A Pragmatic Analysis of the Uses of 'May' in the Anglican Communion's Rubrics for the Eucharistic Services

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ABSTRACT

Language is logical and dynamic; there is meaning and connotation for every word used. The use of modal auxiliary 'may' in the rubrics of the Holy Eucharist in the Anglican Book of Common Prayer (BCP 2007) has not really been recognised for its grammatical implications by the worship leaders and congregation. Therefore, there is the need to call the attention of the leadership of the Church to the direct implications of the verb used in the rubrics.

The study adopted the quantitative methodology using the Speech Act theory of J.L Austin 1975 to bring out meaning in the context of the rubrics and the interpretative application it has on both the worship leaders and members, in order to note the linguistic and the conventional meanings of the verb 'may' in the rubrics.

Findings revealed that this work is geared towards pointing out the confusions in the different meanings that the uses of modal auxiliary 'may' pose in the rubrics, like: 'A hymn may be sung', 'Gloria in Excelsis may be said or sung', 'Silence may be kept', 'The President may say this or an alternative BLESSING', as instructions, and considering the linguistic features that denote 'possibility', 'probability' or 'politeness'; it is responsible to making the worshippers not to follow the implied meanings of the verb but make it a conventional rite.

The study confirmed that despite the linguistic features of the verb 'may', the worshippers have already formed an understanding that the Church has a long-standing order that is binding.

Keywords Holy Eucharist, Anglican Church, Book of Common Prayer, Ordinal, Modal Auxiliary 'May'.

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This study is a pragmatic study of modal auxiliary 'may' in the rubrics of Anglican Book of Common Prayer (BCP 2007) for Holy Communion. Language is one of the most vital tools in man's existence. Language is therefore, essential in the implementation and understanding of meaningful prayers in any denomination or movement. According to Taiwo (2009), language is the disseminator belt of prayers and important of them. It drives people to demonstrate support, or objection. It can thus, be considered a central explanation of religious activities. In fact, in contemporary religions, language plays a great role, as religious leaders are seen opting for western education training, especially in language and art of communication. Effective use of language can guarantee spiritual virtues, security or polarisation. This view may explain the effectiveness of the poetic books in the Holy Bible. A good example of it is found in Psalm 51, where King David bemoaned his demotion. That Psalm especially becomes a reference point to believers who are disjointed in the spirit throughout the ages. The essence of language in expressing thoughts and ideas affects all aspects of human endeavours. Language is the blood and wire of human activities. Language is essential to religious rituals. Most activities performed by religious leaders are conveyed through the use of language.

The Book of Common Prayer is a standard manual for the Church of England from where the Anglican Church originates. It contains all the orders for ceremonial & private services and the teaching of the Church, like: Morning & Evening Prayer, Compline, Catechism, Baptism, The Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion, Holy Eucharist, Holy Matrimony, Funeral, Making of Deacons, Ordination of Priests, Consecration of Bishops & Archbishops, Dedication of a Church, Dedication of a New Home, including all the variable and invariable Collects; each variable collect for every week and the principal days.

The Book of Common Prayer (commonly called BCP) dates back to the 1662 Church of England. According to Akinola (2007) in the Book of Common Prayer:

> The Church of Nigeria is likely the largest in the Anglican Communion in terms of membership. Nigeria was first evangelised by Anglican missionaries of the Church Missionary Society (CMS) in 1842, and to this day maintains the evangelical character typical of areas where the CMS was active. The Anglican Church in Nigeria used the 1662 BCP (plus, of course, translations of it into indigenous languages) up until the independent Province of Nigeria was

created in 1979. Nigeria approved a Book of Common Prayer of its own in 1996, from which this booklet presumably was taken. David Okeke, in an essay on the BCP in Nigeria in *The Oxford Guide to the Book of Common Prayer,* states that the 1996 Nigerian BCP "on the whole relies on adoption and adaptation rather than on liturgical creativity and innovation.

This is corroborated in the fact that the liturgy of the Church remains the medium through which the parishioners express what they believe. In all of this, there are always rubrics to direct in the conduct of the services. Apart from the Holy Bible, it is seen as an atlas for worship in the Church, since all the forms of functions carried out by a parish priest are included.

Concept of Pragmatics
Pragmatics is a sub-field of language study, which came into existence due to realisation that Semantics was not a sufficient instrument for the analysis of meaning in language. According to Ogunsiji, (2009), This sub-field handles those facets of meanings in language which a mere formal approach cannot reveal- the use of language in communication situation. Pragmatic unveils some conversation strategies which are highly utilitarian in some linguistic undertakings. These conversational strategies cannot be literally understood as they are pregnant with meanings. Much is said through a non-linguistic means in this context of language. This meaning of the messages which conveyed the evaluations of a text is not made until all the linguistic features have been studied and interpreted.

Banjo (1982) stresses that "an ideal pragmatic analysis should proceed from analysis to synthesis and then to the effectiveness of the use of language in the text to an examination of the way in which linguistic devices are used to build up the meaning of the text" (p.56). Such an examination invariably ends with evaluations on whether the language user has succeeded or not in conveying his ideas. In this pragmatic analysis of rubrics in the Book of Common Prayer (BCP) for Holy Communion**,** also known as New Liturgy, attention will focus mainly on how modal auxiliary 'may' is used in conveying different meanings. In order to achieve this, both style and context of this Book of Common Prayer foreground scholarly debate and it becomes imperative that it be examined, especially the rubrics. This part has been chosen for this study because of the uniqueness of the language used. Bearing in mind that Anglican Communion is one of the denominations that sets the pace of simplicity in religious ritual on which modern day denominations build on, the worshipers or members are also expected to cultivate the

attitude of simple-mindedness. The book (BCP) contains varied renditions. Content wise, it can be said to encompass all aspects of man's existential needs. Irrespective of the readers' personality, it always offers the situational need of the readers. For instance, it encourages, warns, offers protection, offers repentance, etc. This is why it becomes so popular that one can almost refer to the entire book as the book of prayers. According to Ayeomoni (2012), Its compositional style is so unique that it meets up with modern style of poetic composition. There is a way the language choice is structured to reflect the supremacy and superiority of prayers as demanded by God. A pragmatic study accommodates extra-textual references while the evaluations of a text are being made.

Statement of the Problem
The Church of Nigeria Anglican Communion is an offshoot of the Church of England with the See in the Canterbury. The primary instrument of worship called Book of Common Prayer is handed over to the Church of Nigeria. Though it is a truism that members in Anglican are much acquainted with the 1662 BCP, however it is noteworthy that the usage of the book has a number of historical antecedents.

Fape (2009) states "The Prayer Book, unlike books of prayers, contains the words of structured (or liturgical) services of worship. The first edition of the Book of Common Prayer of 1549 contained the forms of service for daily and Sunday worship in England and to do so within a single volume. In this volume were the orders for Morning Prayer, Evening Prayer, the Litany, and Holy Communion" (p.19).
After all series of editions, 2007 edition remains the latest Book of Common Prayer, and the use and application of the modal auxiliary 'may' in the rubrics has called for the pragmatic analysis.

Significant research has been conducted on religious **discourses**, the uses of 'may, in the rubrics for the Eucharistic service remain unexplored in the context of the Anglican Book of Common Prayer for Holy Communion. This study attempts to fill that research gap by exploring the modal auxiliary 'may' from the pragmatic perspective.

The general aim of the study is to analyse the uses of 'may' in the Anglican Communion's rubrics for the Eucharistic service; and ascertain the contextual and grammatical meanings used in the context of the liturgy.

The use of 'may' in the rubrics for the service of Eucharist is used in a way that it has unconsciously created a linguistic confusion whilst it intended to give guidelines

for the worshipers and worship leaders in the service.

Its linguistic features are now overtly overlooked in the service, given that worshippers and their leaders already formed a conventional stance that the Anglican Communion has as a custom in worship.

Literature Review
Language users usually look for a way of expressing ideas in a somewhat subtle way, which can make the message better understood to the listeners or readers. This is often done by impressing some feelings intended in such situations. Using language in some incongruent form is believed to be the hallmark of communicative competence especially if well managed. On the other hand, in the field of religious discourse where communication of cognitive and directly concerning reality concepts takes place, metaphorical language use seems to be non-specific and can be compared to analogical use of metaphors in everyday language. Moreover, it co-exists with literal way of speaking that cannot be always distinguished from metaphorical language.

From the philosophical point of view, Falako (2011), it could be said that a language use that refers to transcendent dimensions of religious world view seems to be the most interesting. Such dimensions can be referred to as the sacral domain of religious discourse. This area of religious world is the most problematic from the point of view of studies on religious language's meaning. Yet, is it possible to talk about reality that is neither accessible for immediate experience nor can be reduced to such experience? Falako (2011), in his inquiry presents a view in which he asks the possibility of the religious genre. According to him … if so, how is such religious speech possible? Why does it happen that religious language presents ideas that are beyond human cognitive abilities, and that cannot be described due to its nature? Why does a religious man ascribe special truth to religious statements? (p.89). Theologians and philosophers studying religious beliefs and utterances have been troubled by such questions for ages. Many of them concluded that religious speech is not possible at all or it has to make use of negation, contradiction, or paradox. Others referred to symbolic and metaphorical character of religious language that enables us to grasp reality that cannot be grasped literally in any other way. This explains why they indulge in the use of grammatical metaphor (Halliday, 1985). Irrespective of the above-mentioned opinions we must agree that religious language bases on the assumption that a religious man is making a claim while speaking. He is convinced that his words have certain sense and relate to some kind of transcendent reality (that is beyond human cognitive

abilities and abilities of human language).

Since religion is a social-and linguistic event that affects man, language becomes a veritable means of achieving this goal. There is a strong link between language and religion. Just as Arabic is an indispensable tool in Islam, the Greek language plays an important role in the understating of the New Testament in particular and Christianity in general. Hebrew is also a key in the understanding of the Old Testament and Judeo-Christianity. Also, the local languages in Nigeria are very important to the practice of traditional religion, while the English language has proved to be a more efficacious medium than any of the native languages in Nigeria, particularly in Christianity (see Jemiriye, 2004. (P.36) and Bamisaye 2006 (p.38). Cook (1996) supplies some examples of discourse genres. Using his description of discourse, we can therefore, refer to prayer as an instance of language used by a group of people in the society, as they (Christians) attempt to communicate with God, the transcendent being for transactional and interactional purposes in accordance with Yule's (1985) macro functions of language. It must be noted also that other religious sects such as Islam, Buddha etc pray too.

The language used in the Book of Common Prayer is dated back to the practice in England wherein English has been the language of the land. According to Akinola (2007), 'The 1662 edition had been a source of inspiration and a prototype of the Prayer Book of the daughter Churches throughout the Anglican world' (p.iii). Prayer as a subtype of religious discourse and as a piece of language or means of communication, occupies a central place in this categorisation and as such, can be studied and analysed, using insights from linguistic tools. Prayer is an essential part of religion and is at the heart of every religion. Omoregbe (1993), It can be argued that prayer produces psychological changes or advantages to the religious man who prays. It changes the one who offers it.

Theoretical Framework
In line with how the study examines the pragmatic analysis in the uses of 'may' in the rubrics for the Eucharistic service, Kempson (1986) cited in Osinsanwo (2003) describes pragmatics as: the study of the general cognitive principles involved in the retrieval of information from an utterance(pp.561,68). Leech and Short (1987) view it as the analysis of language that is broadly understood to be the investigation into that aspect of meaning which is derived not from the formal properties of words and constructions, but from the way in which utterances are used and how they relate to the context in which they are uttered. Language has earlier

been said to be human vocal noise or its graphic representation. According to J.L Austin (1962), in every utterance, a person performs an act such as stating a fact, stating an opinion, confirming or denying something et cetera. All these are speech acts. In understanding this deeply, Speech Act theory is key to unlocking the meaning of the work. The theory connects all aspect of linguistic communication as entailed in the linguistic actions. For example, it is believed that the major tools for communication are words, symbols, sentences or other means of these. However, it is speech act theory that suggests production of words, and symbols stand as the basic units of communication. This is implied in between the speaker and the audience.

According to Greig & Brown, 'A theory of language is a theory of action.' The theory confirms that the utterances have a different or particular meaning to its user and listener apart from its meaning according to the language. The theory further notes there are two types of utterances, and these are called: constative and performative utterances.

There are three categories in this theory, following Austin.

Locutionary act: It is the act of saying something. The direct meaning of what one is saying as it is heard. It has a meaning and it creates an understandable utterly to convey or express.

Illocutionary act: This is performed as an act of saying something. In this case, the audience cannot decode the speaker's intention based on the direct meaning, but symbols. The illocutionary utterance has a certain force of it. It is well-versed with certain tones, attitudes, feelings, or emotions. There will be an intention of the speaker or others in illocutionary utterance. It is often used as a tone of warning in everyday event.

Perlocutionary act: This usually creates a scene of consequential effects on the recipients/ audiences. The essence may be in the form of thoughts, imaginations, feelings or emotions.

Speech act types can be distinguished on the basis of structure. There seems to be a correlation between the structure and function the structure is performing. For instance, Utterances are Direct Speech acts because there is a direct relationship between their structures and their functions. When the speaker says for instance," leave the room", "You will leave the room", and "Will you leave the room?" the same proposition, that you will leave the room, is expressed in the performance of three different illocutionary acts, one a request, one a prediction, and one a question. This last distinction between the illocutionary

act and the propositional act has suggested to most theorists who write about speech acts that there is a typical logical form of the illocutionary act whereby it has a propositional content *(P)* and that propositional content is presented with a certain illocutionary force F, giving the total act the structure *F(P)*.

Finally, in the theory of speech acts there is a customary distinction between direct speech acts, where the speaker says what he means, and indirect speech acts where he means something more than what he says. For example, in a standard dinner table situation when a speaker says "Can you pass the salt?" he performs the *direct* speech act of asking whether the hearer can pass the salt but normally also the *indirect* speech act of requesting the hearer to pass the salt.

The Modal Auxiliary Verbs
Modal auxiliary verbs have posed a great number of challenges in their interpretations and understanding.
In a perspective prioritising function, the notion of modality can be extended to other types of linguistic expressions. Nuyts (2001) takes a broader functional perspective on the linguistic manifestations of (epistemic) modality and distinguishes four different expression types all found in Western European languages: (1) modal adverbs; (2) modal adjectives; (3) mental state predicates; (4) modal auxiliaries

(1) Maybe/probably/certainly… they have run out of fuel.
(2) It is possible/probable/likely/certain… that they have run out of fuel.
(3) I think/believe… they have run out of fuel.
(4) They may/might/must… have run out of fuel (p.29).

Modal Auxiliary 'May'
The class of modal auxiliary 'May' is considered as the concern. In its linguistic case, it could be used for a number of things. According to Quirk & Greenbaum (1993), it describes permission, possibility, politeness. For example, '**May** I borrow your pen, please?', '**May** we ask you some questions about your experience?', 'General, you **may** fire when you are ready.' 'She **may** invite one or two friends, but not more than that.'

From the above, it is clear that the modal auxiliary 'may' has a number of actions that it can perform.
Hunston (2011) avers there is need to recognise modal-like expressions appearing in contexts that signal modal meanings though the modal meaning is realised in ways that are not usually considered modal. The verb *decide* can, for instance, have a modal-like meaning in expressions such as *it's up to him to decide where to go* (p.66).

Methodology
The methodology used in making inquiry for this work is quantitative through the distribution of data. The data collected was analysed on percentage rate.
This was distributed between participants, namely: 60 priests and 40 parishioners, and the data analysed was personally administered by the researcher.

Data Analysis
The data gathered from the field were analysed by using quantitative system in analysing and interpreting the documents that have been collected from the respondents.

English as A Second Language
The Book of Common Prayer is no doubt likened to an atlas in worship, the Holy Eucharist in particular as it has been considerably extracted from the whole BCP, being a regular service in the Anglican Communion. This Book of Common Prayer (the New Liturgy) of the Church was published by the Anglican Church of Nigeria, whose members' first language (L1) is not English, and this makes the language used in the Book of Common Prayer as Second Language (L2). It then means that the uses of English by a second language users must be considered whether it meets the standard of the native speakers of English language.

Therefore, the uses of the 'may' in the rubrics for the Eucharistic service can prove the mind of the speakers (worship leaders) in guiding worshipper for the appropriate response in the service.

The Auxiliary Verbs
According to Chuku (2003), They are helping verbs. They are also referred to as operators. Auxiliaries help the main or principal verb in the sentence to form a verb phrase or verbal group. They also help to indicate aspect, tense and mood (p.46).

Murthy (2007) states that, Auxiliary verbs help other verbs to form tenses in the construction of sentences. There are a number of the list of auxiliary verbs, like:

> Be and its forms: am, is, are, was, were
> Have and its forms: have, has, had
> Do and its forms: do, does, did, done
> Shall, should; will, would
> Can, could; may, might
> Must, ought, need, dare, used to (p.127).

For example, I have a student who has a good grade. He has acquired all the levels of his education in London. Do you mean he did not study in Nigeria at all? The man shall show

you the document when you see him. He should not show any other person, apart from you.

Types of Auxiliary Verbs:

Primary Auxiliary Verbs
There are cases where some auxiliaries could also function as both auxiliaries and main verbs, according to Chuku (2003), they are three in number 'have' 'be' and 'do'. she stressed further that the three other aspects like 'has', 'had', 'does', 'did', 'is', 'am', 'are', 'was', 'were', 'being', 'been'.
While Murthy (2007) posits that, Verbs used to form negatives, questions and tenses are known as Primary Auxiliaries.

Modal Auxiliary Verbs
This part of auxiliaries called modal accounts for the application of various expressions of moods and mental attitudes. Murthy (2007) says, the moods and mental attitudes like hope, expectations, possibility and futurity are known as Modal Auxiliaries.

Example: can   may   will   shall   must
        could   might   would   should   need
        dare   ought to used to

The Functions of Auxiliary 'May'
This work covers the uses of 'may' in the rubrics for the Eucharistic service, hence the interest to base on the uses of the auxiliary 'may'.

May and *might* both indicate possibility but *might* can suggest that there is less possibility than *may.*

Modal auxiliary 'may' could be used for a variety of purposes, whether in written or spoken capacity. Quirk & Greenbaum (1993), it describes permission, possibility, politeness. For instance, '**May** I take my seat, please?', '**May** we ask you some questions about your experience?', 'General, you **may** fire when ready.' 'She **may** invite one or two friends, but not more than that.'

From the above, it is clear that the modal auxiliary 'may' has a number of functions that it can display.

The Rubrics and the Eucharistic Service
The service is a traditional one, even though it is conducted under the full leading of Holy Spirit. And, being that as it may, it has always started with the official procession of the choir, lay readers, vergers and followed by the priest(s) and the wardens. At any point in time this service is taking place, it is customary to begin with a hymn whilst the procession is in progress. This hymn is called 'Processional Hymn'. However, it is stated in the rubrics thus: "A Hymn May Be Sung."

During the procession, the whole members of the parish also rise to sing together. According to the various functions of the auxiliary 'may' stated above, it means it could be for permission, request, possibility or a wish, and if compared to elsewhere it is stated. "The President May Say" … Or one or more of these sentences:"
In considering the above, it proves that the use of 'may' in "The President May…" shows probability/possibility.

The Rubrics and the Eucharistic Prayer 1
This **rubrics state:** (*Congregation remains standing*) (*The President faces the congregation and sings or says*). Next to the second one, says: (*The congregation may kneel*). (*The President continues*).

In the case of the first two rubrics, the guide is direct, as lexical verbs are used in both. Meanwhile, it is customary that everyone in the congregation must rise at this juncture, while the leader of the worship (President) also faces the members.

Then, the next rubric says: "The congregation may kneel." The fact is, everyone also kneels, as the leader continues. The question now is, what is the original meaning implied to the later instruction? What is the grammatical meaning meant for the instruction?

One may not be duly guided with the uses of auxiliary 'may' in the rubrics, as they do not follow a pattern of linguistic function of the auxiliary may, hereby liable to cause confusion for the followers in the service as well as the conservative leader in the worship who is keenly led by the tone of the rubrics.

Discussion of the Findings
The analysis of data represented in the research questions prove that 100% of the users of the rubrics, comprising 60 priests and 40 laity, follow the rubrics without strictly observing what the modal auxiliary verb dictates. Apart from the influence of the Holy Spirit which cannot be disparaged in the worship, the users are already glued to the original practice of the church, not necessarily noting what the rubrics instruct.

Those who conduct the service as worship leaders are discovered to only follow the rubrics, not completely with full awareness of the modal auxiliary 'may', but they already formed a basis that the Church has an order to be followed. It has therefore been somehow seen as what obtains in the system. This has also got the members informed, that there is a tradition already laid, known and practised by the church.

Conclusion

This study attempts to give a critical look into the linguistic use of modal auxiliary 'may' as 'cheaply' used in the rubrics of a majorly pronounced service in the Anglican Communion, Church of Nigeria. It therefore considers pragmatics as a field for application, and following this it has established various ways in which one can use modal auxiliary that expresses various meanings. It is on this that Murthy (2007) posits that there exists a number of varieties of the usage. It shows that there is a significant relationship between the tone of the modal auxiliary 'may' and the compliance for the rubrics by those who use the Book of Common Prayer for Holy Communion. It is therefore expected that language users or readers from any field or religion in the world should note the appropriate usage of the verb whilst making instructions.

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