an exponent of epistemic possibility in everyday usage”. However, it is interesting to find in the ambassadorial speeches that epistemic *may* is more frequently used than epistemic *might*, with 32 instances (at 6.81%) as opposed to 22 instances (at 4.68%) in the AAC and 34 instances (at 7.35%) compared with 18 instances (at 3.89%) in the BAC, respectively (see Appendix 6).

In sum, it may be difficult to reach an overall conclusion as to whether *may* or *might* will be more prominent in expressing epistemic possibility. However, as observed from instances of epistemic *may* and *might* in the research corpora of ambassadorial speeches it can be claimed that *may* is used in patterns of MMs such as hedges or comment clauses in the utterance (see 7.2.2) as a formal way of expressing the speaker’s view, whereas *might* is

combined with the main verb in the utterance to express the speaker's attitude of low level commitment to the proposition.

#### 7.2.4 Epistemic *will*

Epistemic *will* is similar to epistemic *must* (see 7.2.1) in expressing the speaker's confidence in the proposition uttered. The difference is in the levels of confidence expressed through these two epistemic modals. While epistemic *must* conveys the sense of confidence created from the process of logical inference, epistemic *will* indicates the speaker's prediction about the occurrence of the event presented. Therefore, epistemic *will* is analysed as an epistemic marker of prediction as in the following excerpts:

[129] The Bilateral Investment Treaty will actually bring certain legal protections in our two countries up to what we consider the gold standard or the best international standard for investment protection that exists in the world today. This will give an added level of confidence to American investors who want to invest in Vietnam. [A04F]

[130] In future Vietnam's success will be measured by declining, not increasing, amounts of aid. This will be supplemented by discussions, exchanges of ideas and experiences, and technical cooperation. [B02O]

Epistemic *will* as in [129] indicates the speaker's confident prediction about *certain legal protections the Bilateral Investment Treaty will bring...* In [130] epistemic *will* is not simply used to express futurity but to indicate the speaker's confident prediction that *Vietnam's success is measured by declining, not increasing, amounts of aid...*

In the research corpora instances of epistemic *will* are found to co-occur with a preceding comment clause to express the speaker's confident prediction as in the following excerpts:

[131] As you probably know, this will be my last visit to Ho Chi Minh City as the United States Ambassador to Vietnam. [A03X]

[132] I hope that you will encourage your contacts in business and government to focus on key areas of economic reform, in preparation for WTO accession. [B01A]

Expressions like 'As you all probably know' in [131] and 'I hope that' in [132] known as "harmonic phrases" (see Coates, 1983) are normally used to show the speaker's tentativeness in his prediction about the issue presented in the complement clause with *will* included as MMs. These expressions can be seen as additional elements to epistemic *will* to show the

speaker's tentative prediction about the event presented. This also makes the sense of epistemic *will* distinctive from the *will* of pure futurity.

As observed in the research corpora of ambassadorial speeches, epistemic *will* occurs with the highest frequencies among the subcategories of *will*, accounting for 191 out of 330 instances in the AAC, at 57.88% and 162 out of 293 instances in the BAC, at 55.29% (see Table 6.1). As such, epistemic *will* prediction occurs with higher frequencies than the other subcategories of *will* intention and willingness (see 6.3.1 and 6.3.2) in both the research corpora of ambassadorial speeches. It can be explained that the speakers may be more interested in expressing their prediction about the occurrence of the event presented in the utterance than using other dynamic meanings of *will* intention and willingness in delivering ambassadorial speeches.

### **7.2.5 Epistemic *could***

Epistemic *could* is also used to show the speaker's weak commitment to the content of the event presented due to lack of confidence. This epistemic modal paraphrased as '*it is possible that...*' conveys the sense of tentative possibility. *Could* is an element that gives a remote assessment of possibility but its epistemic sense is not the past form of *can*. It is normally used to tentatively assert the possibility of an event at the moment of speaking.

[133] We ***could*** only talk about the issue, the important issue of accounting for those missing from the war and how American NGOs might help Vietnamese citizens in need. [A03Y]

[134] The combined effect then is that by the end of next year we ***could*** see some 90 million more people living in extreme poverty as a result of this financial crisis. [B04P]

In [133] epistemic *could* indicates the speaker's tentative attitude in addressing the issue of *those missing from the war* because he understands how sensitive it is to tread on this ground. Therefore, epistemic *could* is an appropriate selection to show the speaker's hesitation in referring to such a delicate issue. With epistemic *could* the speaker implies that he would like to give hearers the right to determine whether or not to *talk about the issue*. In [134] the speaker also gives a tentative estimation since it is unwise to assert that *90 million more people will live in extreme poverty...*

As observed in the research corpora of ambassadorial speeches, epistemic *could* exists in much higher frequencies than deontic *could* (see 5.4.3) and dynamic *could* (see 6.2.2), accounting for 45 out of 49, at 91.83% instances of *could* in the AAC and 81 out of 84, at 96.42% of those in the BAC. It can be explained that epistemic *could* is used to express the speaker's implication that hearers may not agree with him about the point presented but in his cognition there is a possibility that this is the case. As such, it is more commonly used in ambassadorial speeches than the other subcategories of deontic *could* request and dynamic *could* possibility.

### 7.2.6 Epistemic *should*

Epistemic *should* as compared with epistemic *could* is weaker in expressing the speaker's commitment to the proposition presented. While epistemic *could* expresses the sense of tentative possibility (7.2.5), epistemic *should* is used to convey the sense of a tentative assumption. It is weaker than epistemic *could* in that despite the speaker's understanding of the event presented he can only express the probability of the case. Therefore, if epistemic *could* is used to express the speaker's assessment of possibility, epistemic *should* conveys that of probability.

At this point we can evaluate the epistemic senses of *must*, *could* and *should* in expressing the speaker's degrees of confidence. The three epistemic modal auxiliaries can be seen to express a set of epistemic senses as certainty, possibility and probability. In short, epistemic *must* can be paraphrased as '*I am sure that...*', *could* as '*it is possible that...*', whereas with *should* the speaker shows a much less confident assumption paraphrased as '*to the best of my knowledge, it is probable that...*' or '*I assume that...*' as in the following excerpts:

[135] We believe that everyone *should* have the right to freely express their political views. [A04B]

[136] I believe employers *should* support volunteering, and that's why I can also announce from this podium this evening that the government will provide a fund of £13 million to ensure that UK public servants don't lose out on their pension contributions when they volunteer overseas. [B04I]

With epistemic *should* [135] is paraphrased as *I assume that* everyone will have the right to freely express their political views. That is to say the speaker is not confident that his

summary is exactly succinct. As such, epistemic *should* can be seen to convey the speaker's attitude that he would leave the determination of the case to his hearers. Epistemic *should* in [136] also conveys the sense of probability which can be interpreted as '*I believe it is probable that everyone will have the right...*'. As observed in the research corpora of ambassadorial speeches, epistemic *should* occurs with the lowest frequencies among the subcategories of *should*, accounting for 11 out of 63 instances in the AAC, at 17.46% and 12 out of 131 instances in the BAC, at 9.16% (see Table 5.3).

### 7.2.7 Epistemic *would*

Instances of epistemic *would* collected from the research corpora show that this epistemic modal verb mainly conveys the sense of *hypothesis* and *tentativeness*. The former is identified when there is a conditional feature in the utterance, and consequently *would* is used in the conditional clause. The latter is actually a pragmatic variant of the former as Coates (1983: 216) claims "hypothetical *would* is also used pragmatically to express politeness or tentativeness rather than a genuine hypothesis".

Epistemic *would* in the sense of hypothesis is considered the most common among the four "secondary modals" *could*, *might*, *would* and *should* (see Perkins, 1983) since it is used when the context of the utterance indicates an unreal condition. The distinctive characteristic of hypothetical *would* is in its sense of a negative implication as in the following excerpts:

[137] The Vietnamese Government needs to act like a referee and not a player in its own economy, even if this means relinquishing a great deal of control to market forces.

If these steps are taken, Vietnam **would** have a true level playing field and **would** become a mecca for foreign investment. [A03I]

[138] In addition, with its long coastline, Vietnam is likely more connected to the world.

If you could improve your deep-sea ports, export **would** be much easier. [B01I]

In [137] the speaker would like to express the negative implication that *Vietnam has not taken these steps yet and therefore it has not had a true level playing field and has not become a mecca for foreign investment*. This is the case with [138] too, the negative implication is that *Vietnam has not improved the deep-sea ports...* As such, we can see that hypothetical *would* is an essential selection for the speaker in addressing delicate issues since it can be the most positive way to address negative points.

Epistemic *would* in the sense of tentativeness indicates the speaker's attitude of politeness and formality towards the addressee. In this sense, tentative *would* is normally combined with the 1<sup>st</sup> person singular subject followed by a performative verb such as *say*, *suggest*, *mean*, and *admit* to express the speaker's tentativeness as politeness. That is to say the epistemic sense of *would* has the effect of a supposition indicating that what is said is not straightforward but indirect. This sense of indirectness implies that the speaker avoids asserting some state or asking the addressee to do something directly. Thus, tentative *would* is identified as a marker of the speaker's politeness as in the following excerpts:

[139] Vietnam **would** very quickly become one of the most prosperous nations in Asia, for all the reasons I've already stated: the human resource, the natural resource, geopolitical positioning.

[140] **I would suggest** you go to our PEPFAR office to get the exact numbers – you can find a great deal of information and statistics on those efforts on our website.  
[A04F]

[141] And **I would like to suggest** tonight that VSO volunteers have played a vital, indeed key role in turning Britain's concern for global poverty into practical action.  
[B04I]

In [139] the speaker uses *would* in the sense of tentativeness in order to avoid a direct assertion that *Vietnam very quickly becomes one of the most prosperous nations in Asia*. *Would* in [140] modifies the speaker's politeness in suggesting hearers *to go to PEPFAR office to get the exact numbers...* In [141] it is more polite to use the expression '*I would like to suggest*' instead of saying *I suggest that...* It could be its sense of expressing politeness or tentativeness that epistemic *would* is frequently used in ambassadorial speeches, accounting for 142 instances, at 14.00% of epistemic modals in the AAC and 127 instances, at 10.03% of epistemic modals in the BAC (see Appendix 6)

### 7.3 Other modal forms as epistemic modality markers

This section consists of an analysis of other modal forms (non-auxiliary modal forms) as epistemic modality markers including patterns with modal lexical verbs, modal adjectives, modal adverbs and modal nouns as embedded modality (see 5.2.2.3). The common factor shared by these modal forms is to convey the speaker's levels of certainty and commitment to the propositional content of the utterance. In an interaction the speaker's purpose is not only



to transmit information but also to conduct strategies in exchanging information. Accordingly, the speaker employs devices combined with the proposition to show his/her engagement, commitment, and attitude towards the content. Instances of epistemic modal forms collected in samples of ambassadorial speeches expressing the speaker's degrees of assertion or certainty scales of commitment are characterised in the following subcategories.

### 7.3.1 Epistemic modality markers with modal lexical verbs

Modal lexical verbs normally occur in the comment clause of an utterance to indicate the speaker's commitment to the occurrence of the event presented in the complement clause of the utterance. These are in patterns with "parenthetical verbs" co-occurring with 1<sup>st</sup> person subjects to form comment clauses expressing the speaker's "mental state or attitude" towards the proposition (see Perkins, 1983: 97). Different modal lexical verbs in patterns of comment clauses as MMs indicate different levels of the speaker's commitment to the event presented in the proposition uttered as in the following excerpts:

[142] Madame Minister, I personally renew our commitment to you here today, to stand with you as your partners and to fight side by side with you as your friends against this dreaded disease. Together, ***I believe*** we can keep making progress and give hope to those in need. [A03U]

[143] ***I think*** today's report highlights the need for sound science, for monitoring and assessment, so we can understand the environmental trends much better, and, crucially, to understand the impact of those trends on the very poorest. [B03M]

In the excerpts above, patterns like *I believe...*, *I think...* are expressions of embedded modality. Such patterns perform the function of hedges marking the speaker's engagement to the content of the utterance. The epistemic meaning expressed by the pattern ***I believe*** as in [142] indicates the speaker's strong belief that the two sides *can keep making progress and give hope to those in need*. Thus, this pattern is used to convey the strong epistemic sense of commitment. In [143], the pattern ***I think*** implies that the speaker neither completely commits himself to nor is fully responsible for the achievement of *today's report* and he merely expresses his opinions. It can be claimed that 'believe' is typically used in hedges showing the speaker's strong commitment while 'think' is used to express the speaker's weak commitment to the occurrence of the event presented.

Other modal lexical verbs combined with the *I* pronoun expressing the sense of strong commitment such as *believe, know, see, understand, and assure*. Modal lexical verbs in the sense of weak commitment are *think, hope, expect, wish, and suggest*. These convey the speaker's implication of lacking confidence in the proposition presented. Observations of these epistemic MMs in the research corpora show that the British ambassadors (BAs) employ more patterns with modal lexical verbs as hedges than the American ambassadors (AAs) do, accounting for 484 instances (4.6 instances per 1,000 words) in the BAC compared with 378 instances (3.6 instances per 1,000 words) in the AAC (see Appendix 7). This also corroborates the argument that the British ambassadors are more tentative and indirect in expressing their views than the American ambassadors (as discussed in Chapters 8 and 9 below).

### 7.3.2 Epistemic modality markers with modal adjectives

Similar to the modal lexical verbs presented above modal adjectives are used in the comment clause as expressions of embedded modality showing the speaker's levels of confidence in the occurrence of the event presented in the utterance. Observations of MMs with modal adjectives collected in the research corpora (see Appendix 8) show that the sense of the speaker's strong or weak confidence is not in the modal adjective itself but through patterns of embedded modality expressing subjective or objective meanings as in the following excerpts:

[144] ***It is clear*** therefore ***that*** beneath this financial crisis lies a human crisis, and we need a coordinated global response to this crisis to ensure that the coming years do not become the 'lost years' in the global fight against poverty. [B04P]

[145] ***I am confident that*** Vietnam will continue to make the domestic changes needed to ensure the future prosperity and happiness of its people, with a focus not only on economic growth but also on the evolution toward the Prime Minister's goal of a system free of corruption, built on a transparent and just legal system and greater public participation. ***I am hopeful that*** – in recognition of its own interests – Vietnam will choose to strengthen its cooperation on challenges to global and regional stability that threaten us all. ***I am certain that*** our two peoples will continue to grow closer together, through trade and investment, through

educational, technical and people-to-people exchanges, and as both our societies benefit from “globalization.” [A03P]

In [144], the pattern of the modal adjective combined with the impersonal subject ‘*it*’ indicates the sense of objective epistemic modality. Patterns like ‘*It is clear that...*’, ‘*It is likely that...*’ convey the speaker’s implication that this is not his subjective judgement but it can be inferred from the actual situation that it is the case. With such patterns, the speaker transmits a message to hearers that even though he does not commit himself to the event presented, he would like hearers to believe it. Patterns of objective epistemic modality with modal adjectives as [It is + Adj<sub>Mod</sub> + that/to] occur with higher frequencies in the BAC than in the AAC, accounting for 25 instances of *clear* found in the BAC at 29.76% compared with 15 instances in the AAC at 12.82%; and 23 instances of *likely* in the BAC at 27.38% compared with only 6 in the AAC at 5.13% (see Appendix 8).

In [145], the pattern of a modal adjective combined with the *I* pronoun conveys the sense of subjective epistemic modality. Patterns like ‘*I am confident that...*’, ‘*I am hopeful that...*’, ‘*I am certain that...*’ indicating the speaker’s strong belief or subjective commitment occur frequently in the research corpora. Interestingly, such patterns of subjective epistemic modality as [I am + Adj<sub>Mod</sub> + that/to...] are found with a higher frequency in the AAC than in the BAC, accounting for 96 and 36 instances respectively (see Table 9.4). Such data also support the argument (as presented above) that the AAs are more subjective and thus more personal and direct than the BAs in making commitments to the proposition presented in the utterance.

### **7.3.3 Epistemic modality markers with modal adverbs**

Modal adverbs found in ambassadorial speeches occur in two subcategories of MMs. One modifies the whole utterance and the other modifies a particular word within the utterance. The former, as expressed in Perkins (1983: 90) as a “sentence modifier”, is “peripheral in clause structure”. The latter occurs within the structure of the utterance and directly modifies the main verb as a “verb modifier”. Semantically, modal adverbs as sentence modifiers indicate the epistemic sense that the speaker tentatively reveals his comment on the proposition presented. When it is used physically close to the main verb of the utterance the modal adverb is realised as modifying the verb as in the following excerpts:

[146] ***Perhaps*** one of my greatest accomplishments during my first year here was the extremely successful visit of Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung to Washington to meet with President Bush. [A04F]

[147] So you can just imagine what could ***possibly*** happen if some of these things were developed to the degrees that they can. [A01C]

The modal adverb *perhaps* in [146] performs the role of a sentence modifier. It indicates the speaker's assessment on the total content of the utterance and thus, can be paraphrased as *it is possible that...* In [147] the modal adverb *possibly* is a verb phrase modifier. It is combined with the modal verb *could* to intensify the possibility that the event presented will occur.

Of the four categories of adverbials (see Quirk et al, 1985), 'disjuncts' and 'subjuncts' are closely related to modal adverbs in their functions as sentence modifiers and verb phrase modifiers, respectively. Disjuncts are characterised as modal adverbs since such adverbs, as Hoyo (1997: 151) states, "conveys the speaker's evaluation towards his utterance and functions as a metacomment on its content".

[148] ***Obviously*** there is a need to make the information that's contained in the Vietnamese media available in English, otherwise your leadership is going to be very limited. [A03Y]

[149] The unprecedented pace, breadth and senior nature of our interchanges in the past 15 months marks a breakthrough to a new level of engagement. ***Frankly***, I would not have predicted this sudden development when I arrived here two years ago. [A03P]

In [148] the modal adverb *obviously* is used not only to convey the meaning of the individual disjunct itself but also to highlight the speaker's conviction towards the content of the utterance. This modal adverb can be interpreted as '*I strongly believe that...*'. In [149], the modal adverb *frankly* is used to express the speaker's attitude and indicates the manner in giving his comment on the event presented in the utterance. These are typical instances of disjuncts functioning as modal adverbs found in ambassadorial speeches (see Appendix 7). Hoyo (1997: 180-4) also categorises these modal adverbs as 'content disjuncts' and 'style disjuncts', respectively.

Subjuncts are involved in semantic processes playing the functions of epistemic MMs as 'emphasizers', 'intensifiers' and 'focusing subjuncts'. Hoyo (1997: 150) adds a fourth type as

‘courtesy subjuncts’ combined with a modal verb in formulaic expressions of politeness and mitigation as in the following excerpts:

[150] Vietnam is ***certainly*** a country in a hurry. Anyone who has been there recently cannot fail to be impressed by the sheer energy of the place. GDP per capita has already doubled in the last six years. It should double again to reach about \$1,000 by 2010. [B01K]

[151] I must admit that as I sat watching those films I was struck by the thought - what I could ***possibly*** say that would be as eloquent a tribute to Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO) as what we’ve just seen and heard from those volunteers. [B04I]

With the use of the modal adverb *certainly* as in [150], the speaker implies his affirmation of the truth presented in the utterance. This type of modal adverb is considered as an ‘emphasizer’, a subjunct that indicates the speaker’s strong commitment to what is being said. Although *possibly* in [151] is a verb phrase modifier, its function is quite different. The modal adverb *possibly* is used to convey the speaker’s politeness throughout the utterance showing the sense of complimenting. Modal adverbs of this type are identified as ‘courtesy subjuncts’ (see Hoyer, 1997). The relationship between these adverbs as modal forms expressing epistemic meanings and the speaker’s politeness will be analysed in Chapter 8 as ambassadors’ politeness strategies in their speech delivery.

#### **7.3.4 Epistemic modality markers with modal nouns**

As discussed in the foregoing sections the common factor that modal forms share as non-auxiliary markers of epistemic modality, is to convey the speaker’s degrees of certainty or commitment to the content of the utterance presented. Patterns of epistemic MMs with modal nouns are no different. Modal nouns are used in patterns of comment clauses showing the speaker’s degrees of certainty or attitude towards what is presented in the utterance. The common pattern of MMs with modal nouns found in the research corpora are: (1) [*There is* + determiner + N<sub>Mod</sub>]; and (2) [*It is* + possessive Adj + N<sub>Mod</sub>].

In pattern (1) the epistemic sense expressed is objective in that the speaker shows no involvement with the occurrence of the event presented in the utterance. This pattern means it is just inferred from the situation that it is the case. Pattern (2) is more subjective since the speaker shows his involvement with the event presented in the utterance through the use of

the possessive adjective preceding the modal noun in the comment clause as analysed in the following excerpts:

[152] This may be an exaggeration – but *there is no doubt that* Vietnam needs to tackle this issue now, if its young people are going to be in a position to compete in the years ahead. [A03N]

[153] As we look forward to the future of education in Vietnam, *it is my fondest hope that* the flame of learning will burn ever brighter and that its light will illuminate every corner of this beautiful and fascinating country. [A03X]

There is a difference in the speaker's involvement through the use of the impersonal subjects 'there' and 'it'. In [152] the speaker shows his objective view through the pattern 'there is no doubt that...'. That is to say with impersonal *there* it can objectively be inferred from the situation that it is the case. This epistemic expression can also be paraphrased as 'it is obvious that...'. In [153] the speaker expresses his strong commitment to the possibility of the event presented in the complement clause of the utterance. The pattern 'it is my fondest hope that' in this pattern indicates the speaker's involvement in the event presented. This pattern paraphrased as 'I fully hope that...' conveys the speaker's subjective commitment to the event presented.

The point is that only a few instances of patterns with modal nouns such as *hope, belief, honour, pleasure and doubt* were found in the research corpora. This is opposed to the high frequencies of modal lexical verbs such as *think, hope, believe or expect* used in patterns of comment clauses expressing the same sense of epistemic modality. Modal nominal expressions in patterns presented above are not of interest in ambassadorial speeches. It can be explained that modal lexical verbs are preferred and used to replace modal nouns as MMs in samples of ambassadorial speeches.

In sum, this chapter contains analyses of epistemic MMs expressing the speaker's commitment to or confidence in the propositional content of the utterance presented. Epistemic MMs collected in the research corpora of ambassadorial speeches are not only modal auxiliaries but also other patterns with modal forms such as modal lexical verbs, nominal modals, adjectival modals and adverbial modals. Such patterns perform the role of expressing embedded modality. The higher frequencies of non-auxiliary modals used as epistemic MMs than as deontic MMs and dynamic MMs reveal the speakers' common

selection in the use of patterns of epistemic MMs to express their confident assertion, commitment or assessment of the possibility of the event presented in the utterance. These will also provide illustrations for the analyses of politeness strategies in Chapter 8 and comparisons of the use of politeness markers between British and American ambassadorial speeches as discussed in Chapter 9 of this thesis.

## **CHAPTER 8: MODALITY AS A POLITENESS STRATEGY IN AMBASSADORIAL SPEECHES**

### **8.1 Introduction**

One of the most important aspects of communication is the expression of politeness through language, especially spoken language. Different levels of politeness can be achieved through a variety of strategies in spoken communication with the use of syntactic structures or lexical devices such as modality markers (MMs). Ambassadorial speeches are expected to contain MMs expressing the speakers' politeness strategies (see explanation below) in order to achieve their missions in diplomatic relation. Therefore, on the basis of the semantic categories of MMs (as analysed in the foregoing chapters) this chapter continues with an investigation into the pragmatic functions of MMs as tools for conducting particular politeness strategies in ambassadorial speeches. Such analyses will enable comparisons between major categories of politeness markers used in British and American ambassadorial speeches as presented in chapter 9 below.

To examine modality as a politeness strategy in ambassadorial speeches, MMs collected in the research corpora are classified and analysed in their pragmatic functions under the umbrella of the two super-strategies of positive and negative politeness (see 3.3.2.3). The typology of politeness strategies mainly depends on expressions of modality marking found in ambassadorial speeches. As such, section 8.2.1 discusses the treatment of MMs categorised in seven positive politeness strategies and section 8.2.2 presents the treatment of MMs in seven categories of negative politeness strategies. Frequencies of MMs occurring in the research corpora to express particular politeness strategies are compared to indicate the politeness markers that reveal significant differences between British and American ambassadorial speeches.

Such comparative analyses of MMs as expressions of particular positive and negative politeness strategies in this chapter will provide data for a discussion of the major categories of politeness markers used in ambassadorial speeches as presented in Chapter 9. The analysis of MMs used as specific politeness markers collected in the corpora will indicate the difference between British and American ambassadors in their preference of MMs and thus provide answers to the question whether British ambassadors or American ambassadors are



more positive/negative in their politeness strategies. The reason for the selection of ambassadorial speeches as data source for the investigation into the functions of MMs as expressions of politeness strategies will now be discussed.

Ambassadorial speeches, as a category of political discourse (see 3.2.3.2), can be considered highly face-threatening since they may potentially violate hearers' face wants or ideologies, especially in cross-cultural interactions when ambassadors deliver speeches to audiences in the countries they are visiting. It is assumed that ambassadors are concerned with devices expressing politeness in their speech delivery. Observations of ambassadorial speeches in this research showed a wide range of MMs used for the speakers' purpose of expressing their views, and mitigating the force of speech acts, especially when delicate issues have to be addressed. For example:

[154] ***I believe that*** Vietnam will find that its national interests will be well-served by a more active and representative legislature. [A03P]

[155] As one of the biggest investors of the European Union in Vietnam, ***should we*** have much hope about a new wave of investment from the UK in the near future? [B01F]

Moreover, when delivering diplomatic speeches, ambassadors are also aware that their discourse will have an effect on their countries' image. Therefore, the ambassadors pay considerable attention not only to the content of the propositions presented but also to other expressions added to the proposition to show their concern with the hearers' desire, their intimacy with hearers, and simultaneously their avoidance of any violation to the hearers' face wants. Expressions covering such functions are identified in samples of ambassadorial speeches as MMs indicating their politeness strategies.

MMs such as *If I may say, I must say that, I believe/hope/think/expect that, It is my hope/belief that, Let me say that, Let me tell you that, I am confident/sure that, I would suggest/mean/argue that, hopefully, clearly, frankly, and perhaps* are frequently used in ambassadorial speeches. Essentially, these expressions add no further information to the main content of the proposition uttered. However, they convey the social message that the ambassadors would like to communicate in their speeches. These patterns of MMs are used to serve the ambassadors' politeness strategies from three aspects:

- (1) In relation to the interactional function<sup>(19)</sup>, the ambassadors employ these patterns of MMs to inform hearers that they are fully aware of the delicacy of the issues presented and that these are mitigation devices used to minimise the force of speech acts to reveal their intimacy with hearers.
- (2) With regard to pragmatic functions, these patterns of MMs, as hedging devices, help create indirectness in the speech so that the speaker can attenuate face-threatening acts (FTAs) imposed on hearers.
- (3) These patterns of MMs are also used to save the speaker's face since they indicate the speaker's claim that he does not strongly commit himself to, nor is fully responsible for the occurrence of the event or the performance of the act uttered.

In this chapter MMs collected from ambassadorial speeches are categorised and analysed following two 'super-strategies' of *positive politeness* and *negative politeness* (see Brown and Levinson, 1987). The former is expressed via MMs of intimacy and closeness showing the speaker's concern with hearers' face wants. These MMs are based on the community's mode of social life to transfer the speakers' attendance, appraisal and approval towards hearers (see 8.2.1). The latter is identified through MMs in their function of avoiding intrusion into the other's privacy (see 8.2.2).

## **8.2 Politeness strategies in ambassadorial speeches**

This section consists of an analysis of politeness strategies used in samples of ambassadorial speeches. MMs collected are described and classified according to the two broad categories in terms of positive and negative politeness strategies. The former is central to MMs in their function of preserving the interactants' positive face, that is the desire to be appreciated or approved of by others. The latter is indicated by the use of MMs addressing negative face which refers to the claim to independence of action and freedom from imposition or interference (see Brown and Levinson, 1987). In other words, the analysis of positive politeness strategies in ambassadorial speeches will focus on patterns of MMs showing the interactants' desire for approval and that of negative politeness strategies is central to patterns of MMs concerned with autonomy (see also 3.3.2.3).

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<sup>(19)</sup> Halliday (1994) introduces a set of metafunctions referring to the interactional aspect of communication as 'interpersonal function'. Through this function the speaker exchanges information and sets up relationships with hearers/addressees. See also chapter III of this thesis at 3.1.7.

### 8.2.1 Positive politeness strategies

Positive politeness strategies in speech delivery are identified through language devices displaying the speaker's responsibility for maintaining or protecting the addressee's positive face. Such language devices, seen from the angle of positive politeness, are MMs added to the proposition to indicate the speaker's attendance to hearers' desires. In other words, MMs identified as indicators of positive politeness strategies are those conveying the speaker's message of closeness and intimacy to hearers. As Scollon and Scollon (1981) claim, positive politeness is the politeness of solidarity. Brown and Levinson (1987: 103-129) have proposed the "three broad mechanisms" of positive politeness: (1) "claim common ground", (2) "convey that S and H<sup>(20)</sup> are cooperators" and (3) "fulfil H's want for some X" which are actually indicators of the speaker's solidarity with hearers. Under the umbrella of politeness of solidarity, the classification and analysis of MMs into specific positive politeness strategies are presented in the following sections.

#### 8.2.1.1 Paying attention to hearers

In speech delivery the speaker pays attention not only to the information produced but also to other expressions connecting himself with hearers via the content of the utterance. One of these is the strategy of paying attention to hearers' needs or addressing hearers' desires without violating their face wants. This strategy is normally displayed by MMs implying that the speaker shares the hearers' views, approves of hearers' desires and would like to establish a common ground with hearers. Thus, MMs used in this strategy convey the speaker's concern with hearers' desires and pay attention to what is known to hearers as shown in the following excerpts:

[156] ***As you know***, the United States government through its implementing agency, USAID, has begun to implement the \$3 million appropriated by the US Congress in 2007 for dioxin mitigation and health activities and is already finalizing its first grants to strengthen disability services in Danang. [A04H]

[157] ***As many of you know*** only too well, land is a challenging issue to work on. [...] Many politicians find the issue of land reform too politically hot to handle -

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<sup>(20)</sup> 'S' stands for the speaker and 'H' for the hearers.

reforms are extremely difficult to achieve and land issues are emotive and potentially explosive... [B03J]

Observations of ambassadorial speeches show that MMs such as *as you know*, *as you may know*, and *as you probably know* are frequently used to indicate the speaker's attention to what hearers are expecting and to establish common ground with hearers. As in the excerpts above, what the speakers focus on is not only the propositions uttered but also MMs expressing their views. Patterns like *as you know* in [156] and *as many of you know* in [157] are identified as MMs of positive politeness strategy since they indicate the speakers' attention to what "H would want S to notice and approve of" (Brown and Levinson, 1987: 103). Furthermore, when using these patterns of MMs, the speaker implies that although what is presented is known to hearers, he finds it necessary to address it and be respectful of what hearers know. Therefore, these MMs not only express the speaker's attention to hearers but also a strategy to preserve the speaker's positive face when addressing things known to hearers. In addition, the attitude of paying attention to hearers is also recognised by the utilisation of the 2<sup>nd</sup> person subject 'you' in such patterns. That is to say the speaker directly addresses hearers to show his intimacy.

As in [156], '*as you know*' conveys the speaker's implication that he understands hearers' knowledge and that it is not only the message that is being impacted but also his attention (*as the representative of the US Government in Vietnam*) to hearers' concern with the issue presented (*dioxin mitigation and health activities ... to strengthen disability services in Danang*<sup>(21)</sup>).

In [157], with '*as many of you know*', the speaker shows his understanding of the situation and is sharing the hearers' concern (that *land is a challenging issue to work on*). This strategy also preserves the speaker's positive face in that although what is uttered is known to hearers, the utterance is central to the speaker's attention to hearers rather than his repetition of the information. The datasets collected from the research corpora show that MMs used in this strategy occur with a higher frequency in the AAC than in the BAC, accounting for 20 instances (at 3% of MMs used as politeness markers in the AAC) and 6 instances, (at 1% of MMs used as politeness markers in the BAC). This indicates that the

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<sup>(21)</sup> The US Ambassador addressed the issue of contaminant dioxin used by the US Army in Vietnam.

AAs are more direct than the BAs in addressing hearers with the use of the *you* pronoun showing the speaker's attention to hearer(s).

### 8.2.1.2 Expressing strong commitment

Observations of MMs in samples of ambassadorial speeches in this research show that patterns such as *I will* and *We will* are frequently used to express the high certainty scale in the speaker's commitment to the proposition. These patterns are characterised as MMs of positive politeness since they indicate the speaker's strong commitment to the performance of the act uttered such as making a promise, a plan or an arrangement and also involvement with the hearers in co-operating with the speaker. With these MMs of strong commitment the speaker attempts to persuade hearers, "to stress his agreement with H and therefore to satisfy H's desire to be 'right', or to be corroborated in his opinions" (Brown and Levinson, 1987: 112). Therefore, patterns of *intention will* combined with first person plural pronouns are categorised as MMs of positive politeness strategy. Observations of the research corpora show the difference between the British and American ambassadors in the use of these patterns for their positive politeness strategies as in the following excerpts:

[158] If confirmed as US Ambassador to Vietnam, **I will** protect American citizens and promote US interests, while fostering and developing a relationship with the leadership and the people of Vietnam that will be of mutual benefit to both countries. **I will** work diligently to gain continued and even better cooperation from Vietnam on our efforts to achieve the fullest possible accounting of our missing personnel from the Indochina conflict. **I will** continue to seek tangible progress from Vietnam in the areas of human rights and religious freedom, an area that must improve if US-Vietnamese relations are to continue to blossom. **I will** emphasize support for US business to penetrate the Vietnamese market. **I will** look for new ways to expand the growth of people-to-people ties between Vietnam and the United States. [A03A]

[159] **We will** work with UNICEF and NGOs to review the impact of social protection to ensure that it is the most effective way of meeting the needs and rights of orphans and vulnerable children. Indeed **we will** lead international efforts to halve unmet demand for family planning by 2010, to pave the way for universal access by 2015. [B04M]

[160] And *I do believe* these are the best basis for developing global guidelines. *I hope that we will* see all states at this conference support them. [B03D]

In [158] instances of '*I will*' are continually used to emphasise the speaker's commitment as promises to *protect American citizens; work diligently to gain continued and even better cooperation from Vietnam; continue to seek tangible progress from Vietnam; and look for new ways to expand the growth of people-to-people ties between Vietnam and the United States* Utilising these patterns of MMs, the speaker directly expresses his commitment to the occurrence of the event presented in the utterance. Observations of the research corpora show that the pattern '*I will*' occurs with a higher frequency in the AAC than in the BAC, accounting for 62 instances, at 9.33% of the total MMs as politeness strategies in the AAC compared with 24 instances, at 4.09% of those in the BAC.

With regard to the pattern '*we will*' the situation is quite complicated since the *we* pronoun can be used either inclusively or exclusively (see Quirk et al. 1985: 225). Inclusive *we* is used to express the speaker's involvement with hearers which means *I and you* whereas exclusive *we* excludes hearers from the event presented. Exclusive *we* refers to the speaker and any other interactants or in general represents his point of view. It is also a polite way that the speaker intentionally uses to avoid using the *I* pronoun. Inclusive *we* is used as an indicator of the speaker's desire to be part of the group of hearers (see 8.2.1.4). That is to say, with inclusive *we*, the speaker expresses his attempt in accomplishing the social goal of involving hearers in agreeing with him or co-operating with him to perform the act uttered.

As seen in [159], the pattern '*we will*' is also used to express the speaker's commitment but the *we* pronoun is used exclusively to refer to either the 'British diplomatic agents' or the speaker himself in his desire to be polite and of avoiding the *I* pronoun. This pattern with exclusive *we* occurs with a higher frequency in the BAC than in the AAC, accounting for 58 instances, at 9.90% of the total MMs in the BAC compared with 35 instances, at 5.25% of the total MMs in the AAC. This can be seen as a compensation for the higher frequency of the pattern '*I will*' in the AAC than in the BAC (as presented above).

The pattern '*we will*' with inclusive *we* indicates the speaker's purpose of involving hearers in the commitment to perform the act uttered. Moreover, observations of the ambassadorial speeches reveal that the reinforcement of the commitment with inclusive *we* is also hedged by other modality expressions prefacing this pattern (see 8.2.1.3). As in [160] the

pattern ‘*we will*’ is combined with other hedging expressions such as *Indeed / I do believe / I hope that we will...* These patterns are used to emphasise the speaker’s persuasive purpose of desiring the hearers’ co-operation with him in performing the act uttered and his politeness in leaving the right of determination to the hearers. The frequencies of the pattern with inclusive *we* are similar to that of exclusive *we*, with more instances found in the BAC, accounting for 83 (at 14.16%) than in the AAC, accounting for 47 (at 7.08%).

Such evidence of commitment patterns as discussed above indicates that the American Ambassadors (AAs) tend to feature the *I* pronoun more frequently than the British Ambassadors (BAs) with heavier use of the inclusive *we*. The high frequency of the pattern *I will* in the AAC represents the speaker’s commitment to his personal opinions, arguments and knowledge claims. The high frequency of inclusive *we* in the BAC indicates that the BAs, on the contrary, seem to be more formal and thus reserved in expressing commitment.

In sum, the high frequency of the *I* pronoun indicates that the AAs appear to be more personal and direct in expressing commitment (see 8.2.1.3). The BAs employ higher frequency of the *we* pronoun expressing indirectness as an alternative for the implication of a request. That is to say the pattern ‘*we will*’ is seen as an alternative for expressions such as ‘*you should*’, ‘*you need to*’ or ‘*you have to*’ to construct the speaker’s solidarity and involvement with hearers (see also Hyland, 2001) and makes the utterance sound more indirect and polite.

### **8.2.1.3 Hedging to address hearers’ positive face**

Hedging, among other rhetorical strategies, is normally used to convey the speaker’s lack of confidence or weak commitment to the content of the utterance (see Hyland, 1994; Meyer, 1994; Crompton, 1997; Fraser, 2010). Hedging is presented via a lexical item or structure initialising an utterance to imply that the speaker is not fully committed to, or responsible for, the certainty of the event presented. As observed in the research corpora, hedges serve both positive and negative politeness strategies. The former includes MMs that the speaker uses to address hearers’ positive face and the latter is used to hedge the force of a speech act to minimise the imposition of FTAs on hearers (presented in 8.2.2.3).

Hedging, as a positive politeness strategy, is related to MMs to indicate that the speaker knows what hearers want and is willing to take their wants into account. Hedging expressions normally function as weak committers “which are used to lower the degree to which X

commits himself to the state of affairs referred to in the proposition” (House and Kasper, 1981: 167), as analysed in the following excerpts:

[161] ***I hope*** the international community can work with countries such as Vietnam who will be most affected by climate change. [B02F]

[162] ***I hope*** that the governments of the United States and Vietnam, as well as their business communities and organizations like the VCCI, will work together to improve protection of IPR through the effective enforcement of existing laws and tougher penalties against IPR violations. [A03H]

Expressions like *I hope that...*, *I expect that...*, *I believe that...*, *I think that...*, *It is my hope that...*, and *It is my belief that...* (see 7.3) are frequently used in ambassadorial speeches to manifest the speaker’s appreciation and concern with hearers’ wants. Furthermore, with these MMs as hedges the speaker would like to send a message to hearers that he does not fully commit himself to the occurrence or the achievement of the event uttered but merely shows his belief in the case. Therefore, these patterns are identified as MMs of positive politeness hedging on hearers’ positive face.

Table 8.1: Distribution of MMs as hedges on hearers’ positive face

	I hope	I expect	I believe	I think	Total
The AAC	45 21.13%	4 1.88%	49 23.00%	115 53.99%	213 100%
The BAC	44 29.53%	3 2.01%	41 27.52%	61 40.94%	149 100%
Log likelihood	0.02	0.15	0.75	17.11	13.05

Table 8.1 illustrates patterns of epistemic MMs as hedges on hearers’ positive face collected in the research corpora. The AAs use such hedging expressions more frequently than the BAs, accounting for 213 instances (at 32.0% of the total MMs as politeness markers in the AAC) compared with 149 instances (at 25.4% of the total MMs as politeness markers in the AAC). In addition, the frequencies of individual patterns are also higher in the AAC than in the BAC. Remarkably, the frequency of the pattern ‘*I think*’ is the highest in both of the research corpora, accounting for 115 instances, at 53.99% of the total MMs as hedges in the AAC and 61 instances, at 40.94% of the total MMs as hedges in the BAC. This evidence



also supports the argument that the AAs are more personal and direct since they prefer patterns of MMs with the '*I*' pronoun (cf. 8.2.1.2).

There are also four instances of the pattern '*It is my hope / belief that*' found in the AAC which show the American ambassadors' special interests in the utilisation of variables of the first person singular pronoun. In this pattern, although the impersonal subject '*It*' conveys the sense of objectivity, the speaker's sense of subjectivity is still expressed via the use of the possessive adjective '*my*'. It can be explained that in their speeches the AAs showed more attention to sensitive issues than the BAs (i.e., the normalisation of bilateral relations between the US and Vietnam, post-war issues, political environment, social issues such as poverty, and disease) which potentially constitute FTAs on hearers (the Vietnamese audience). Therefore, in order to maintain diplomatic relations when addressing such sensitive issues, the AAs employ these patterns of MMs to hedge deliberately on the force of the critical comments (if possible) and turn hearers' attention to their appreciation and concern with hearers' needs.

#### **8.2.1.4 Expressing solidarity with hearers**

Positive politeness strategies, as discussed in the foregoing sections, are mainly used to express the speaker's attitude of intimacy with hearers, i.e., claiming a common point of view, involving co-operation, and attending to hearers' desires (see also Brown and Levinson, 1987: 103-129). In other words, these mechanisms make positive politeness strategies idiosyncratic as the politeness of solidarity. The following is an analysis of patterns of MMs collected from the research corpora as indicators of the speakers' solidarity with hearers.

##### **(i) Patterns with inclusive '*we*':**

The '*we*' pronoun is used both inclusively and exclusively as discussed in 8.2.1.2. As inclusive *we* is used to indicate the speaker's solidarity (Hyland, 2001) and create intimacy with hearers (Harwood, 2005), it is considered as a marker of the speaker's desire to be part of the hearers' group.

In this research all tokens of the *we* pronoun found in ambassadorial speeches are examined and only patterns with inclusive *we* are selected for analysis. Observations of instances of inclusive *we* in the research corpora show that it is used to combine with modal

auxiliary verbs to express the speakers' involvement with hearers in performing the act uttered as in Table 8.2.

Table 8.2: Frequencies of patterns with inclusive 'we' combined with modal auxiliaries

Modal	The AAC	The BAC	Subtotal	Log-likelihood
Will	37 (24.83%)	44 (26.03%)	81 (25.47%)	0.57
Can	35 (23.49%)	40 (23.67%)	75 (23.58%)	0.31
Need	24 (16.11%)	19 (11.24%)	43 (13.52%)	0.61
Must	17 (11.41%)	27 (15.98%)	44 (13.84%)	2.24
Should	14 (9.40%)	19 (11.24%)	33 (10.38%)	0.74
Would	13 (8.73%)	5 (2.97%)	18 (5.66%)	3.72
Could	3 (2.01%)	11 (6.51%)	14 (4.40%)	4.82
Might	3 (2.01%)	1 (0.59%)	4 (1.26%)	1.06
Ought	2 (1.34%)	0	2 (0.63%)	2.78
May	1 (0.67%)	0	1 (0.32%)	1.39
Shall	0 (0.00%)	3 (1.77%)	3 (0.94%)	4.14
<b>Total</b>	<b>149 (100%)</b>	<b>169 (100%)</b>	<b>318 (100%)</b>	<b>1.16</b>

With inclusive *we*, the speakers claim a common point of view with hearers and thus involve hearers in the commitment to the performance of the act or the occurrence of the event uttered as in *we will*, *we can*, *we would*, and *we could*. Inclusive *we* also helps to mitigate the sense of obligation or minimise the imposition on hearers since it indicates the speakers' sharing responsibility with hearers for performing the act uttered i.e., *we must*, *we need*, and *we should* as in the following excerpts:

[163] ***We need*** to ensure that encouraging media development in Vietnam is measured by the quality of coverage and reporting as well as the quantity of outlets. ***We must*** encourage the development of the highest professional standards among journalists. [B01R]

[164] Once Vietnam weans its economy from public financing, I am confident that ***we will*** see the domestic private sector blossom to its full potential. [A03I]

In [163], inclusive *we* is combined with deontic *must* or *need* to indicate the speaker's politeness strategy by expressing the sense of obligation or necessity indirectly. These

patterns help the speaker avoid an obligation directly imposed on hearers (i.e., *you must*) and imply that this is what the community ought to do. Furthermore, inclusive *we* indicates the speaker's solidarity with hearers in that he is urging himself to cooperate with hearers to perform the act uttered. That is to say the speaker addresses the responsibility of the community of the audience in which he is also a member (see also 8.2.2.7). As such, patterns of inclusive *we* combined with a deontic modal verb serve as MMs expressing the speaker's share of responsibility with hearers. These patterns with inclusive *we* are indicators of politeness because they replace *you need* or *you must*. In [164] the pattern *we will* conveys the sense of commitment (see 8.2.1.2). The speaker involves hearers and thus strengthens the commitment to the occurrence of the event uttered.

Therefore, inclusive *we* is considered as a marker of 'in-groupness' showing the speakers' solidarity with hearers (Brown and Levinson, 1987). Table 8.2 shows the overall instances of inclusive *we* combined with modal verbs, with 169 instances at 28.8% of the total MMs as politeness markers in the BAC and 149 instances, at 22.5% of the total MMs as politeness markers in the AAC. It is interesting that the frequencies of inclusive *we* combined with individual modal verb forms are higher in the BAC than in the AAC, especially with *will*, *can*, *must*, *should* and *could*. This evidence also supports the argument that the BAs seem to be more indirect by using inclusive *we* to seek hearers' agreement to strengthen the commitment to the performance of the act uttered (see 8.2.1.2).

**(ii) The pattern *let's*:**

Another pattern used to convey the sense of solidarity involving both the speaker and hearers in performing the event uttered is '*let's*' as in the following excerpts:

[165] *Let's* turn to *our* economic relationship with Vietnam. In my view, the United States and Vietnam need to continue to expand *our* economic relationship and to leverage the good will it can create to broaden *our* bilateral relations as well as to benefit *our* two economies. [A03B]

[166] *Let's* talk for a moment about the new areas where *we* really are not fully normalized. *We* don't have much of a military-to-military relationship, for obvious historical reasons. [A02F]

*Let's* can be seen as an indicator of the speaker's politeness since it shows the speaker's solidarity with hearers in performing the act uttered. This pattern indicates that the speaker

cares about the hearers' needs and appeals for hearers to co-operate with him. Other variables of the 1<sup>st</sup> person plural pronoun such as *we*, *our*, *us* also occur with this pattern to intensify the speaker's solidarity with hearers in the utterance.

However, the pattern *let's* has very few instances in the research corpora, accounting for only 5 instances in the AAC and none in the BAC. This infrequency can be explained in that the pseudo-imperative '*let's*' is normally used as an informal indicator of intimacy and is rarely used in samples of ambassadorial speeches. As compared with the pattern '*we will*' which is more formal (see 8.2.1.2), the pattern '*let's*' sounds more informal and may thus be infrequently used in ambassadorial speeches.

### (iii) Patterns with impersonal subject '*it*':

The sense of solidarity is also objectively expressed through patterns with the impersonal subject '*it*' combined with the possessive adjective *our* and a modal noun, i.e., *it is our responsibility*, *it is our opportunity*, and *it is our task* as in the following excerpt. (These are among the very few instance of non-auxiliary modal forms found in ambassadorial speeches for deontic modality.)

[167] It is up to us. It is our shared *responsibility*. It is our shared opportunity. And, working together, I believe it can be our shared achievement. [B04D]

With the use of the pattern '*it is our...*', '*it can be our...*' the speaker objectively expresses the attitude of solidarity and willingness to co-operate with hearers in meeting their needs. This impersonal structure indicates the speakers' indirect assertion such as *it is our shared responsibility/opportunity*. With such patterns the speaker involves hearers in the task and politely reminds hearers of their responsibility or indirectly imposes an obligation on hearers and avoids deontic patterns such as *you must*, *it is obligatory that*, and *it is obliged that*<sup>(22)</sup> which may constitute FTAs (see also Perkins, 1983). As such, this pattern is a strategy of imposing obligation or responsibility on inclusive *we* to show the speaker's politeness through his solidarity with hearers.

Moreover, with the inclusion of variables of 1<sup>st</sup> person plural pronouns (i.e., *we*, *us*, *our*) the speaker conveys the sense of "in-group membership" (Brown and Levinson, 1987: 107) to claim the common point of view with hearers. The speaker can demonstrate his solidarity

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<sup>(22)</sup> Modality markers of this type have been presented in previous studies in terms of "invented examples" (see Stubbs, 1996). However, in the corpora of this research no instances of such markers have been found.

in that he knows what hearers want and is willing to take hearers' needs into account. In addition, the variables of *inclusive we* involve all interactants in the performance of the act uttered which helps lower the imposition of responsibility, increase the communality of the event presented and thus indicates the speaker's politeness. In this strategy the speaker would like to show his solidarity and share responsibility with hearers rather than impose an obligation on hearers. The occurrence of this impersonal pattern in ambassadorial speeches is the reverse of that of '*let's*' with four instances found in the BAC and none in the AAC. In sum, it can be inferred from patterns of MMs expressing the speaker's solidarity with hearers that the BAs appear to be more indirect and objective (i.e., *it's our...*) whereas the AAs are more direct and subjective (i.e., *let's*).

#### 8.2.1.5 Expressing encouragement

Positive politeness has been characterised as the politeness of solidarity showing the speaker's agreement, co-operation and attendance to hearers (as discussed above). Observations of the research corpora reveal another aspect of the speaker's politeness in showing intimacy with hearers through MMs expressing encouragement.

In samples of ambassadorial speeches patterns such as '*you can...*' and '*please*' followed by action verbs are frequently used to express the speaker's encouragement and consultancy for hearers to perform the act suggested. These patterns of MMs are combined with explicit and direct statements to indicate the speakers' co-operative behaviour and are thus categorised as MMs of positive politeness as in the following excerpts:

[168] ***You can*** do this by re-registering online on our web site <http://www.uk-vietnam.org>, or by contacting our Consular Section. [B01O]

[169] ***You can*** find a great deal of information and statistics on those efforts on our website. [A04F]

[170] ***Please*** do not hesitate to contact me or my staff here or in Ho Chi Minh City on any issue – be it a success story or a problem. [A03I]

[171] ***Please*** feel free to contact the SISBO co-ordinator for Vietnam, who is my deputy, Kara Owen. She would be happy to talk through any concerns you have on these topics. [B01P]

In the excerpts above, although the patterns '*you can*' and '*please*' followed by an action verb sound like instructions, these patterns actually convey the speaker's sense of

encouragement by displaying a common point of view with hearers. In [168] and [169] the speakers directly encourage hearers to perform the act uttered via patterns with the *you* pronoun followed by possibility *can* and an action verb. This pattern is an alternative for an instruction since ‘*you can*’ indicates the speaker’s closeness and encouragement for hearers to perform the act uttered. In [170] and [171], encouragement is also expressed via the imperative structures directly addressed to hearers and *please* is considered as an indicator of politeness showing the speaker’s encouragement for hearers to perform the acts uttered. The frequencies of these patterns of MMs in the two research corpora are almost equal. Twenty instances of the pattern ‘*you can*’ were found in each of the research corpora; and 22 instances of the pattern with ‘*please*’ were found in the BAC compared with 19 in the AAC. These instances added together represent 5.9% of the total MMs in the AAC and 7.2% of those in the BAC. In sum, these patterns of MMs are categorised as indicators of encouragement that the speaker uses to mitigate his attitude of giving instructions and show his intimacy with his hearers.

#### 8.2.1.6 Expressing optimism

Another positive politeness strategy identified in the use of MMs in the research corpora is to express the speaker’s optimism. This is categorised as a positive politeness strategy as it involves the speaker’s concern for hearers’ needs to be met and satisfies the hearers’ desire to be approved. MMs expressing optimism show the speaker’s confidence in the “mutual shared interest” between himself and hearers (Brown and Levinson, 1987). With MMs expressing optimism the speaker simultaneously claims his common point of view with hearers and shows that hearers’ needs will certainly be met as in the following excerpts:

[172] ***I am highly optimistic that*** PNTR<sup>(23)</sup> ***will*** be granted, and ***cautiously optimistic that*** the process ***will*** reach conclusion before the APEC Leaders Meeting, which begins on November 18. [A03O]

[173] ***I am confident that*** Vietnam ***will*** continue to make the domestic changes needed to ensure the future prosperity and happiness of its people, [...] ***I am hopeful that*** - in recognition of its own interests - Vietnam ***will*** choose to strengthen its cooperation on challenges to global and regional stability that threaten us all. [A03P]

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<sup>(23)</sup> PNTR: Permanent normal trade relations, a legal designation in the United States for free trade with a foreign nation.

[174] ***I'm sure*** I speak on behalf of everyone in the room in saying that your passion for women's rights and social justice is an inspiration to us all. [B04H]

As seen in the excerpts above, politeness is indicated not only through the speakers' confidence but also in the implication that such confidence will result in a benefit for hearers and thus satisfy hearers' desires. Observations of the research corpora show that patterns such as *I am hopeful / optimistic / confident / certain / sure that...* are frequently used as MMs hedging on the main content of the utterance. These MMs followed by the modal *will* in the proposition indicate the speaker's optimism in the events uttered. Such patterns of MMs serve as indicators of the speakers' concern with hearers' interests in *the process of PNTR* as in [172], *the future prosperity and happiness of Vietnamese people* as in [173], and *the passion for women's rights and social justice* as in [174].

The data sets collected indicate that the frequency of MMs expressing the speakers' optimism in the AAC is double that in the BAC, accounting for 65, at 9.8% of MMs in the AAC and 33 instances, at 5.6% of MMs in the BAC. This also modifies the claim that the AAs are more personal and direct with preference in using the *I* pronoun (cf. 8.2.1.3). The BAs, however, use the *we* pronoun more frequently which indicates that they are more formal and cautious in their speech delivery (cf. 8.2.1.4). In sum, it can be argued that the AAs are more straightforward in expressing politeness whereas the BAs are more indirect and reserved (see also 7.3.1 and 7.3.2).

#### **8.2.1.7 Complimenting to mitigate the force of critical comments**

Observations of the research corpora show situations in which the ambassadors have to present suggestions or comments on specific issues containing potential FTAs on hearers. To mitigate the force of such FTAs, the speaker normally provides a compliment before presenting a suggestion or comment on an issue. Complimenting is considered as a politeness strategy that the speaker conducts to persuade hearers. On the one hand, the positive appraisal is a signal of solidarity that the speaker would like to create in order to meet hearers' face wants to be approved of. On the other hand, when the negative remark is presented via a specific comment or suggestion, the compliment performs the role of a softener redressing the FTA to preserve the hearers' positive face and thus show politeness as in the following excerpts:

- [175] *Vietnam has a number of unique qualities that make it very attractive to investors. **On the other hand**, the investment climate **can** be improved in a whole number of ways, mainly through improvement of the legal framework. [A04B]*
- [176] *All around Vietnam, one **can** see energy, enthusiasm and hope. **But** set against its many successes, Vietnam faces significant challenges, not the least of which is its education system. **While** this country's sustained economic growth has exceeded expectations, and the Vietnamese people continue to place an extremely high priority on education, the human resource infrastructure here has simply not developed sufficiently to support the growing demands. [A03X]*
- [177] *Geographically, Vietnam is quite lucky. Vietnam is next to China, and foreign investors will strategically think about Vietnam first when they want to add the next nation to their list after China. In addition, with its long coastline, Vietnam is likely more connected to the world. **If you could** improve your deep-sea ports, export **would** be much easier. Vietnam is moving forward in the right direction, and many experts think that it is building a firm grounding for strong development. **However**, **you should** “run” even faster. [B01I]*
- [178] *So why do companies choose Vietnam? I have already hinted at some of the reasons: Vietnam has a large and growing domestic market, a young population (52% are under 25), a good work ethic, high literacy rates, political and economic stability, an abundance of natural resources and is well-positioned to supply other Asian markets, crucially China. But **if Vietnam is to continue** to attract FDI, **it needs to make** some more changes to its business environment. [B01K]*

Patterns of MMs as in [175] and [176] were frequently used in the AAC while those occurring in [177] and [178] were commonly found in the BAC. The common point is that all excerpts start with compliments and positive remarks. Actually, these MMs serve the speakers' purpose of redressing the FTAs included in the critical comment that follows. The difference between the BAs and the AAs is in the utilisation of MMs to switch from complimenting to making suggestions or comments.

The AAs seem to be more direct in addressing the negative points which may cause FTAs on hearers (see also 7.3.1). As in [175] the sense of criticism is directly presented through comments on the *improvement of the legal framework; the investment climate*. In [176] the



speaker appears to be straightforward, performing FTAs “baldly, without redress” (Brown and Levinson, 1987: 69) when addressing the weak points such as *Vietnam faces significant challenges; not the least of which is its education system; the human resource infrastructure here has simply not developed sufficiently*. As such, these comments are preceded by compliments connected with MMs such as concessive subordinators (i.e., *while, whereas*); concessive conjuncts (i.e., *however, on the other hand*); adversative coordinators (i.e., *but, still*). Such MMs, connecting a critical comment with praise, were found with a higher frequency in the AAC than in the BAC, accounting for 31 instances, at 4.67% of the total MMs in the AAC compared with 5 instances, at 0.85% of the total MMs in the BAC.

The BAs appear to be more indirect and thus more reserved in addressing issues with negative effects. As seen in [177] and [178], in addition to the praise opening the utterance, critical comments are cautiously hedged by means of modal verb forms, i.e., *could, would* and *should*; embedded modality expressions, i.e., *many experts think that..., it needs to...*; and other hedges in terms of *conditionals*. Interestingly, these MMs occur with a higher frequency in the BAC than in the AAC, accounting for 17 instances, at 2.90% of the total MMs in the BAC compared with 3 instances, at 0.45% of those in the AAC.

It could be claimed that complimenting is actually a strategy for mitigating the effects of critical comments. The British and American ambassadors are different in their use of MMs to switch from complimenting to making comments in that the BAs are more indirect and reserved whereas the AAs are more direct in addressing negative points.

### **8.2.2 Negative politeness strategies**

Negative politeness strategies, as presented earlier in this chapter, are normally undertaken to reflect the desire for independence in action and freedom from imposition. To implement this type of politeness in speech delivery, the speaker normally employs MMs to hedge on the negative force presented in the utterance so as not to impinge on hearers’ interests. MMs as negative politeness strategies are considered as hedging devices used to indicate the speaker’s avoidance in violating hearers’ freedom or imposing on hearers in the utterance presented. If positive politeness strategies (8.2.1) exhibit ‘solidarity’, negative politeness strategies exhibit ‘deference’ (see also Johnson and Yang, 1990). Negative politeness strategies are employed in speeches to address hearers’ negative face, as claimed in Brown and Levinson’s (1987) model, as the face want to be able to act freely and

unimpeded by others. MMs found in the research corpora expressing negative politeness strategies are categorised in the following sections.

### 8.2.2.1 Minimising imposition on hearers through indirectness

The core issue in negative politeness strategies, as presented above, is to show the speaker’s attitude of deference and attempt to minimise imposition. That is to say what is presented in the utterance may contain FTAs, and thus the speaker has to implement politeness to mitigate potential negative force. Actually, in the strategy of minimising imposition on hearers the speaker normally uses MMs as downtoners “to modulate the impact his utterance is likely to have” on hearers (House and Kasper, 1981: 167). These are also in line with what Brown and Yule (1983) suggest as ‘mitigation markers’ which are used in the utterance to minimise the force of the act uttered.

Observations of the research corpora show that epistemic modality markers in terms of modal adverbs i.e., *perhaps, probably, maybe*; and modal verb forms i.e., *may, might* are mainly used in samples of ambassadorial speeches to realise this negative politeness strategy.

Table 8.3: Epistemic MMs used for minimising imposition

	Perhaps	Probably	Maybe	Subtotal	May	Might	Subtotal
The AAC	25 37.88%	27 40.91%	14 21.21%	66 100%	10 66.67%	5 33.33%	15 100%
The BAC	14 70.00%	5 25.00%	1 5.00%	20 100%	27 69.23%	12 30.77%	39 100%
Log likelihood	3.20	16.73	13.51	26.17	8.03	2.94	10.93

Table 8.3 demonstrates the raw counts of MMs as indicators for minimising the sense of imposition. These epistemic MMs, as claimed in Coates (1983: 31), indicate “the speaker’s lack of confidence in the proposition expressed”. However, in terms of pragmatics it can be argued that these are signals of negative politeness strategies rather than indicators of the speaker’s lack of confidence or weak commitment. The reason is that with the utilisation of such epistemic MMs as “downtoners” (House and Kasper, 1981), the speakers focus on mitigating the force of imposition on hearers as in the following excerpts:

[179] ***Some of you may recall that*** I have talked before about our Security Information Service for Business Overseas, or SISBO for short. [B01P]

[180] Indeed, because of this WTO-induced market openness, ***we might expect*** Vietnam to take somewhat surprisingly forward positions on issues such as a new EU-ASEAN Free Trade Agreement. [B01G]

[181] ***Perhaps*** most importantly, Vietnam still needs effectively to enforce intellectual property rights laws. [A02I]

[182] In a business sense, you ***probably*** really should plan to be patient. It takes time, it takes longer than you may think sometimes. And also please stop by the American Embassy. [A02C]

Epistemic MMs in excerpts above are identified as mitigation markers since they satisfy the speakers' implication in minimising potential threats imposed on hearers. The major difference between the AAs and the BAs is in their selection of types of MMs to conduct this strategy. In [179] the expression '*some of you may recall that*' can be seen as the speaker's deference as an alternative for a command as *please recall that...* That is to say epistemic *may* followed by an action verb is used to minimise the force of a direct command and create an indirect speech act that the speaker would like to instruct on hearers and simultaneously expresses his respect for hearers' independence. In [180], the speaker's implication is to urge *Vietnam to take somewhat surprisingly forward positions on issues such as a new EU-ASEAN Free Trade Agreement*. However, rather than using a direct expression of the deontic sense (i.e., *Vietnam should/must take...*) the speaker chooses an indirect way through the epistemic expression *We might expect Vietnam to take...* to minimise the force of urging hearers to perform the action presented.

Such patterns of epistemic MMs, collected from the research corpora, include epistemic *may* or *might* combined with an action verb i.e., *recall, expect, think, see, and realise*. These are used to create the indirectness that minimises the sense of imposition on hearers. Such patterns of MMs occur with a higher frequency in the BAC than in the AAC, accounting for 39 and 15 instances, respectively. This is also in line with the decline of modal verb form use in American English as claimed in Leech (2003).

Modal adverbs such as *perhaps, probably* and *maybe* are also MMs used to mitigate the sense of imposition. As in [181], *perhaps* attenuates the force of a direct necessity that '*Vietnam still needs effectively to enforce intellectual property rights laws*'. In [182], *probably* softens the sense of an obligation that '*you really should plan to be patient*'. It is

interesting to find that modal adverbs in this function occur with a higher frequency in the AAC than in the BAC, accounting for 66 and 20 instances, respectively (see Table 8.3). Perhaps this can be seen as compensation for the less frequent use of the modal *may* in American English as presented above.

These instances of MMs as expressions of minimising imposition on hearers added together number 56, at 22.4% of the total MMs in the AAC and 77, at 18.7% of those in the BAC. It could be claimed that BAs appear to be reserved through their selection of MMs with a modal auxiliary verb combined with an action verb while AAs appear to be more direct through the use of modal adverbs (see also 5.2.2.3 and 7.3.2).

Indirectness is considered as an indicator of politeness since it shows the speaker's effort at minimising FTAs on hearers. The degree of indirectness shows the speaker's respect for the hearers' freedom, leaving them non-coerced. As in [179], with the pattern '*some of you may recall that...*' the speaker indirectly imposes a command on hearers to *recall that...* In [180] the hedging expression *we might expect Vietnam to take...* is an alternative to the sense of an obligation on the addressee as *Vietnam should / have to take...* Therefore, it can be argued that minimising imposition through indirectness is the signal of a negative politeness strategy because with the utilisation of MMs expressing indirectness the speaker can hedge on the negative force imposed on hearers and simultaneously show his respect to hearers' determination of action and freedom from imposition.

#### **8.2.2.2 Making tentative claims**

Samples of ambassadorial speeches patterns such as *I would say that, I would mean that,* and *I would admit that* known as "harmonic phrases" (Coates, 1983) or "parenthetical forms" (Perkins, 1983) are frequently used to show the speaker's politeness strategy as making tentative claims. With the *I* pronoun combined with *would* and a performative verb, the speaker makes a tentative claim or desire towards the occurrence of the event uttered. Politeness is indicated through the speaker's implication of leaving the right of determination or judgement to hearers. Such MMs are characterised as elements serving the speakers' negative politeness strategy in making tentative claims.

Observations of MMs of tentativeness in the research corpora show that they are used to serve the speaker's interactive purpose in both ways. On the one hand, the modal *would* is used to minimise the imposition of the act presented by the performative verb. That is to say

the pattern '*I would*' conveys the sense of the speaker's suggestion rather than imposition (because it can be paraphrased as *if given a choice I would...* or *if you let me I would...*). Tentative *would* also functions as an indicator of the speaker's weak commitment since it conveys the sense of non-assertion. Therefore, MMs of tentativeness not only help avoid an imposition on or violation of the hearers' freedom but also emphasises the speaker's opinion that it is good for the event uttered to occur as in the following excerpts:

[183] We just had the agreement during the Prime Minister's visit to begin negotiations.

We've had some preliminary talks already. In fact I think we've had several sessions of preliminary talks. We're still finalizing the dates for the first round of talks. ***I would expect*** them to happen sometime in September or October. [A04F]

[184] But, ***I would argue that*** economic growth does not need to harm the environment.

Of course, the notion that economic growth and the environment are and should be mutually reinforcing is not a new concept. [A03N]

[185] And given the interconnected nature of the challenges we face, ***I would argue that***

we have to simultaneously be fighting to end poverty, to secure trade justice, and to tackle conflict and climate change as well as working to defeat terrorism and ensure the preservation of our security. [B04D]

[186] This letter will not reach all of you. But ***I would ask you*** to share it around any resident British expatriates you know of. For those who did not receive a copy of their own, my apologies, and a plea to check with our Consular Section that your registration is up to date. [B01O]

In these excerpts MMs of tentativeness are used to avoid direct claims and imply that the speakers would like to leave the right of determination to hearers. This satisfies the speaker's attitude of 'deference' to hearers since these MMs indicate that what is presented is simply the speaker's tentative claim or suggestion. The speaker still respect hearers' freedom in making decisions. Patterns such as *I would* followed by a performative verb, i.e., *say, mean, admit, expect, argue, realise, and ask* are normally used to substitute for a present tense form structure (i.e., *I say..., I mean...*) to make the utterance more polite. Thus, it can be claimed that patterns with tentative *would* indicate the effect of supposition which implies the speaker's avoidance of a direct assertion or imposition on hearers.

Although the pattern ‘*I would*’ followed by a performative verb indicates the speaker’s personal intention, MMs of this type actually convey the speaker’s respect for hearers through tentative *would*. A form such as ‘*I would argue that*’ is more tentative and thus more polite than ‘*I argue that*’ and ‘*I would ask you*’ is less directly imposed and thus more formal than ‘*I ask you*’. In [183] the speaker politely conveys his desire for *the talks to happen sometime in September or October* through such a pattern of tentativeness. In [184] and [185] politeness is expressed through MMs indicating that the speakers tentatively make arguments. In [186] the speaker implies that *if I may I will ask you...*

The data sets collected in the research corpora show that the frequency of these MMs of tentativeness in the AAC is higher than in the BAC, accounting for 52 instances, at 11.9% of MMs in the AAC and 24 instances, at 9.2% of those in the BAC. It can be explained that the AAs are more direct and personal with a preference for the use of the *I* pronoun, while the BAs appear to be indirect and formal with more variables of the *we* pronoun used (see also 8.2.1.2 and 8.2.1.4).

### **8.2.2.3 Hedging on the force of an FTA**

Observations of samples of ambassadorial speeches show that there are situations when the speaker addresses sensitive issues that potentially impinge on the hearers’ negative face. The politeness strategy implemented to avoid violating hearers’ face in such cases is hedging on the negative force of an FTA by using impersonalised patterns. MMs used in this politeness strategy indicate that what is uttered may be an objective consequence rather than the speaker’s assertion. In samples of ambassadorial speeches, patterns with impersonal subjects ‘*it*’ and ‘*there*’ combined with a modal verb form are typically used to mitigate the negative effect of FTAs. Such MMs imply that the speaker does not commit himself to nor is responsible for the performance of the act uttered as in the following excerpts:

[187] ***It may be that*** those running the healthcare system are failing to buy sufficient quantities of the right drugs, whether through lack of funding or indeed organisation. ***It may be that*** even when the right drugs are bought, they can’t be properly distributed to health centres and pharmacies. And ***it may be that*** criminals and corrupt officials are stealing medicines or buying counterfeits. [B04L]

[188] Again, without the free flow of information ***it will be impossible*** for Vietnam to reach its full potential. ***You have to*** let the information in and trust your people to be able to decipher what is good information for them and what is not. [A03Y]

[189] ***There should be*** a simple “Special Safeguard Mechanism” for protecting countries from fluctuations in the volume and price of imports. And all developed countries, and the larger developing nations, should be providing the Least Developed Countries with duty and quota free access for all products. [B04B]

[190] Again, I think ***there may be*** a confidence-building process going on here as well. As the government develops more confidence in the people themselves, then maybe ***there will be*** more freedom of expression. [A04F]

In the excerpts above the impersonal subjects ‘*it*’ or ‘*there*’ combined with a modal verb play the role of mitigation markers. The speakers use such MMs to hedge on the negative effects of sensitive issues that may violate hearers’ pride. As we can see, each of the excerpts above contains a sense of criticism which will potentially perform FTAs on hearers. The criticism presented in [187] on the *failure in medicine distribution and healthcare system management* may hurt hearers’ self-respect. Similarly, [188] paraphrased as *Vietnam will not be able to reach its full potential* conveys the comment which may create FTAs on hearers. In [189] the speaker addresses the responsibility of *all developed countries... for protecting the least developed countries* which sounds more like a command to the addressees. [190] represents the speaker’s request for *the government to develop more confidence in the people...*

Obviously, it would be unwise to express critical comments as directly as paraphrased above since such straightforward criticism will create FTAs and certainly impinge on the hearers’ self-respect. Therefore, these comments have to be embedded in patterns of MMs such as *it may be, it will be, there should be* and *there may be*. These patterns of MMs play the role of hedges on the negative force of FTAs making a comment impose on no overt subject to indicate the speaker’s objective and diplomatic judgement.

The datasets collected from the research corpora reveal the speakers’ interest in using such MMs as hedges for their negative politeness strategies. The impersonal subject ‘*there*’ occurs more frequently in the BAC than in the AAC, accounting for 38 and 13 instances, respectively. Similarly, the frequency of the pattern with impersonal ‘*it*’ in the BAC is much

higher than that in the AAC, accounting for 43 compared with 23 instances. Added together, these instances of hedges equate to 13.7% of MMs in the AAC and 18.7% of those in the BAC. Such comparisons of the frequencies of MMs intensify support for the argument that the BAs seem to be more indirect and impersonal than the AAs in using MMs to express their politeness strategies (see also 8.2.2.1).

In sum, these patterns with impersonal subjects are signals of indirectness that the speakers intentionally use to hedge the sense of a command or criticism on the issues uttered. With these hedging devices the speaker may feel safer addressing sensitive issues tactfully because these MMs help avoid violating the hearers' negative and positive face. It could be claimed that these patterns of impersonalisation are MMs expressing the speaker's negative politeness strategy since they are used to turn a critical comment into a suggestion. With such impersonalised MMs hedging on the force of FTAs, the speaker can minimise the imposition of criticism on hearers objectively and thus acquire politeness.

#### **8.2.2.4 Expressing a hypothesis**

Negative politeness, as discussed in the foregoing parts of this superstrategy, is mainly related to the speaker's art of hedging through indirectness, tentativeness or objectivity. This section discusses another negative politeness strategy of hedging which is using MMs to express a hypothesis. Hypotheses are normally expressed by the use of "secondary modals" among which hypothetical *would* is the most frequently used (see Perkins, 1983: 50-56). A hypothesis can be considered as a condition for the act uttered to be performed or the event presented to occur (see also 7.2.7). However, observations of ambassadorial speeches in this research show that the major point is not in the hypothetical *would* itself but in the speaker's implication to hedge on the negative effect that may occur in the propositional content uttered. Therefore, "hypothetical *would* is used pragmatically to express politeness or tentativeness rather than a genuine hypothesis" (Coates, 1983: 216). Hypothetical *would* is used as a marker of politeness to compensate for the strong sense of a command included in the utterance and turn it into a suggestion as analysed in the following excerpts:

[191] The Vietnamese Government **needs** to act like a referee and not a player in its own economy, even if this means relinquishing a great deal of control to market forces.

**If these steps are taken**, Vietnam would have a true level playing field and would become a mecca for foreign investment. [A03I]



[192] In addition, with its long coastline, Vietnam is likely more connected to the world.

**If you could improve your deep-sea ports**, export would be much easier. [B01I]

Although the speaker may concentrate on asking the addressees *to act like a referee*, *improve deep-sea ports*, with the existence of hypothetical *would* the excerpts above turn the sense of a command into suggestions. In addition, to some extent these excerpts can be perceived as the speakers' critical comments. However, with the strategy of expressing a hypothesis, the speaker can avoid direct impositions of critical comments on hearers and obtain politeness in the utterance. Therefore, it can be claimed that hypothetical *would* is more tentative and less assertive than *will* of strong commitment (see 8.2.1.2).

Hypothetical *would* is identified as a mitigation marker in the utterance helping the speaker avoid the force of a command imposed on the addressee. As in [191], the beginning of this utterance sounds like a command. In this case the hypothetical *would* tactfully expressed that mitigates the force imposed on the addressee, *the Vietnamese Government, to act like a referee...* In [192] the strategy of expressing a hypothesis is implemented to minimise the force imposed on the addressee, Vietnam, *to improve the deep-sea ports*. As such, patterns of MMs expressing hypotheses can be seen as indicators of the speaker's courtesy through indirectness or tentativeness. Instead of issuing instructions to hearers the speaker presents a hypothesis as *it would be better* for the act to be performed and thus, avoids an imposition on hearers. Hypothetical *would* can be seen to show the speaker's politeness in making the utterance sound more tentative and less assertive as analysed in the following excerpts:

[193] The Prime Minister suggested to me that maybe what would be appropriate for me would be to have a Bilateral Investment Treaty signed with Vietnam. Well guess what? During the visit of the Prime Minister we agreed that we would start negotiations on a Bilateral Investment Treaty with Vietnam. [A04F]

[194] Vietnam cannot afford to be complacent about climate change, a one metre rise in sea level would put over 10% of the population under water. Environmental protection has been neglected in the dash for growth. It now needs urgent attention.

[B01G]

In the excerpts above hypothetical *would* indicates the speakers' tentativeness paraphrased as '*if possible, it will be...*' or '*it could be estimated that*', '*there is a possibility that*'. With

regard to the sense of tentativeness, to be polite the speaker can tactfully present the possibility for the occurrence of the event uttered and thus avoid a direct assertion.

The datasets of MMs collected in samples of ambassadorial speeches show that hypothetical *would* occurs with a higher frequency in the BAC than in the AAC, accounting for 89 instances, at 20.5% of MMs as politeness expressions in the BAC compared with 49 instances, at 18.6% of those in the AAC. The difference in frequency use of patterns with hypothetical *would* combined with an action verb between the AAC and the BAC indicates that the BAs are more reserved and formal in using more patterns of tentativeness than the AAs (cf. 8.2.2.2).

#### **8.2.2.5 Attenuating the force of an assertion**

Negative politeness strategies are mainly implemented when the speakers have to address sensitive issues in their speech delivery (as discussed above). MMs used in this super-strategy are combined with the proposition to mitigate the imposition on hearers. In this section we continue with the discussion on MMs collected in the research corpora that serve the speakers' politeness in attenuating the force of an assertion.

Observations of the datasets collected in samples of ambassadorial speeches show that MMs used to cover this negative politeness strategy are the semi-modal verbs *seem* and *appear*. With these MMs the level of assertion referring to the performance of the act uttered can be minimised, specifically when the speakers address sensitive issues involving critical comment or commitment in their speeches as in the following excerpts:

[195] Exporters should be prepared to put in a lot of time and effort in developing their relationships, in researching the market and developing their business. Similarly investors should be prepared to work their way through what can sometimes *appear* a labyrinth of complex regulations. [B01K]

[196] The United States needs to do more, we have this troubled history; and it doesn't *seem* to be balanced at all by any kind of expressions of gratitude or enthusiasm, that relations *appear* to be warming. [A01E]

The semi-modal verbs *seem* and *appear* are used as indicators of the speaker's desire to appear polite when making critical comments on sensitive issues. *Appear* in [195] has the effect of a content mitigation marker. With this semi-modal verb, the speaker implies a weak commitment in his comment on *the investment market in Vietnam*. Although the message

from this utterance is in the speaker's critical comment on this market as *a labyrinth of complex regulations*, his attitude of assertion can be attenuated by the semi-modal verb *appear* as a mitigation marker. In [196] the speaker is addressing the sensitive issue of a *troubled history* which may create FTAs on both the speaker and hearers. The negative form given to the semi-modals *seem* and *appear* can be seen as a strategy of positive negation. That is to say criticism can be attenuated and the positive suggestion for the bilateral relation *to be balanced* and *to be warming* is emphasised. These markers can be seen to attenuate the direct assertion that the *troubled history* between both sides has not been balanced and that bilateral relations need reinforcing to improve.

Such MMs attenuating the force of assertion are found with similar frequencies in both research corpora, accounting for 16 instances, at 6.1% of the total MMs in the AAC and 18 instances, at 4.1% of those in the BAC. These semi-modal verbs are considered as markers of the ambassadors' politeness strategies in their diplomatic speech delivery because they indicate that the speakers are not determined to impose any assertion on the addressee. These MMs in the sense of tentativeness are identified as an element of the speaker's negative politeness strategies in making diplomatic judgements on the issues uttered rather than expressing a direct assertion.

#### **8.2.2.6 Expressing humility**

Another negative politeness strategy identified from samples of ambassadorial speeches is in the use of MMs expressing the speaker's humility. As discussed in previous sections, in speech delivery the speaker normally employs MMs as strategic hedges to mitigate the force of the speech act that may be imposed on the addressee. The most common indicator in expressing humility is to use MMs expressing the speaker's request for permission when he has to address sensitive issues that may impinge on hearers. Observations of the research corpora show that the two patterns of MMs frequently used to express the speakers' humility are '*let me*' and '*I would like to*' followed by action verbs.

##### **(i) The pattern '*let me*':**

The pattern '*let me*' is used as a marker of politeness in two ways. It is an indicator of the speaker's request for permission to present an opinion or to perform an act. This pattern can be paraphrased as '*if you let me I will...*' displaying the speaker's humility. This pseudo-imperative structure also helps the speaker preserve his face in this pattern of requesting

permission, the speaker appears not to be inferior to hearers as in other formal alternatives i.e., *could you permit me, could I have your permission, please allow me, and I would be grateful if you could* as suggested in Aijmer (1996). Expressing humility is considered a strategy the speaker uses to persuade hearers, as in the following excerpts:

[197] Let me close by coming back to that original question: is it for real this time? Yes, I think it is. The Vietnamese government have learned some painful lessons from the “irrational exuberance” of the mid-90s. [B01K]

[198] Like any relationship, there are real highs, and genuine challenges in our bilateral ties, but let me make a prediction – I believe that we are poised to take our relationship with Vietnam into a new, deeper phase, leading to closer ties in many more areas. [A03S]

As seen in the excerpts above, the pattern *let me* plays the role of a mitigation marker. The speaker is aware that the matter presented in the proposition may impose an FTA on hearers and the pattern *let me* is the selection to initialise this sensitive issue. The major function of this pattern is to mitigate the negative force that the propositional content may create. This pattern is interpreted as a way of expressing the speaker’s attitude of humbleness paraphrased as “*if you let me I’d like to say that...*” (see Dedaic, 2004: 53). In [197] the speaker uses this pattern to request permission to address *the Vietnamese government* and in [198] for making a prediction about the bilateral relation.

Table 8.4: The frequencies of patterns *let me* and *let’s*

	Let me	Let’s	Total
The AAC	26 (83.87%)	5 (16.13%)	31 (100%)
The BAC	45 (100%)	0	45 (100%)
Log likelihood	5.05	6.96	2.52

Observations of the research corpora show that BAs use this pattern more frequently than AAs, with 45 instances, at 10.37% of the total MMs of negative politeness in the BAC compared with 26 instances, at 9.63% of those in the AAC. It is interesting to note in Table 8.4 that the frequencies of the pattern *let me* are much higher than those of the pattern *let’s* (see 8.2.1.4) in both the research corpora. The difference between the frequency use of these patterns underscores an idiosyncrasy in the selection of patterns expressing politeness in

samples of ambassadorial speeches. The infrequency of the pattern *let's* compared with the high frequency of the pattern *let me* reveals the ambassadors' interest in formal structures as politeness expressions. It can be argued that *let me* is more formal and thus occurs with higher frequencies than *let's*, which is more intimate.

In addition, the distance between the frequencies of the pattern *let me* in the research corpora, with 26 instances found in the AAC compared with 45 in the BAC (see Table 8.4), also emphasises the BAs' preference in the selection of this pattern expressing humility. Conversely, 5 instances of the pattern *let's* found in the AAC compared with none in the BAC more or less indicate the AAs' interest in the use of solidarity expressions (see 8.2.1.4). All in all, this evidence supports the argument that in implementing politeness strategies in the use of MMs, the BAs appear to be more reserved whereas the AAs seem to be more intimate in their speech delivery.

**(ii) The pattern '*I would like to*':**

This pattern is characterised as a marker of negative politeness since it indicates the speaker's request for permission from hearers to present a speech act. With the *I* pronoun combined with the modal *would* of volition followed by *like to* this pattern is identified as a conveyor of the speaker's humility. That is to say with this pattern, the speaker not only expresses his preference tactfully but also shows his respect to hearers formally. Therefore, the pattern *I would like to* can be seen as a marker of negative politeness showing the speakers' implication in avoiding a direct imposition on hearers as in the following excerpts:

[199] ***I would like to*** suggest that we need to embrace a definition of a "success" in our relationship which is broader and more inclusive. Our definition of "success" cannot be limited to commercial progress. US-Vietnam relations represent more than our bilateral trade agreement. [A02M]

[200] ***I would like to*** suggest tonight that VSO volunteers have played a vital, indeed key role in turning Britain's concern for global poverty into practical action. [B04I]

First of all, the excerpts above simply indicate the speakers' suggestions. However, what the speakers would like to accomplish is not simply the presentation of such suggestions. With the pattern '*I would like to*' the speakers can courteously show their expectation towards the addressee's performance of the act presented. It is obvious that '*I would like to suggest that*' is indirect and sounds more polite than '*I suggest that*'. Therefore, the speaker's courtesy in

this pattern can be paraphrased as *if you let me I would suggest that* or *I would like you to agree with me in my suggestion that...*

In the research corpora, the pattern '*I would like to*' is found to precede performative verbs such as *suggest*, and *say*. These verbs convey the sense of suggestion, order or advice which may represent FTAs on hearers. Therefore, the pattern '*I would like to*' prefacing such verbs is a wise selection to compensate for the imposition that the speaker may create on his hearers. There are 34 instances of this pattern, at 12.93% of MMs as negative politeness in the AAC compared with 13 instances, at 2.99% of those in the BAC. The comparison of frequencies of this pattern in the research corpora also supports the argument presented above that the AAs are more subjective than the BAs through the use of the *I* pronoun (cf. 5.2.2.3).

#### **8.2.2.7 Mitigating the negative force of obligation**

Although ambassadorial speeches can be considered as potentially face-threatening and the ambassador (as the speaker) is always cautious in addressing sensitive issues, there are situations in speech delivery when the speaker imposes some specific obligations on hearers. This is obviously not easy, especially in diplomatic speech delivery, because imposing an obligation on hearers will certainly lead to violating their face wants and may cause a negative effect on the relationship among the interactants. Therefore, the speaker has to pay special attention to additional devices to mitigate the negative force of obligation imposed on hearers in order to preserve the interactants' face.

As discussed in the semantics of modal verbs in the foregoing chapters, deontic *must* is the most frequently-used in conveying the sense of obligation (see 5.2.1). However, this deontic modal verb of strong obligation potentially creates FTAs. As such, the speaker normally attempts to minimise the force of obligation contained in this modal verb by making it impose on no overt subject. This politeness strategy is conveyed by combining deontic *must* with other elements to attenuate imposition and make the utterance sound less obligatory and thus accomplish politeness (see 5.2.1).

Observations of the research corpora show that the pattern *we must* is the most commonly-used to mitigate the imposition of obligation. This pattern can be considered as a hearer-oriented hedging device. With the pattern *we must* the speaker desires to group himself with his hearers in the responsibility for the performance of the act uttered. This pattern is actually used as an objective alternative for the pattern *you must*. As such, with

inclusive *we* combined with deontic *must* the speaker can accomplish his politeness in two ways: mitigating the negative force of obligation and sharing responsibility with hearers as in the following excerpts:

[201] *Our response* to this crisis *must* be different. *We must* do more to help poor people, so that they can emerge from this crisis with their livelihoods, their assets and indeed their health. And *we must* respond to the particular challenges facing women and girls. [B04P]

[202] *We must* find ways to eliminate it and *we must* ensure that no child living with HIV/AIDS suffers from it. [A03M]

The pattern *we must*, as in the excerpts above, is typically used as an indicator of the ambassadors' strategic hedging on the force of strong obligation imposed on hearers. With this pattern, the speakers intentionally remind hearers of their responsibility for the acts presented (i.e., *do more to help poor people, respond to the particular challenges facing women and girls, find ways to eliminate it, ensure that no child living with HIV/AIDS suffers from it*). As a result, the speakers can avoid imposing a direct obligation on hearers and accomplish politeness in their utterances. With inclusive *we* (see also 8.2.1.2 and 8.2.1.4) combined with deontic *must*, the speaker can switch from the sense of subjective obligation to an exhortative responsibility which is imposed on no overt subject. Therefore, the pattern *we must* plays the role as an indicator of the speaker's negative politeness strategy which mitigates the negative force of obligation on hearers.

As seen in the research corpora, this pattern occurs with a higher frequency in the BAC than in the AAC, accounting for 55 instances, at 12.7% of MMs as expressions of negative politeness strategies in the BAC compared with 19 instances, at 7.2% of those in the AAC. The difference in the frequencies of this pattern in the two research corpora also supports the argument (claimed in the foregoing sections) that the BAs are more cautious and reserved as they use more MMs of negative politeness strategies than do the AAs (see also 7.3.1 and 8.2.1.6).

In sum, the discussion of MMs as expressions of particular politeness strategies in ambassadorial speeches in this chapter shows that both British ambassadors and American ambassadors use MMs to conduct politeness strategies in their speech delivery. However, they are strikingly different in their selections of modality marking patterns expressing

politeness strategies. Specific differences are also shown through the analyses of frequencies of MMs as positive and negative politeness markers occurring in the corpora of ambassadorial speeches. To be more precise, the comparative analyses of MMs in their functions expressing seven positive politeness strategies and seven negative politeness strategies reveal that American ambassadors are more positive while British ambassadors are more negative in their politeness strategies. The explanation of such differences is presented in the discussion of major categories of politeness markers found in ambassadorial speeches as in Chapter 9 below.



## **CHAPTER 9: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF POLITENESS MARKERS IN BRITISH AND AMERICAN AMBASSADORIAL SPEECHES**

### **9.1 Introduction**

Although politeness has been considered as a universal mechanism for saving interactants' face in communication (Brown and Levinson, 1978/1987), many authors (i.e., House and Kasper, 1981; Kasper, 1990; Fraser, 1990; Escandell-Vidal, 1996) claim that linguistic politeness is culture-specific. In other words, linguistic forms used to express politeness in language communication normally vary across cultures. Even among varieties of a specific language (i.e., English), particular differences can be identified in the speakers' expressions of politeness (see Precht, 2003; Collins, 2007).

Moreover, politeness strategies as claimed in Thomas (1995) and Kerbrat-Orecchioni (1997) are not always universal because expressions of politeness differ from one culture to another and may be perceived differently, especially in intercultural communication. As such, it is expected that there will be important differences in the use of modality markers (MMs) expressing politeness strategies in samples of British and American ambassadorial speeches. Therefore, this analysis of MMs as expressions of politeness in ambassadorial speeches promises to shed light on the pragmatic properties of MMs which may help L2 learners of English with more targeted ways of using MMs as politeness expressions in spoken communication.

Modality has mostly been considered under the umbrella of "modal auxiliaries" (Coates, 1983) or "a system of modal verbs" (Palmer 1986, 1990). Simon-Vandenberg and Aijmer (2007: 2) also claim that "modality in English has tended to be regarded as identical with the modal auxiliaries". However, as discussed in the foregoing chapters, modality is covered by a range of grammatical structures and lexical items including not only modal verb forms but other modal forms represented in structures with modal lexical verbs, modal nouns, modal adjectives and modal adverbs. Therefore, modality meanings and the range of MMs must be considered through the development of modality expressions rather than the modal auxiliaries themselves (see also de Haan, 2006: 30).

A range of studies (i.e., Bybee et al., 1994; Biber et al., 1998; Krug, 2000; Leech, 2003; Leech and Smith, 2006, 2009) have shown that the use of modal auxiliaries (or core modals) in BrE and AmE has decreased over time. This may lead to a shift from modal auxiliaries to

other modal forms, especially in expressing the sense of epistemic modality (as presented in Chapter 7). Accordingly, the basic assumption underlying this study is whether the general tendency of decline in the frequency of modal auxiliaries has caused any influence in the occurrence of other MMs as politeness expressions in samples of ambassadorial speeches. If this is true, it is expected that some important differences in the use of MMs will be identified from the research corpora of British and American ambassadorial speeches (the AAC and the BAC) in their politeness strategies.

Therefore, this chapter focuses on examining differences between the AAs and the BAs in the use of MMs as politeness expressions in their speeches. The investigation into MMs used in the AAC and the BAC aims to reveal whether the AAs and the BAs are different in their politeness strategies or in the frequency use of MMs or both. Specifically, this chapter will attempt to provide answers to the following questions:

- (1) What are the similarities and differences between the AAs and the BAs in their range of politeness markers in their speeches?
- (2) Are there qualitative differences between the AAs and the BAs in the use of politeness markers to express particular politeness strategies in their speeches?
- (3) Are there quantitative differences between politeness markers used to express specific politeness strategies in the AAC and the BAC?

## **9.2 A comparative analysis of MMs as politeness strategies in the research corpora**

This section consists of a comparative analysis of the frequencies of MMs occurring in ambassadorial speeches. The comparison is based on the account of MMs that the AAs and the BAs produce to express politeness strategies. With regard to politeness strategies (see chapter 8), frequencies of MMs used to express politeness strategies in the AAC and BAC are used for comparisons. Therefore, in this section a discussion on the differences between the AAs and BAs in their use of MMs as politeness expressions is presented. The tables below show the frequencies of MMs occurring as politeness markers per 100,000 words in the research corpora of ambassadorial speeches. Table 9.1 shows the frequency use of MMs in the seven positive politeness strategies and Table 9.2 those used in the seven negative politeness strategies. The figures in brackets indicate the raw counts of MMs collected in the research corpora of ambassadorial speeches and the remainder are normalised figures.

Table 9.1: Distribution of MMs as positive politeness strategies per 100,000 words

Positive politeness strategies			Modality markers		Log-likelihood
			AAC	BAC	
1	Paying attention to hearers	Frequency % of total	19 (20) 3.0%	5 (6) 1.0%	8.02
2	Making commitment	Frequency % of total	138 (144) 21.7%	157 (165) 28.2%	
3	Hedging on the positive FTA	Frequency % of total	204 (213) 32.0%	142 (149) 25.4%	11.69
4	Expressing solidarity with hearers	Frequency % of total	143 (149) 22.5%	161 (169) 28.8%	1.16
5	Expressing encouragement	Frequency % of total	37 (39) 5.9%	40 (42) 7.2%	0.10
6	Expressing optimism	Frequency % of total	62 (65) 9.8%	31 (33) 5.6%	10.80
7	Complimenting	Frequency % of total	32 (34) 5.1%	21 (22) 3.8%	2.65
Total		Frequency % of total	635 (664) 100%	557 (586) 100%	5.26

Table 9.2: Distribution of MMs as negative politeness strategies per 100,000 words

Negative politeness strategies			Modality markers		Log-likelihood
			AAC	BAC	
1	Minimising imposition	Frequency % of total	56 (59) 22.4%	77 (81) 18.7%	3.36
2	Making a tentative claim	Frequency % of total	23 (24) 9.2%	49 (52) 11.9%	10.42
3	Hedging on the negative FTA	Frequency % of total	34 (36) 13.7%	77 (81) 18.7%	17.54
4	Expressing a hypothesis	Frequency % of total	47 (49) 18.6%	85 (89) 20.5%	11.57
5	Attenuating the force of an assertion	Frequency % of total	15 (16) 6.1%	17 (18) 4.1%	0.11
6	Expressing humility	Frequency % of total	57 (60) 22.8%	55 (58) 13.4%	0.04
7	Mitigating the force of an obligation	Frequency % of total	18 (19) 7.2%	52 (55) 12.7%	18.10
Total		Frequency % of total	250 (263) 100%	412 (434) 100%	41.54

It can be seen that there are no differences in the range of politeness strategies between the two varieties of ambassadorial speeches. However, differences are found in the frequencies of MMs expressing specific politeness strategies in the research corpora. At the first stage of comparison, the Log-likelihood calculation<sup>(24)</sup> run for the use of MMs as politeness strategies in the AAC and BAC reveal significant differences in positive politeness strategies with the critical value = 5.26, at  $p < 0.05$ ; and highly significant differences in negative politeness strategies with the critical value = 41.54, at  $p < 0.0001$ . (With the Log-likelihood calculation at a critical value of 3.84 or higher indicates that the difference in comparison between the two variables is significant at the level of  $p < .05$ ; a critical value of 6.63 or higher, significant at  $p < .01$ ; of 10.83 or higher, at  $p < .001$  and of 15.13 or higher, at  $p < .0001$ .)

The general results of comparison, as illustrated in Tables 9.1 and 9.2 above, show the significant differences between the AAC and the BAC<sup>(25)</sup> in the distribution of MMs as both positive and negative politeness strategies. It can be seen that the AAs use more MMs of positive politeness strategies than the BAs, accounting for 664 instances (at 635 per 100,000 words) compared with 586 instances (at 558 per 100,000 words), respectively. The frequencies of MMs used as negative politeness strategies in the two research corpora are in the reverse. The BAs use more MMs of negative politeness strategies, accounting for 434 instances (at 413 per 100,000 words), while the AAs produce only 263 instances (at 251 per 100,000 words) of MMs in these politeness strategies.

When the BAs and AAs are compared in their use of MMs expressing positive politeness (see 8.2.1), the datasets show that the AAs use more MMs of positive politeness than the BAs using strategies such as *paying attention to hearers*, *hedging on the positive force of an FTA*, *expressing optimism* and *complimenting*. In the other three positive politeness strategies, *making commitment*, *expressing solidarity with hearers* and *expressing encouragement*, higher frequencies of MMs are found in the BAC than in the AAC (see Table 9.1). In these three strategies, the higher frequencies of MMs in the BAC than the AAC are due to the use of the 1<sup>st</sup> person plural pronoun ‘we’ combined with modality expressions. For instance, in the strategy of *making commitment* the pattern ‘we will’ is used with a higher frequency in

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<sup>(24)</sup> See Dunning (1993) for probability using the Log-likelihood test of significance.

<sup>(25)</sup> The AAC is 104,484 words and the BAC 105,002 words. As such, the two research corpora can be seen as similar in size.

the BAC than in the AAC, accounting for 83 instances, at 70.33% compared with 47 instances, at 44.76%. The AAs produce more instances of the pattern ‘*I will*’ in making commitment than the BAs, accounting for 58 instances, at 55.24% compared with 35 instances, at 29.67%. Similarly, in the strategy of *expressing solidarity with hearers*, more instances of ‘*inclusive we*’ (cf. 8.2.1.2) combined with modal verbs are found in the BAC than in the AAC, accounting for 169 and 149 instances (161 and 142 instances per 100,000 words), (see also 8.2.1.4).

With regard to MMs expressing negative politeness, higher frequencies are found in the BAC than in the AAC with six out of the seven strategies (see Table 9.2). In the remaining negative politeness strategy of *expressing humility*, instances of MMs found in the AAC and the BAC are almost equal, accounting for 60 and 58 instances (57 and 55 instances per 100,000 words), respectively (see also 8.2.2.6). As such, it can be argued that the AAs use more MMs of positive politeness whereas the BAs are more interested in using MMs of negative politeness. The next section is a comparative analysis of typical patterns of MMs (which occur in at least 6% of the total number of MMs) in the AAC and the BAC in terms of the relation between their pragmatic functions and syntactic structures.

### **9.3 Major categories of politeness markers in the research corpora**

As discussed in 9.2, the difference between the AAs and the BAs is not in the range of politeness strategies but in patterns of MMs and their frequency as used for specific politeness strategies. Among the MMs used to express positive and negative politeness strategies in the AAC and the BAC (see 8.2.1 and 8.2.2), major differences have been found in patterns with different modal forms in terms of modal adjectives, modal adverbs, modal lexical verbs and modal auxiliaries. These patterns of MMs are characterised in correspondence with politeness functions in terms of strong committers, hedges, intensifiers, downtoners and mitigation markers.

Comparison of the frequency use of MMs as politeness strategies in the AAC and the BAC indicates significant differences in the five specific categories of politeness markers as shown in Table 9.3 below. The Log-likelihood calculation for the comparison of the total instances of MMs used in five particular categories of politeness markers, with its critical value of 13.72, indicates that the frequency use of these five patterns of politeness markers in

the two research corpora are significantly different, at  $p < .001$ . Comparisons of MMs used as specific politeness expressions are presented in the following sections.

Table 9.3: Distribution of MMs as politeness expressions in the research corpora

Politeness markers			MMs		Log-likelihood <sup>(26)</sup>	P
			AAC	BAC		
1	Strong committers	Fre./100,000 ws. % of total	92 (96) 13.87%	34 (36) 6.42%	28.60	< .0001
2	Hedges	Fre./100,000 ws. % of total	204 (213) 30.78%	142 (149) 26.56%	11.69	< .001
3	Intensifiers	Fre./100,000 ws. % of total	197 (206) 29.77%	167 (175) 31.20%	2.68	not sig.
4	Downtoners	Fre./100,000 ws. % of total	92 (96) 13.87%	48 (50) 8.91%	14.97	< .001
5	Mitigation markers	Fre./100,000 ws. % of total	78 (81) 11.71%	144 (151) 26.91%	21.11	< .0001
Total		Fre./100,000 ws. % of total	663 (692) 100%	535 (561) 100%	13.72	< .001

### 9.3.1 Strong Committers

Strong committers identified in the AAC and the BAC are MMs added to the proposition to show the speaker's strong commitment to the occurrence of the event or the performance of the action presented in an utterance (see 8.2.1.2). Most instances of MMs as strong committers collected from the AAC and the BAC are in the pattern:

*[I am + modal adjective + that-clause].*

The major difference between the AAs and the BAs in the use of MMs as strong committers is revealed through their frequencies in the AAC and the BAC. Table 9.4 below shows the raw count of modal adjectives occurring in the pattern of strong committers. The total amount of modal adjectives occurring in this pattern of strong committers collected in the AAC is more than double those in the BAC, accounting for 96 and 36 instances, respectively. The log-likelihood calculation with its critical value of 28.60 indicates that the

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<sup>(26)</sup> - The higher the critical value, the more significant is the difference between the two frequency scores.  
- See also Rayson et al (2004) for comparisons of the log-likelihood.

difference between MMs used as strong committers in the AAC and the BAC is highly significant, at  $p < .0001$  (see Table 9.3).

Table 9.4: Frequencies of modal adjectives occurring in patterns of strong committers

<b>Modal</b>	<b>The AAC</b>	<b>The BAC</b>	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>Log-likelihood</b>
Sure	16 (16.67%)	9 (25.00%)	25 (18.94%)	2.02
Confident	16 (16.67%)	1 (2.78%)	17 (12.89%)	16.03
Pleased	12 (12.50%)	7 (19.45%)	19 (14.39%)	1.36
Optimistic	11 (11.46%)	1 (2.78%)	12 (9.09%)	9.80
Certain	9 (9.37%)	1 (2.78%)	10 (7.58%)	7.40
Hopeful	7 (7.29%)	1 (2.78%)	8 (6.06%)	5.09
Proud	6 (6.25%)	2 (5.55%)	8 (6.06%)	2.11
Grateful	6 (6.25%)	5 (13.90%)	11 (8.34%)	0.10
Honoured	4 (4.17%)	2 (5.55%)	6 (4.54%)	0.69
Glad	4 (4.17%)	2 (5.55%)	6 (4.54%)	0.69
Determined	3 (3.12%)	3 (8.33%)	6 (4.54%)	0.00
Delighted	2 (2.08%)	2 (5.55%)	4 (3.03%)	0.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>96 (100%)</b>	<b>36 (100%)</b>	<b>132 (100%)</b>	<b>28.60</b>

It is also interesting to see in Table 9.4 that the raw counts of individual modal adjectives occurring in this pattern of strong committers are higher in the AAC than in the BAC. As such, it can be argued that the AAs appear to prefer more expressions of personal emotion and commitment such as *I am sure that*, *I am confident that*, and *I am certain that* than the BAs as analysed in the following excerpts:

[203] ***I am confident that*** Vietnam is up to the challenge because these changes are critical not only to the successful implementation of the BTA, but also to Vietnam's overall economic reform effort and its bid to fully integrate its economy into the world market. [A02O]

[204] ***I am sure that***, like me, the people of Vietnam have watched with deepening concern as the full extent of Cyclone Nargis' destruction in Burma has revealed itself. [A04C]

Strong committers like *I am confident that, I am optimistic that, I am certain that*<sup>(27)</sup> occur with high frequencies in the AAC, accounting for 16, 11 and 9 instances respectively, whereas in the BAC only one instance is found of each of these patterns (see Table 9.4). In addition, other modal adjectives used in this pattern as MMs also occur with higher frequencies in the AAC than in the BAC. It appears to be the case that the AAs are more personal and direct in expressing strong commitment while the BAs seem to be more tentative and indirect (cf. 8.2.2.2). (This recognition is interestingly in line with Precht's (2003) claim that AmE uses more expressions of personal preference and emotion whereas BrE uses more expressions of hesitation and possibility). All in all, it can be argued that AAs prefer more expressions of personal opinion as strong commitment (see also 8.2.1.2) while BAs appear to be more tentative in making commitment.

### 9.3.2 Hedges on FTAs

Hedges on FTAs (hereafter hedges) are modality expressions found in samples of ambassadorial speeches indicating the speaker's tentativeness in committing to the propositional content of the utterance. The most frequently used MMs as hedges found in the research corpora are in the pattern: [I + modal lexical verb + that-clause].

Hedging expressions such as *I think that, I believe that, I hope that, and I expect that* are identified as politeness markers showing the speaker's weak commitment to the proposition presented. Coates (1983) considers these patterns as expressions of the speaker's lack of confidence in the propositional content of the utterance (cf. 8.2.2.1). However, I would argue that from the angle of politeness strategy in speech communication, these can be seen as indicators of the speaker's claim that he would not fully commit himself to the state of affairs presented rather than his lack of confidence as analysed in the following excerpts:

[205] ***I believe that*** the response of the government to the inflation and the downturn in the economy has been very good. [A04F]

[206] I congratulate Vietnam for its diplomatic successes so far. ***I think that*** Vietnam has reached a good position. Many countries have said they would vote for Vietnam. [B01L]

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<sup>(27)</sup> These expressions are called "harmonic phrases" in Lyons (1977) and Coates (1983); and "modal expressions" in Perkins (1983).



In [205], with the pattern *I believe that*, the speaker shows his tentativeness and caution in the judgement that *the response of the government to the inflation and the downturn in the economy has been very good*. The situation in [206] is also the same, the pattern *I think that* expresses the speaker's hesitation as he does not fully commit himself to the assertion that *many countries will vote for Vietnam* (to be a member of WTO).

Table 9.5: Frequencies of modal lexical verbs occurring in patterns of hedges

	I hope	I expect	I believe	I think	Total
The AAC	45 21.13%	4 1.88%	49 23.00%	115 53.99%	213 100%
The BAC	44 29.53%	3 2.01%	41 27.52%	61 40.94%	149 100%
Log-likelihood	0.02	0.15	0.75	17.11	11.69

Table 9.5 shows the occurrences of modal lexical verbs in the pattern of hedges on FTAs indicating the speaker's weak commitment to the content of the utterance. As such, patterns i.e., *I think that*, *I know that*, and *I believe that* are considered as indicators of the speaker's caution and tentativeness in his commitment to the event or action presented in the utterance. Obeng (1997) claims that these expressions are used as the strategy of offering the speaker some degree of protection. Wilson (1990: 37) also considers these patterns of MMs as a strategy of "creating implicatures" since they can be used to protect a politician from being accused "if latter evidence should prove against him". As such, these patterns of MMs should be treated as the speaker's strategy for showing caution and tentativeness in speech delivery rather than lack of confidence. They are classified as hedging devices since what the speaker *thinks*, *believes* or *expects* can be proved either right or wrong later on. Therefore, with this strategy of hedging the speaker implies that he is not fully responsible for what is presented in the utterance.

As seen in Table 9.5, modal lexical verbs used in patterns of hedges occur with a higher frequency in the AAC than in the BAC, accounting for 213 instances compared with 149 instances, respectively. The comparison of the frequencies of these hedging devices in the AAC and the BAC (with 204 and 142 instances per 100,000 words, respectively) produces a Log-likelihood calculation with its critical value of 11.69, at  $p < .001$  (see Table 9.3). This

indicates significant differences between the AAs and the BAs in their use of hedges as politeness markers.

Observations of the patterns of hedges and strong committers (see 9.3.1) show that both patterns are similar in the use of the *I* pronoun showing the speaker's personal opinion and commitment. The higher frequencies of MMs as hedges in the AAC than in the BAC also reveal that the AAs are more personal while the BAs seem to be more reserved and cautious in expressing their opinions and commitment to the propositional content of the utterance.

In sum, it can be argued that the AAs appear to be more direct with more MMs expressing their personal preference and emotion through the use of the *I* pronoun found in the AAC. The BAs, on the contrary, are more reserved and tentative in making commitment with more patterns of the *we* pronoun found in the BAC. The higher frequencies of harmonic expressions with the *I* pronoun can also be seen to compensate for the lower frequencies of modal verb forms in the AAC than in the BAC (see Table 8.2). Patterns with the *I* pronoun combined with modal lexical verbs are identified as hedges since they are used to attenuate FTAs potentially contained in the proposition uttered. Moreover, these MMs are also used to save the speaker's face as they are signals of the speaker's claim that he does not strongly commit himself to, or is not fully responsible for, the occurrence of the event presented.

### 9.3.3 Intensifiers

Intensifiers are MMs used to modify the level of certainty that the speaker would like to claim for the propositional content of the utterance. Most of the MMs found in samples of ambassadorial speeches as intensifiers are modal adverbs such as *obviously*, *certainly*, *definitely*, *of course*, *indeed*, and *clearly* expressing epistemic modality. MMs of this type are identified as politeness expressions since they are used to reinforce the impact of the utterance but still help the speaker avoid direct imposition on hearers as in the following examples:

[207] ***Obviously*** *there is a need* to make the information that's contained in the Vietnamese media available in English, otherwise your leadership is going to be very limited. [A03Y]

[208] ***Clearly*** the challenge is huge and *we need* to do more. This Government has committed to spend 0.7% of our national income on aid by 2013 – and we are the first UK government to put a date to the UN target. [B03C]

In [207] and [208], the modal adverbs *obviously* and *clearly* are used to enhance the speaker’s opinion that the impact on the sense of obligation represented in *there is a need to...* or in *we need to...* is certain. That is to say although the impact of the utterance is intended to impose on hearers, with these intensifiers the sense of obligation becomes objectively obvious. As such, intensifiers can be seen as politeness markers conveying the sense of objective certainty about the occurrence of the event presented in the utterance other than the speaker’s subjective opinion.

Table 9.6: Frequencies of modal adverbs occurring in patterns of intensifiers.

	Certainly	Definitely	Absolutely	Of course	Obviously	Clearly	Indeed	No doubt	Total
The AAC	19 9.22%	14 6.80%	10 4.85%	55 26.70%	25 12.14%	34 16.50%	47 22.82%	2 0.97%	206 100%
The BAC	12 6.86%	1 0.57%	9 5.14%	65 37.14%	12 6.86%	15 8.57%	60 34.29%	1 0.57%	175 100%
Log-likelihood	1.63	13.51	0.06	0.79	4.73	7.66	1.52	0.34	2.68

As seen in Table 9.6, modal adverbs as intensifiers occur with a higher frequency in the AAC than in the BAC, accounting for 206 and 175 instances, respectively. Such data showing modal adverbs as intensifiers may indicate that the sense of certainty is expressed by a range of expressions other than the core modals. As Lyons (1977: 808-809) claims, the unmodalised assertions may express stronger commitment than modalised ones. Rohdenburg and Schluter (2009: 305) also state that “AmE retained the explicit marking of modality in the form of modal auxiliary constructions, while BrE gave up modally marked forms in favour of plain indicative clauses” (see also Perkins, 1983; Hoyer, 1997; Krug, 2000). Rohdenburg and Schluter’s (2009) view is in line with the data of MMs collected in this research which indicates that AmE is more direct whereas BrE is more indirect (as analysed in 9.3.4 below).

Observations of the research corpora show that modal adverbs seem to take over the position of the core modals in expressing certainty. It is obvious that this should be examined

in specific studies, for instance, on non-auxiliary modal forms showing the speaker's different levels of certainty in making commitment to the proposition presented in the utterance. However, in the scope of this discussion, with the high frequencies of MMs as strong committers (9.3.1) and intensifiers (9.3.3), it can be argued that harmonic expressions (see Coates, 1983) and modal adverbs (see Hoye, 1997) tend to be preferred over the use of the modal verb forms in expressing similar meanings (cf. 3.3.2).

#### 9.3.4 Downtoners

Downtoners are MMs used to serve the speakers' politeness in attenuating the strong impact of the utterance on hearers. MMs as downtoners are also found in samples of ambassadorial speeches in the form of modal adverbs. They are used as sentence modifiers and can be pragmatically seen as the opposite of intensifiers. As presented in 9.3.3, intensifiers are modal adverbs used to reinforce the speaker's judgement on the certainty of the state of affairs presented in the utterance. Downtoners, on the contrary, are politeness markers used to show the speaker's avoidance of certain assertions or candid comments on the issue presented. As such, MMs identified as downtoners are politeness markers expressing the speaker's intention to avoid the strong impact of the utterance on hearers. In samples of ambassadorial speeches modal adverbs such as *perhaps*, *probably*, *maybe*, *possibly* are frequently used as downtoners as in the following excerpts:

[209] ***Perhaps*** the first thing to bear in mind is the need for informed public debate.

[B03N]

[210] In a business sense, you ***probably*** really should plan to be patient. It takes time, it takes longer than you may think sometimes. [A02C]

Downtoners like *perhaps* and *probably* are found in samples of ambassadorial speeches to attenuate the strong impact on hearers. As in [209], *perhaps* makes it easier for hearers to accept the imposition of obligation which may be paraphrased as *the first thing you must bear in mind is...*. In [210] the deontic *should* of obligation is weakened when the modal adverb *probably* is used as a downtoner.

Similar to MMs as weak committers, presented in 9.3.2, these modal adverbs as downtoners are also considered as epistemic modality expressions indicating "the speaker's lack of confidence in the proposition expressed" (Coates, 1983: 131). However, as viewed from the angle of politeness strategies, these downtoners play the role as pragmatic signals

serving the speaker's politeness rather than conveying the speaker's lack of confidence or weak commitment. Observations of MMs as downtoners occurring in samples of ambassadorial speeches indicate that they convey the speaker's intention of modulating the impact that the utterance may have on hearers.

Table 9.7: Frequencies of modal adverbs occurring in patterns of downtoners.

	Perhaps	Possibly	Probably	Maybe	Total
The AAC	38 39.58%	17 17.72	27 28.12%	14 14.58%	96 100%
The BAC	25 50%	12 24%	5 10%	8 16%	50 100%
Subtotal	63 43.15%	29 19.86%	32 21.92%	22 15.07%	146 100%
Log-likelihood	2.77	0.89	16.73	1.69	14.97

As shown in Table 9.7, modal adverbs as downtoners occur with a higher frequency in the AAC than in the BAC, accounting for 96 compared with 50 instances, respectively. Moreover, the frequencies of individual modal adverbs as downtoners are found with higher frequencies in the AAC than in the BAC. The Log-likelihood calculation for the frequencies of these downtoners, with its critical value of 14.97, at  $p < .001$ , also indicates that the AAs and the BAs are significantly different in their politeness strategy of using MMs as downtoners.

The high frequencies of these modal adverbs used as downtoners in samples of ambassadorial speeches also support the argument (presented in 9.3.3) that modal adverbs tend to be taking over the position of the modal auxiliaries (see also Perkins, 1983). Essentially, it can be seen in the research corpora that the modal adverbs used as downtoners replace the epistemic modals *may* or *might* expressing the speaker's sense of tentativeness (see also 7.2.2 and 7.2.3). The interesting point in this analysis is that these modal adverbs in their role as sentence modifiers are found with higher frequencies in the AAC than in the BAC (see Tables 9.6 and 9.7). All in all, it can be argued that the higher frequencies of modal adverbs in the AAC than in the BAC may be considered as compensation for the lower

frequencies of core modals and semi-modals in the AAC in comparison with those in its counterpart, the BAC (see 9.4.1).

### 9.3.5 Mitigation markers

Mitigation markers are modality expressions used in the utterance to attenuate the sense of obligation or necessity imposed on hearers in order to preserve both the speaker's and hearers' face. As discussed in 5.2.1 on modal verbs expressing the sense of obligation, deontic *must* is identified as the most frequently-used modal verb conveying the sense of strong obligation (see also Coates, 1983; Perkins, 1983). This deontic modal potentially commits FTAs since it conveys a strong impact as an explicit imposition on hearers (cf. 5.2.1). Therefore, the speaker normally uses other elements as mitigation markers to minimise the negative influence of deontic *must*. Patterns of mitigation markers are used to attenuate the force of imposition and make the utterance sound more natural, less obligatory and therefore, help the speaker to accomplish politeness (cf. 8.2.2.7).

The most commonly-used pattern of mitigation markers found in samples of ambassadorial speeches is in the combination of inclusive *we* with deontic *must* (see 5.2.1.5). The pattern '*we must*' shows the speaker's solidarity in sharing responsibility with hearers and thus mitigates the imposition as in the following excerpts:

[211] ***We must*** provide greater support for technology development and transfer to benefit developing countries. [B04O]

[212] As the US and Vietnam move forward in our relationship and with BTA implementation, ***we must*** remain committed to the high level of cooperation we have established. [A02O]

With the pattern *we must* as in [211], the speaker can mitigate the negative force of strong obligation imposed on hearers. Although the sense of obligation is placed on both the speaker and hearers (with inclusive *we*), in fact it is implicitly imposed on hearers. With this strategy both of the interactants' face can be preserved because the speaker means that he is presenting a general obligation imposed on no overt subject. The sense of obligation presented through '*we must*', can be considered as an objective responsibility involving the speaker and hearers for *providing greater support for technology development...* Similarly, in [212] the speaker's politeness is indicated by his solidarity with hearers in the *commitment*

to the high level of cooperation (see also 8.2.1.4). As such, the pattern ‘*we must*’ is used as a mitigation marker to preserve interactants’ face when an obligation is to be imposed.

Another way of using MMs to mitigate the sense of strong obligation found in the research corpora is to make the obligation sound general. That is to say although the speaker intentionally reminds hearers of their responsibility for the event or the performance of the act presented in the utterance, mitigation markers are used to turn the sense of imposing an obligation on someone else other than hearers. Apart from its combination with inclusive *we*, deontic *must* is also combined with passive structures (5.2.1.2) or general subjects (5.2.1.3) to form mitigation markers, making the sense of obligation imposed on no overt subjects. The reason these patterns are characterised as mitigation markers is that as for the subtle relation in diplomacy the ambassadors use these patterns to mitigate strong obligations directly imposed on hearers. This is also the reason why the pattern ‘*you must*’ is rarely found (with only 2 instances in the AAC and none in the BAC). It can be seen that instead of the 2<sup>nd</sup> person subject *you*, general subjects and impersonal passive structures are commonly used with deontic *must* to mitigate the sense of strong obligation as in the following examples:

[213] **The international community must** ensure that we provide aid in order that developing countries can invest in the capacity necessary to grow. [B04J]

[214] **That action must be led** by the governments of developing countries – for it is their deeds, along with those of their institutions and citizens, that will do most to determine the lives of the poorest people in the world. [B04E]

In the excerpts above, deontic *must* is mitigated when combined with a general subject or used in a passive structure. In [213], the obligation for the action presented in the proposition to be performed is imposed on a collective actor - *the international community*. In [214], the passive structure is a safer way for the speaker to impose the sense of obligation indirectly on *the governments of developing countries*.

Table 9.8 below shows that the frequency of deontic *must* occurring in patterns of mitigation markers collected in the BAC is almost double those in the AAC, at 151 compared with 81 instances. It is also interesting to find that frequencies of individual patterns of mitigation markers in the BAC are also higher than those in the AAC: 55 instances of *we must* are found in the BAC compared with only 19 instances in the AAC; 71 instances of deontic *must* combined with general subjects are found in the BAC compared with 50

instances in the AAC; and 25 compared with 12 instances of deontic *must* in passive structures found in the BAC and the AAC, respectively. These statistics of comparison are also in line with Algeo’s (2006) claim that deontic *must* is 1.7 times more frequently used in BrE than in AmE and that this deontic modal verb is more characteristic of BrE. Such comparisons also support the argument that the BAs are, therefore, more cautious and reserved than the AAs in expressing a sense of obligation.

Table 9.8: Patterns of mitigation markers combined with *must* obligation

	We must	General subject + must	passivisation	Total
The AAC	19 23.46%	50 61.73%	12 14.81%	81 100%
The BAC	55 36.42%	71 47.02%	25 16.56%	151 100%
Subtotal	74 31.90%	121 52.15%	37 15.95%	232 100%
Log-likelihood	18.10	3.56	4.60	21.11

Deontic *must* of obligation, as claimed in several studies, is more frequently used in formal than informal contexts of communication. According to Lyons (1977), deontic *must* is rare in informal contexts of language use. Coates (1983) also states that deontic *must* is infrequently used because “apart from a few rare contexts like the law courts, people are either seen as equals or are treated as such, since to do otherwise would be impolite, if not counterproductive” (1983: 38). Therefore, there seems to be a tendency that other MMs of deontic sense will be used to compensate for the infrequency of deontic *must*. The next section is a comparative analysis of obligation markers occurring in the AAC and the BAC.

#### 9.4 A comparative analysis of obligation markers in the research corpora

##### 9.4.1 Differences in frequency use of modal verb forms

Observations of samples of ambassadorial speeches indicate that differences between the AAs and the BAs in their use of obligation markers are identified not only in patterns with deontic *must* (see 8.2.2.7 and 9.3.5) but also with other deontic modal verb forms such as



*should*, *need to* and *have (got) to*. As such, a comparative analysis of the occurrences of obligation markers in the two research corpora is necessary. At first, the datasets collected in the two research corpora show that obligation markers occur with higher frequencies in the BAC than in the AAC. Table 9.9 below shows the frequencies of these obligation markers per 100,000 words in samples of ambassadorial speeches. The figures in brackets indicate the raw counts of these obligation markers in the two research corpora.

Table 9.9: Frequencies of obligation markers in the research corpora (per 100,000 words)

Corpora	AAC	BAC	Log likelihood
Must	77.52 (81)	143.80 (151)	21.11
Should	49.76 (52)	113.33 (119)	26.77
Need to	111.34 (113)	186.66 (196)	22.16
Have to*	161.73 (169)	183.18 (191)	1.24

\**Have to* and *'ve to* are under the label of *have to*

As seen in Table 9.9 individual obligation markers of the four types occur with higher frequencies in the BAC than in the AAC. Of these four groups, significant differences are found in the use of the deontic modal verbs including *must* with the critical values of log-likelihood calculation at 21.11, *should* at 26.77 and *need to* at 22.16, at  $p < .0001$ . Although *have to* is the most frequently used obligation marker in both the AAC and the BAC, at 161.73 and 183.18 instances per 100,000 words respectively, the critical value of log-likelihood at 1.24 indicates that the difference in the use of this obligation marker in the two research corpora is not significant. The pattern for *have (got) to* in the corpora goes against the general trend as shown in the reference corpora as for the formal situations in ambassadorial speeches that patterns expressing mild obligation is more interested.

It is interesting to see that the semi-modals *need to* and *have (got) to* are in higher frequencies than the core modals *must* and *should* in both the AAC and the BAC. When comparing the research corpora, as shown in Table 9.9, *have to* is the most frequently used in the AAC, accounting for 161.73 instances per 100,000 words. This is followed by *need to*, with 111.34 instances, whereas deontic *must* and *should* are in lower frequencies, accounting for 77.52 and 49.76 instances per 100,000 words, respectively. In the BAC, the order is almost similar with the frequency of *need to* in the leading position, accounting for 186.66

instances per 100,000 words. The occurrence of *have to* comes close after, with 183.18 instances. The frequencies of these two semi-modals in the BAC are also higher than those of deontic *must* and *should* accounting for 143.80 and 113.33 instances per 100,000 words, respectively. As such, it can be argued that the semi-modals are more frequently used than the core modals in expressing the sense of obligation.

The occurrence of obligation markers in samples of ambassadorial speeches is in the same vein as the general view claimed in Krug (2000), Leech and Smith (2006, 2009) in that there is a tendency for a decline in the use of the core modals and a progressive increase in the frequency of semi-modals (see 3.3.2). Furthermore, the frequency of modal verb forms used in AmE can be seen to decline more steeply than their counterparts in BrE (see also Leech, 2003). As shown in Table 9.9, the frequencies of the core modals *must* and *should* at 143.80 and 113.33 instances in the BAC, are almost double those in the AAC, at 77.52 and 49.76 instances per 100,000 words, respectively. Therefore, it can be argued from such comparisons that (1) the semi-modals *need to* and *have (got) to* tend to take the positions of *must* and *should* in the speaker's strategies of expressing obligation; and (2) obligation markers occur with higher frequencies in the BAC than in the AAC.

Interestingly, observations of the frequency use of these four obligation markers occurring in the general corpora of AmE and BrE show a similar trend. As seen in Table 9.10, the four obligation markers, *must*, *should*, *need to* and *have to* occur at higher frequencies in the BNC than in the COCA. Differences in the use of these obligation markers between the BNC and the COCA are also highly significant, with all the critical values of log-likelihood calculation higher than 15.13, at  $p < .0001$ .

Table 9.10: Frequencies of obligation markers occurring in the BNC and the COCA (per 100,000 words)

Corpora	COCA	BNC	Log likelihood
Must	23.43	61.22	17.48
Should	45.11	121.56	36.41
Need to	27.79	68.51	17.77
Have to	85.85	146.93	16.22

It is also interesting to find that the frequencies of the four obligation markers are in the same rank in both of the general corpora of AmE and BrE. *Have to* is used with the highest frequencies, *should* is next, followed by *need to* and *must* in the general corpora. When AmE and BrE are compared in the frequency use of these four obligation markers, higher frequencies are found in the BNC than in the COCA (see Table 9.10). Previous studies also show similar results of comparison, i.e., Leech (2003) suggests that the core modals used in AmE can be seen to decline more steeply than their counterparts in BrE; Leech and Smith (2006: 191) also claim that “the semi-modals are overall less frequent in the AmE than in the BrE corpora”.

With regard to the occurrence of the two semi-modals as obligation markers, *have to* has higher frequencies than *need to* in both of the general corpora, accounting for 146.93 compared with 68.51 instances per 100,000 words in the BNC; and 85.85 compared with 27.79 instances per 100,000 words in the COCA. Their frequency differences are also highly significant with the log-likelihood calculation for *need to* at the critical value of 17.77,  $p < .0001$  and for *have (got) to* at the critical value of 16.22,  $p < .0001$ .

It can be inferred from the analysis above that considerable changes occur between the core modals and semi-modals expressing obligation. Leech and Smith’s (2009) study on modal changes in the British and American English corpora also states that “*must*, in our data<sup>(28)</sup>, has declined more in AmE than in BrE, and has become much rarer than *have to* in American conversational speech” (2009: 176). Furthermore, the authors also confirm that the alternatives to *must* in its deontic sense are not only *have to* but also *need to* and other modal adverbs (i.e., necessarily, inevitably). The situation is also the same when viewing the lowest frequencies of *must* in both of the general corpora of AmE and BrE among the four obligation markers, at 23.43 and 61.22 instances per 100,000 words, respectively. Although the core modals are found with higher frequencies in the research corpora than in the general corpora, they are still in lower frequencies than other semi-modals in the deontic sense of obligation (see Tables 8.9 and 8.10). In sum, the semi-modals seem to be taking the position of the core modals in expressing the deontic sense of obligation.

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<sup>(28)</sup> Leech and Smith (2009) use the British corpora: LOB and FLOB (1961, 1991) and the American corpora: Brown and Frown (1961, 1992) for their study on grammatical changes in British English and American English.

### 9.4.2 Differences of pronoun use in obligation markers

The difference between the AAs and the BAs in their diplomatic speeches has been found not only in the use of the modal verb forms as presented above, but also in pronoun use in patterns of individual obligation markers. This may be the result of cultural differences in which British may be more reserved and thus negative whereas Americans appear to be more direct, personal and thus positive. However, in the scale of this study, the major point is central to analysing the use of MMs as politeness markers rather than the cultural features of the two variations. Observations of the datasets collected in the two research corpora show that there are major differences in the frequency of patterns with the personal pronouns, *I*, *we* and *you* in their combination with obligation markers expressing different levels of obligation as shown in Table 9.11 below.

Table 9.11: Distribution of obligation markers with pronominal choices *I*, *We* and *you* per 100,000 words in the research corpora and general corpora

	AAC	BAC	COCA	BNC
<b>Deontic <i>must</i></b>				
We must	16.27	63.80	2.76	4.93
You must	1.91	0.00	2.63	7.87
I Must	0.95	1.90	2.63	9.68
<b>Deontic <i>should</i></b>				
We should	13.39	26.66	13.51	15.05
I should	2.87	10.47	7.24	17.79
You should	2.87	2.85	7.24	15.37
<b>Need to</b>				
We need to	49.76	94.28	10.43	8.45
You need to	3.82	0.95	4.74	6.41
I need to	1.91	0.00	4.74	3.18
<b>Have to</b>				
We have to	49.36	68.55	22.18	15.85
You have to	38.27	20.95	26.80	36.43
I have to	1.91	1.90	26.80	17.01

\* The second person pronoun in research is generic *you*.

Table 9.11 shows the frequencies of obligation markers with personal pronoun subjects such as *I*, *we* and *you* combined with modal verb forms as *must*, *should*, *need to* and *have to* collected in the AAC and the BAC. In addition, in column 4 and 5 of this table, frequencies of the same patterns occurring in the general corpora of AmE (the COCA) and BrE (the BNC) are illustrated to modify the comparisons.

The most distinctive feature seen in Table 9.11 is that patterns of obligation markers with the *we* pronoun in combination with each of the four modal verb forms all occur at extremely high frequencies. Conversely, patterns with the other two pronouns, *I* and *you*, combined with modal verb forms occur at much lower frequencies. In the AAC, the pattern *we need to* and *we have to* come first with almost equal frequencies of 49.76 and 49.36 instances per 100,000 words, respectively. The pattern *we must* follows at the lower frequency of 16.27 and that of *we should* is the lowest of these four patterns with the *we* pronoun, with a frequency of 13.39 instances per 100,000 words. The ranking of these patterns in the BAC is also the same, with higher frequencies of the *we* pronoun combined with the semi-modals than with the core modals. The pattern *we need to* leads with a frequency of 94.28 instances per 100,000 words followed by the pattern *we have to*, at 68.55. The frequencies of *we must* and *we should* are lower, at 63.80 and 26.66 instances per 100,000 words, respectively. Interestingly, the BAC also has higher frequencies than the AAC in these individual patterns of mitigating the sense of obligation. This, again, supports the argument that the British ambassadors are more formal and reserved than their American counterparts, especially in expressing a sense of obligation (see also 9.3.3 and 9.3.5).

The higher frequencies of the *we* pronoun than the other pronouns in combination with modal verb forms may characterise an idiosyncratic feature of the ambassadorial speeches. We can see that with the *we* pronoun, the speaker can minimise the sense of obligation imposed on hearers since the pattern is an indicator of the speaker's solidarity (see also 8.2.1.4) through sharing responsibility with hearers. Moreover, the strategy of mitigating the sense of obligation is also identified through the higher frequencies of patterns with the semi-modals than those with the core modals. This can be explained by stating that for the subtle factor of diplomatic relations the ambassadors use more semi-modals as alternatives for the core modals to mitigate the sense of strong obligation imposed on hearers.

Interestingly, the situation is also the same when comparing the frequencies between the patterns *you have to* and *you must* in both of the research corpora. In the AAC, the pattern *you must* occurs with a frequency of only 1.91 per 100,000 words, while that of *you have to* is much higher, at 38.27 per 100,000 words. In the BAC it can clearly be seen that the semi-modals replace the position of the core modals to mitigate the sense of obligation as the pattern *you have to* occurs at a frequency of 20.95 per 100,000 words, whereas the pattern *you must* is not attested.

In the general corpora (the BNC and the COCA ), although patterns of the *we* pronoun combined with modal verb forms occur at relatively high frequencies compared with other pronouns, the difference is not as remarkable as in the research corpora. As for politeness strategies in diplomacy, the ambassadors attempt to avoid imposing obligation directly on hearers to preserve interactants' face. Therefore, more instances of the *we* pronoun combined with modal verb forms were collected in the research corpora. On the contrary, the differences in the use of *I*, *we* and *you* pronouns in the general corpora are not as clear. This is because the context of language use in the general corpora is normal and not as formal as in samples of ambassadorial speeches. It can be argued that the *we* pronoun is more frequently used to combine with modal verb forms in formal situations. These are also in line with Coates' (1983: 37) claim that 2<sup>nd</sup> person subjects are stronger and therefore less frequently-used to express obligation than 1<sup>st</sup> person subjects (cf. 5.2.1.2).

From the differences between the research corpora in the use of personal pronouns combined with modal verb forms, it can be argued that the *we* pronoun, as an indicator for encouraging solidarity, loading shared responsibility and designating support (see also Wilson, 1990: 45-76), is given more priority as a tool for preserving diplomatic relations than the *I* and the *you* pronouns combined with modal verb forms of obligation. The infrequencies of the *I* and the *you* pronouns might be related to the need for courtesy in diplomatic relation; the speakers intentionally avoid imposing strong obligation directly on hearers as the *I* pronoun conveys the speaker's personal opinions or intentions and the *you* pronoun indicates the speaker's subjective imposition on hearers which may cause FTAs.

### **9.5 Differences between British and American ambassadors in the use of modal forms**

It has been found from MMs occurring in the research corpora that particular modal forms are used in particular patterns of MMs to express specific politeness strategies. As in

the analysis of the five major categories of politeness markers in the AAC and BAC (see 9.3), strong committers are expressed through patterns of MMs with modal adjectives; hedges with modal lexical verbs; intensifiers and downtoners with modal adverbs; and mitigation markers with deontic modal verb forms. It could be argued that the AAs and BAs are no different in their politeness strategies but they are strikingly different in using patterns of MMs to express their politeness strategies. Table 9.12 below shows patterns of MMs and their frequency use in specific politeness strategies collected in the research corpora.

As the dataset illustrated in Table 9.12 reveals, the AAs and the BAs are no different in their politeness strategies but in patterns of MMs including specific modal forms (see also 9.3). In other words, major differences are found in patterns of MMs and their occurrences in individual politeness strategies of the two samples of ambassadorial speeches with specific modal forms used.

Table 9.12: Patterns of MMs as major politeness expressions in the research corpora

Politeness markers	Modal forms	Frequency		Log-likelihood
		The AAC	The BAC	
Committers	Modal adjectives	96 (9.25%)	36 (3.32%)	29.60
Hedges	Modal lexical verbs	213 (20.52%)	149 (13.73%)	11.69
Intensifiers	Modal adverbs	206 (19.84%)	175 (16.13%)	2.68
Downtoners	Modal adverbs	96 (9.25%)	50 (4.61%)	14.97
Mitigation markers	Modal auxiliaries	427 (41.14%)	675 (62.21%)	55.07
Total		1,038 (100%)	1,085 (100%)	0.82

The strategy of creating commitment is expressed through patterns with modal adjectives. As shown in Table 9.12, more instances of modal adjectives combined with the *I* pronoun are found in the AAC than in the BAC, accounting for 96 instances, at 9.25% and 36 instances, at 3.32%. In addition, more instances of hedges in the pattern of the *I* pronoun combined with modal lexical verbs are found in the AAC than in the BAC, accounting for 213 instances, at 20.52% in the AAC compared with 149 instances, at 13.73% in the BAC. With MMs as intensifiers and downtoners, higher frequencies are also found in the AAC than in the BAC.

Modal adverbs are the most common modal form used in patterns of MMs as intensifiers and downtoners, with 206 instances of intensifiers found in the AAC, at 19.84% compared with 175 in the BAC, at 16.13%. Similarly, a higher frequency of downtoners is found in the AAC, accounting for 96 instances, at 9.25% compared with 50 instances in the BAC, at 4.61%. However, the BAs are found to use more mitigation markers than the AAs. As shown in Table 9.12, more instances of mitigation markers are found in the BAC than in the AAC, accounting for 675 instances, at 62.21% compared with 427 instances, at 41.14% respectively. This also supports the argument that the BAs are more cautious and reserved than the AAs in expressing a sense of obligation in their speeches.

The comparative analysis of major categories of politeness markers found in ambassadorial speeches, as discussed in this chapter, shows that the differences between the AAs and the BAs are not based on their politeness strategies but rather on the occurrence of different modal forms used in patterns of MMs and their frequency use of politeness markers in their ambassadorial speeches. The AAs use more patterns of MMs with modal adjectives and modal adverbs than the BAs do. These patterns of MMs indicate that the AAs undertake politeness strategies using more patterns of MMs as *strong committers*, *intensifiers* and *downtoners* than the BAs. The BAs, conversely, use more patterns of MMs with modal lexical verbs in patterns of hedges and modal auxiliaries in patterns of mitigation markers than the AAs do.

Therefore, it can be concluded that the British ambassadors and American ambassadors are very similar across the semantic range of politeness strategies but strikingly different in their use of modality marking patterns and frequencies of politeness markers in their speeches. While patterns of MMs expressing politeness strategies in the AAC are more adjectival and adverbial, those used in the BAC are more verbal. The AAs use more patterns of MMs combined with the *I* pronoun whereas the BAs employ more patterns of MMs with the inclusive *We* pronoun.

The analyses of MMs used in ambassadorial speeches might reveal that the AAs are more personal, straightforward and direct in expressing opinions and preference, whereas the BAs appear to be more tentative, cautious and reserved. It can be concluded that the AAs use higher frequencies of MMs that show the speakers' personal preference, opinions as well as



closeness to hearers. Conversely, the BAs employ higher frequencies of MMs which indicates their caution in making commitment to maintain a distance with hearers.

Generally, the analysis of the differences between the AAs and the BAs in their use of politeness markers as presented above may reveal certain non-linguistic reasons for their difference in culture. Although the analysis of the pragmatic functions of MMs as politeness strategies in ambassadorial speeches cannot reveal how different British and American ambassadors are in their culture, findings from the use of MMs as politeness expressions reveal that the AAs are more informal and personal in their politeness strategies while the BAs appear to be more formal and reserved. These may show a recognition in culture that the American ambassadors are more positive while the British ambassadors are more negative in expressing their politeness strategies.

## CHAPTER 10: CONCLUSIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH

### 10.1 Overview

This study approached the semantic and pragmatic functions of modality markers in British and American ambassadorial speeches under the umbrellas of modality and politeness. The analyses of MMs as particular politeness strategies revealed that there is a close relation between politeness and modality. To be precise, politeness strategies in language communication can be examined through the analysis of MMs used in discourse material. As such, this thesis contributes to the practice of the discourse community with the analysis of MMs in a particular discourse of ambassadorial speeches. The thesis also contributes to the theories of politeness and modality with the comparative analyses of MMs used as politeness strategies in British and American ambassadorial speeches.

It is thought that Americans are more positive than the British in communication (e.g. they slap the back or shoulder in interactions). However, there has been no research to support this. There has been no study on MMs between British and American discourse and, of course, no study between British and American ambassadorial speeches either. Therefore, this research contributes to the practice of the discourse community with the analysis of MMs in the particular discourse of ambassadorial speeches. Findings in the research shows that American ambassadors are more personal and informal, whereas British ambassadors appear to be more tentative, cautious and formal in expressing their views. In other words, it can be claimed from this research that American ambassadors are more positive-oriented in the use of politeness expressions whereas British ambassadors are more negative-oriented in expressing their politeness strategies.

Section 10.2 below summarises the process for the research to be undertaken. Findings of differences in patterns of MMs and politeness strategies between the corpora of ambassadorial speeches are presented in sections 10.3 and 10.4. Section 10.5 will point out the limitations of the study and propose further research.

### 10.2 Summary

In this research, I have investigated the frequencies of modality markers (MMs) in the two research corpora of British and American ambassadors' speeches (AAC and BAC), compared frequencies of modal forms occurring in patterns of MMs and the proportions of

MMs used in the speakers' politeness strategies in the two variables of ambassadorial speeches. The corpora used for the research were comprised of over 200,000 words of spoken English taken from speeches made by British and American ambassadors to Vietnam. Excerpts from the research corpora were used as illustration for the comparative analysis of the semantic categories and pragmatic functions of MMs as the ambassadors' politeness strategies in these two variables of spoken English. The theories of modality and politeness were used as the theoretical framework for the analysis of modality markers and politeness strategies in the research.

Firstly, I investigated theoretical approaches to modality and presented the theoretical analysis on the basis of the three major categories of modality in association with the speakers' attitudes towards, and opinions about, the propositional content of the utterance (Chapter 2). These have been manifested in a range of theoretical studies referring to categories in terms of deontic modality, dynamic modality and epistemic modality. Although the domain of modality has been interpreted in a range of semantic subcategories, the three categories mentioned above can be seen as the most influential among the semantic aspects of modality in language communication.

Secondly, the theory of politeness (Chapter 3) has been taken as the theoretical basis for the analysis of the ambassadors' politeness strategies in their speeches. I have explored a range of theoretical studies referring to the aspect of politeness in communication and especially considered how linguistic politeness has been approached. Although the term *politeness* has been approached from a wide range of perspectives, the struggle over the reproduction and reorganisation of linguistic politeness has long been in progress theoretically. Moreover, "many of the writers do not even explicitly define what they take politeness to be" (Fraser, 1990). Nevertheless, it can generally be seen that studies on linguistic politeness have surrounded the major approaches in terms of *the social-norm view*, *the conversational-maxim view* (Lakoff, 1973, 1975; Leech, 1983), *the face-saving view* (Brown and Levinson, 1987) and *the conversational-contract view* (Fraser, 1990).

The research is mainly based on corpus methods to investigate and analyse the data of MMs as politeness strategies. British and American ambassadors' speeches have been collected and compiled into two small research corpora (see Chapter 4). These corpora which are equal in size and synchronic in range of time are expected to be adequate for the analysis

of MMs as expressions of politeness strategies. The mixed methods of quantitative and qualitative analyses have been adopted in this research. The two machine-readable text corpora of ambassadorial speeches are subjected to quantitative analysis. The qualitative analysis is used on the selected utterances to compare the difference between ambassadors in the use of MMs based on the software package of Wordsmith 5.0. The Wordsmith Tools of concordance help to locate MMs in the text corpora and the context of the utterance in which a specific MM occurs.

Drawing on the theoretical analysis of the three major categories of modality, I have explored the semantic categories of modality expressed in ambassadorial speeches, compared the patterns of MMs occurring in these two variables of spoken English and the frequencies of MMs in these two research corpora (as in Chapters 5, 6 & 7). Data recorded from the two research corpora reveal that the British Ambassadors (BAs) and the American Ambassadors (AAs) are no different in politeness strategies but they are quite different in the use of patterns of MMs and proportions of these markers in their speeches. Moreover, the selections of modal forms used in patterns of MMs prove that the AAs and BAs are strikingly different in the use of MMs expressing politeness strategies in their speech delivery.

Among scholars' views accounting for politeness, Brown and Levinson's (1987) face-saving view has been considered as the most articulated and influential approach to studies on politeness. On the basis of the face-saving view as the framework for this research, I have investigated the use of MMs in samples of ambassadorial speeches and presented the semantic and pragmatic analysis of MMs as positive and negative politeness strategies. The former contains MMs that show the speaker's closeness and solidarity with hearers. The latter includes MMs as the speaker's signals of minimising the imposition of FTAs on hearers, showing the speaker's respect for hearers' freedom of action and freedom from interference.

From patterns of MMs identified in the two research corpora as signals of the speakers' politeness, I have presented an analysis of 7 positive politeness strategies and 7 negative politeness strategies from those that the BAs and AAs used as politeness markers in their speeches (Chapter 8). Drawing from the ambassadors' specific politeness strategies, I have shown that the AAs and the BAs are no different in their politeness strategies but they are strikingly different in the use of MMs expressing particular categories of politeness

strategies, the modal forms used in patterns of MMs and the frequencies of MMs in their speeches (chapter 9).

It can be claimed through the analysis of the datasets of MMs recorded from samples of ambassadorial speeches that the AAs used more MMs expressing politeness in the sense of directness, assertion and personal preference - those that tend to be more positive in politeness strategies. The BAs, on the contrary, tend to be more reserved through the higher frequencies of MMs showing the sense of indirectness, tentativeness and objectivity which appear to be negative in expressing the speaker's commitment to the propositional content of the utterance presented.

### **10.3 Differences in patterns of modality markers used in ambassadorial speeches**

Observations of the American ambassador corpus (AAC) and British ambassador corpus (BAC) indicate several patterns of MMs in different forms of lexical items and syntactic structures. The data recorded reveal that the AAs and the BAs tend to be aligned with particular patterns of MMs associated with particular modal forms such as modal adjectives, modal adverbs, modal lexical verbs and modal auxiliaries in their expressions of politeness. The data regarding MMs reveal that the AAs' speeches had higher frequencies of modal forms (non-auxiliary modals) than the BAs'. Conversely, higher frequencies of modal verbs used in patterns of MMs were found in the BAs' speeches than in the AAs'. It could be argued that the difference between the AAs and the BAs is mainly in their selections of modal forms used in patterns of MMs. Specific differences in patterns of MMs as politeness markers between the two variables of ambassadorial speeches are summarised as follows:

#### **(1) Strong committers:**

The AAs used more MMs in patterns with the *I* pronoun combined with a modal adjective, i.e., *I am confident that*, *I am sure that*, *I am optimistic that*, and *I am certain that*. These patterns of MMs indicate the speaker's strong commitment to the propositional content of the utterance (see 8.3.1). With the use of the *I* pronoun in these patterns of MMs, the speaker directly commits himself to the occurrence of the event presented or the performance of the act uttered. As such, it can be argued that the AAs are more interested in using patterns of MMs expressing a sense of directness and personal opinions as the speaker's strong commitment than the BAs.

## **(2) Hedges:**

The data regarding MMs classified as hedging expressions revealed that the AAs used more MMs in patterns with the *I* pronoun combined with a modal lexical verb, i.e., *I think that, I believe that, I hope that, and I expect that* (see 8.3.2). Again, the higher frequency of these patterns of MMs with the *I* pronoun in the AAC than in the BAC supports the argument that the AAs are more personal and direct and thus more informal than the BAs by expressing personal preference as politeness strategies.

## **(3) Intensifiers:**

Patterns of MMs with modal adverbs, i.e., *certainly, clearly, and of course* were also found with higher frequencies in the AAC than in the BAC. These MMs are used in the function as intensifiers (see 8.3.3) showing the speaker's judgement on, or certainty about, the occurrence of the event presented in the utterance. Thus, it can be claimed that the AAs are more direct and straightforward than the BAs in their use of MMs as intensifiers expressing their attitude towards, or opinion about, the propositional content of the utterance.

## **(4) Downtoners:**

It is interesting that other modal adverbs, i.e., *perhaps, probably, maybe, and possibly* used as downtoners (see 8.3.4) were also found with higher frequencies in the AAC than in the BAC. This supports the argument that the AAs are more personal, intimate and informal than the BAs. As discussed in 8.4.1 the data collected indicate that modal adverbs seem to replace the modal verbs in the AAC, whereas in the BAC modal verb forms are more frequently used.

## **(5) Mitigation markers:**

Mitigation markers in patterns with inclusive *we* combined with modal verbs were found with higher frequencies in the BAC than in the AAC through politeness strategies. Patterns such as *we will, we might, we must, we should, we need to...* were identified as mitigation markers (see 7.2.2.1 and 8.3.5) since they conveyed the speakers' strategy of involving hearers with the responsibility presented. The inclusive *we* expresses two aspects: on the one hand it mitigates the sense of obligation (*we must* is weaker than *you must*), and on the other hand it indicates the speaker's weak commitment and tentativeness to attenuate the strong effect presented in the proposition. As such, it can be interpreted that the BAs are more formal, reserved and tentative than the AAs in their politeness strategies. In sum, it can be

argued that while the AAs tend to be more personal and intimate, the BAs appear to be more tentative and reserved in expressing politeness strategies.

#### 10.4 Findings regarding differences of politeness strategies in ambassadorial speeches

Findings of MMs as politeness expressions collected from the research corpora provide answers to the research questions. On the one hand, the two variables of ambassadorial speeches (the AAC and BAC) are similar across semantic categories of modality. That is to say the AAs and the BAs employed similar patterns of MMs expressing categories of politeness in their speeches. However, differences were found in the proportion of MMs used as specific politeness strategies in specific ambassadorial speeches.

It can be argued that the AAs are more interested in using MMs expressing directness, assertion and personal opinions than the BAs, as shown in Table 10.1 below.

Table 10.1: Politeness strategies with more MMs found in the AAC than in the BAC

No.	Politeness strategies	Modality markers	Frequency		Log-likelihood
			AAC	BAC	
1	Paying attention to hearers	As you know, As you may know, As you probably know	20 2.92%	6 0.96%	8.02
2	Expressing strong commitment	I will	62 9.04%	24 3.85%	17.57
3	Hedging on hearers' positive face	I think that, I hope that, I believe that, I expect that	213 31.05%	149 23.89%	11.69
4	Expressing optimism	I am confident that, I am sure that, I am certain that, I am optimistic that	65 9.47%	33 5.29%	10.80
5	Mitigating the force of comments	- Concessive subordinators: while, whereas, etc. - Concessive	31 4.51%	15 2.40%	5.76

		conjunctions: however, on the other hand, etc. - Adversative coordinators: but, still			
6	Making claims	I would mean that, I would claim that I would argue that, I would say that	52 7.58%	24 3.85%	10.70
7	Minimising imposition of FTAs	Perhaps, maybe, possibly, probably	66 9.62%	20 3.20%	26.17

The BAs, conversely, preferred more patterns of MMs expressing indirectness, tentativeness and solidarity than the AAs. Expressing solidarity (‘in-groupness’) is a positive politeness strategy and as such goes against the general trend observed in the BAC. This is simply due to more patterns of MMs with inclusive *we* found in the BAC than in the AAC (see 8.2.1.4). With inclusive *we*, the speakers involve hearers in the commitment to the performance of the act or the occurrence of the event uttered as in *we will*, *we can*, *we would*, and *we could*. Inclusive *we* is also found in patterns of MMs expressing the strategy of mitigating the force of obligation (see 8.2.2.7). These patterns are used to mitigate the sense of obligation or minimise the imposition on hearers since they indicate the speakers’ sharing responsibility with hearers for performing the act uttered i.e., *we must*, *we need*, and *we should*. As such, it cannot be concluded that the BAs are more positive than the AAs but the data collected just reveal that the BAs use more patterns of MMs with inclusive *we* than the AAs.

In the following politeness strategies, as show in Table 10.2, higher frequencies of MMs were found in the BAC than in the AAC.

Table 10.2: Politeness strategies with more MMs found in the BAC than in the AAC

No.	Politeness strategies	Modality markers	Frequency		Log-likelihood
			AAC	BAC	
1	Expressing in-groupness	We will	47	83	9.92



	with hearers		6.85%	13.30%	
2	Hedging on negative FTAs	There should/may be It may/will be	13 1.90% 23 3.35%	38 6.09% 43 6.89%	12.68
3	Expressing hypothesis	Hypothetical would	49 7.14%	89 14.26%	11.57
4	Expressing humility	Let me	26 3.80%	45 7.21%	5.05
5	Mitigating the force of obligation	We must	19 2.77%	55 8.81%	18.10

Differences were also found between the AAs and the BAs in the use of MMs with personal pronouns in patterns of MMs. As the data recorded from samples of ambassadorial speeches reveal, the AAs relied heavily on modality expressions as clause-initiated sentences beginning with subjects like *I*, *you* and *Vietnam* combined with modal verbs, whereas the BAs tended to utilise the strategy of avoiding addressing hearers directly by using more instances of MMs with the *we* pronoun (see 9.4.2). The higher frequencies of MMs with the *we* pronoun in the BAC than in the AAC may suggest that the BAs are more cautious and reserved in addressing hearers. In their politeness strategies they tend to involve hearers' agreement with the occurrence of the event presented. Conversely, the higher frequencies of MMs with *I*, *you* and *Vietnam* in the AAC than in the BAC indicate that the AAs are more direct and explicit in their expressions of politeness. As such, it can be claimed that expressing indirectness and objectivity is an idiosyncratic trait of British politeness, whereas American politeness is oriented towards directness and subjectivity.

Investigations into MMs as politeness strategies reveal that the ambassadors of these two variables of spoken English are similar across their politeness strategies. However, differences were found in the proportion of MMs and the modal forms used in particular politeness strategies. As discussed in Chapter 8, the AAs used more MMs for politeness strategies such as paying attention to hearers, expressing strong commitment, hedging on hearers' positive face, expressing optimism, mitigating the force of comments, making

claims and minimising imposition of FTAs. The BAs employed more MMs for politeness strategies such as expressing in-groupness with hearers, hedging on negative FTAs, expressing hypothesis, expressing humility and mitigating the force of obligation. These differences in samples of British and American ambassadorial speeches may suggest that the AAs are more direct, intimate and personal while the BAs are more indirect, tentative and thus formal in their politeness strategies.

### **10.5 Limitations of the study and further research**

Given the multifaceted approaches to modality and politeness, this study is comprehensive, but not comprehensive. That is to say, although this research is on modality expressions and politeness strategies, it is central to investigating the pragmatic functions of modality markers in expressing the speakers' politeness strategies from the data source of British and American ambassadorial discourse rather than analysing the cultural distinctions between British and American ambassadors in expressing politeness strategies in their speech delivery.

Therefore, in this section limitations of the study and orientations for further research on modality and politeness will be proposed. The emphasis of discussion in the following sections is in terms of expansion of the data source for the research on the one hand, and further research on issues of modality and politeness that were not covered in the present research, on the other.

One way of supplementing this study on modality markers as politeness strategies is by expanding the sources of British and American ambassadorial speeches to compile the corpora in larger sizes. That is to say the extension to the research corpora can be made by collecting a variety of speeches made by British and American ambassadors in other countries rather than simply those presented to Vietnamese audiences. As such, the investigation into MMs as politeness strategies will provide insights into whether British and American ambassadors produce the same patterns of MMs to conduct their politeness or they use different patterns to express different politeness strategies in their speeches delivered to audiences in different countries.

Another important factor is the genre of ambassadorial speeches. For confidential reasons the speeches analysed were only those on general topics delivered to general Vietnamese audiences which were open to the public. To be precise, an investigation into MMs used as

expressions of politeness in various genres of ambassadorial speeches will provide insights into different patterns of MMs and different politeness strategies to different types of audiences or different speech settings. That is to say ambassadors may conduct different politeness strategies when they deliver their speeches to different types of audiences such as the general audiences, political leaders of their visiting countries or enterprise leaders in relation to their home countries.

As such, an investigation into the use of MMs as politeness strategies in various genres of ambassadorial speeches will be more comparable. These different genres of speeches when collected and compiled into research corpora will provide more data for discussions on other issues such as power and audience profiles which determine differences in patterns of MMs and politeness strategies in speech delivery. Moreover, with such an expansion of the data source the distinction between British and American ambassadors in both language use and culture would be made.

Politeness strategies in spoken communication can also be investigated through another aspect, that of intonation. As such, the present study can be expanded to include an examination of intonation that British and American ambassadors expressed to show politeness in their speech delivery to different types of audiences. This is expected to determine the differences not only between the British and American ambassadors but also members of each group of ambassadors in their attitude towards different audiences in their speech delivery. Moreover, my ambition is also to conduct further research in terms of a contrastive study on MMs and politeness strategies between English and Vietnamese discourse or a comparative study on MMs used in spoken and written English discourse.

Further research can be proposed in terms of hearers' perceptions and evaluations of politeness levels on MMs used in an utterance. As discussed so far in this research, expressing politeness with the use of language devices has been characterised as a culture-specific matter. This is because people of different cultures may have different strategies in performing linguistic actions to achieve politeness and in turn one may also vary in one's perception of politeness levels expressed by others in inter-linguistic communication. Such differences may occur when speeches are delivered to L2 users of English. This may be due to second language learners' competence in their use of linguistic devices that produce politeness and may also be influenced by their first language.

Therefore, apart from the present study, I am interested in investigating Vietnamese learners of English (VLEs) in their perception of modality markers used to express politeness levels through samples of ambassadorial speeches. As such, this study provides insights into research on VLEs' evaluation of politeness levels on patterns of MMs used in specific utterances. Such an investigation can be conducted in the form of questionnaire-based research. The questionnaire could be designed by a compilation of excerpts taken from ambassadorial speeches.

Such a questionnaire-based research will examine VLEs' perception of the semantic and pragmatic functions of MMs in speakers' politeness strategies. As such, it can be expected that the survey as proposed will provide answers to questions such as: (1) How do VLEs evaluate politeness levels on MMs? (2) On what features do VLEs rely to evaluate politeness levels on MMs used in the questionnaire items? (3) What explanations can be given to VLEs' evaluation on the pragmatic use of MMs? The descriptive statistics of feedback collected from such a survey will be used for the description and analysis of VLEs' perception on the pragmatic aspect of MMs. Consequently, suggestions can be made for VLEs to use MMs in more targeted ways as signals of the speaker's attitude in spoken communication. It can be claimed that the limitations and suggestions for further research as presented above are indispensable. In sum, the present study provides important insights into the use of MMs to express politeness in spoken communication and proposes orientations for an overall picture of studies on the relationship between modality and politeness.

Finally, this thesis is the result of lengthy research on the issues of modality and politeness. With all of the analysis of the findings of MMs used as politeness strategies in samples of British and American ambassadorial speeches, I would like to contribute to the immense world of linguistic research.

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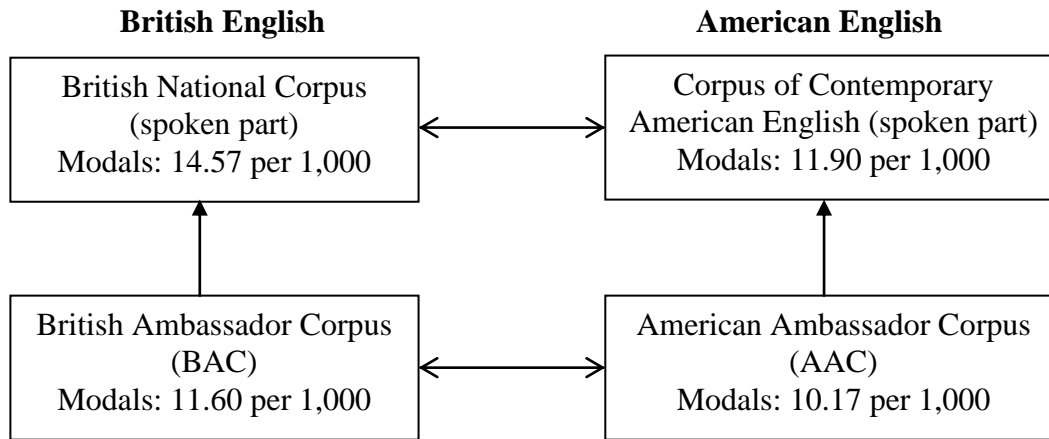
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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX 1

Modal frequencies in the research corpora and the control corpora



### APPENDIX 2

Distribution of the modals in the corpora used in the research

(tokens per 1,000 words)

Modals	BAC	AAC	BNC spoken part	COCA spoken part
Can	3.93	2.41	3.58	2.58
Will	2.17	3.26	1.99	2.39
Must	1.66	0.78	0.61	0.25
Should	1.29	0.62	1.21	0.95
Would	1.09	1.80	3.39	2.86
Could	0.83	0.48	2.02	1.47
May	0.47	0.58	0.54	0.76
Might	0.14	0.22	0.84	0.49
Shall	0.02	0.00	0.27	0.02
Ought	0.00	0.02	0.12	0.13
Total	11.60	10.17	14.57	11.90

### APPENDIX 3

Frequencies of the modals collected in the research corpora

<b>Modals</b>	<b>The AAC</b>	<b>The BAC</b>
Will	330 (25.68%)	293 (17.55%)
Can	252 (19.61%)	398 (23.85%)
Have to	169 (13.15%)	191 (11.44%)
Would	142 (11.05%)	127 (7.62%)
Need to	113 (8.79%)	196 (11.74%)
Must	93 (7.24%)	168 (10.06%)
Should	63 (4.91%)	131 (7.85%)
Could	49 (3.81%)	84 (5.03%)
May	48 (3.74%)	59 (3.54%)
Might	22 (1.71%)	18 (1.08%)
Ought	4 (0.31%)	0 (00%)
Shall	0 (00%)	4 (0.24%)
Total	1285 (100%)	1669 (100%)

### APPENDIX 4

Frequencies of deontic modals collected in the research corpora

<b>Modals</b>	<b>The AAC</b>	<b>The BAC</b>
Have to	169 (37.81%)	191 (28.17%)
Need to	113 (25.28%)	196 (28.91%)
Must	81 (18.12%)	151 (22.27%)
Should	52 (11.63%)	119 (17.55%)
Can	23 (5.15%)	8 (1.19%)
May	4 (0.89%)	7 (1.04%)
Ought to	4 (0.89%)	0 (0.00%)
Shall	0 (0.00%)	4 (0.58%)
Could	1 (0.23%)	2 (0.29%)
Total	447 (100%)	678 (100%)

## APPENDIX 5

Frequencies of dynamic modals collected in the research corpora

<b>Modals</b>	<b>The AAC</b>	<b>The BAC</b>
Can	229 (59.79%)	390 (72.22%)
Will	139 (36.29%)	131 (24.26%)
May	12 (3.14%)	18 (3.33%)
Could	3 (0.78%)	1 (0.19%)
Total	383 (100%)	540 (100%)

## APPENDIX 6

Frequencies of epistemic modals collected in the research corpora

<b>Modals</b>	<b>The AAC</b>	<b>The BAC</b>
Will	191 (41.98%)	162 (35.92%)
Would	142 (31.21%)	127 (28.16%)
Could	45 (9.89%)	81 (17.96%)
May	32 (7.03%)	34 (7.54%)
Might	22 (4.83%)	18 (3.99%)
Must	12 (2.64%)	17 (3.77%)
Should	11 (2.42%)	12 (2.66%)
Total	455 (100%)	451 (100%)

## APPENDIX 7

Frequencies of modal lexical verbs in the research corpora

<b>Modals</b>	<b>The AAC</b>	<b>The BAC</b>	<b>Log likelihood</b>
Think	99 (26.19%)	164 (33.88%)	15.91
Know	86 (22.75%)	97 (20.05%)	0.61
Believe	70 (18.52%)	75 (15.49%)	0.15
Hope	56 (14.81%)	83 (17.15%)	5.15
Suggest	27 (7.14%)	8 (1.65%)	10.99
Expect	24 (6.36%)	29 (5.99%)	0.45
Wish	7 (1.85%)	5 (1.03%)	0.34
Say	6 (1.59%)	11 (2.28%)	1.47
Assure	3 (0.79%)	6 (1.24%)	1.00
Guess	0 (00%)	6 (1.24%)	8.29
Total	378 (100%)	484 (100%)	12.55



## APPENDIX 8

Frequencies of modal adjectives in the research corpora

<b>Modals</b>	<b>The AAC</b>	<b>The BAC</b>	<b>Log likelihood</b>
Sure	16 (13.67%)	9 (10.71%)	2.02
Confident	16 (13.67%)	1 (1.19%)	16.03
Clear	15 (12.82%)	25 (29.76%)	2.48
Pleased	12 (10.26%)	7 (8.33%)	1.36
Optimistic	11 (9.40%)	1 (1.19%)	9.80
Certain	9 (7.69%)	1 (1.19%)	7.40
Hopeful	7 (5.98%)	1 (1.19%)	5.09
Likely	6 (5.13%)	23 (27.38%)	10.55
Proud	6 (5.13%)	2 (2.38%)	2.11
Grateful	6 (5.13%)	5 (5.95%)	0.10
Honoured	4 (3.42%)	2 (2.38%)	0.69
Glad	4 (3.42%)	2 (2.38%)	0.69
Determined	3 (2.57%)	3 (3.57%)	0.00
Delighted	2 (1.71%)	2 (2.38%)	0.00
<b>Total</b>	117 (100%)	84 (100%)	5.61

## APPENDIX 9

Frequencies of modal adverbs in the research corpora

Modal adverbs	The AAC				The BAC				Total
	Initial	Medial	Final	Subtotal	Initial	Medial	Final	Subtotal	
<b>Absolutely</b>		10		10		5		5	<b>15</b>
<b>Apparently</b>	1	1		2				0	<b>2</b>
<b>Aguably</b>		1		1	1	1		2	<b>3</b>
<b>Assuredly</b>		1		1				0	<b>1</b>
<b>Certainly</b>	1	15		16	3	8		11	<b>27</b>
<b>Clearly</b>	14	20		34	3	11		14	<b>48</b>
<b>Evidently</b>				0		1		1	<b>1</b>
<b>Hopefully</b>	1	4		5	1	3		4	<b>9</b>
<b>Likely</b>		6		6		23		23	<b>29</b>
<b>Maybe</b>	10	4		14		1		1	<b>15</b>
<b>Necessarily</b>		4		4		3		3	<b>7</b>
<b>Obviously</b>	4	2		6	1	3		4	<b>10</b>
<b>Of course</b>	20	13	2	35	25	38	1	64	<b>99</b>
<b>Perhaps</b>	7	13	2	22	14	11		25	<b>47</b>
<b>Possibly</b>		5		5	1	1		2	<b>7</b>
<b>Probably</b>		27		27	1	4		5	<b>32</b>
<b>Reportedly</b>		2		2				0	<b>2</b>
<b>Seemingly</b>		3		3		1		1	<b>4</b>
<b>Surely</b>				0	1	5		6	<b>6</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>335</b>
<b>%</b>	<b>31.02</b>	<b>66.84</b>	<b>2.14</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>34.45</b>	<b>64.86</b>	<b>0.69</b>	<b>100</b>	