**WE SHALL in American presidents' Inaugural Addresses**

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**Abstract:** This research, taking the word SHALL as an example, looks at three aspects which have been neglected in traditional grammar books (Leech & Svartvik 1975; Young 1984; Freeborn 1987; Crystal 1988; Crystal & McLachlan 1988; Greenbaum 1991): (1) diachronic changes of how SHALL is being used over time; (2) semantic functions of SHALL in specific context and (3) the relationship between SHALL and its collocated grammatical pronoun subject. It is a diachronic study of a specially constructed corpus (IAAP, 131, 161 words) consisting of 56 speeches of all the 39 American presidents who gave a speech /speeches, comparing with Leech's (2003) and Millar's (2009) observation. it reports that although the use of SHALL decreases significantly after the year 1901 -- as observed by both Leech (2003) and Millar (2009)-- it firstly increased sharply before 1901. After distinguishing inclusive, exclusive and the determinate "WE" in IAAP, it presents the statistical change of WE SHALL in IAAP as well as a study of the deeper relationship between semantic functions of SHALL (giving promise, predicting, and requiring) and the inclusive / exclusive "WE".

**Keyword:** Diachronic study, modal verbs, corpus, Inaugural speech

**Introduction**

Modal verbs have always been a grammatical issue of much interest, not only because of their fuzziness and ambiguity which pose problems for foreign language speakers, but also because their functions seem to undergo changes over time. Researchers in the field of applied linguistics, and particularly in the sub-fields of English grammar, have produced a large and impressive body of work (Leech & Svartvik 1975; Young 1984; Freeborn 1987; Crystal 1988; Crystal & McLachlan 1988; Greenbaum 1991; McArthur 1992; Quirk, et.al. 1985; Schibsbye 1970; Palmer 1971; Close 1992, 1975; Cruickshank, Leech & Ivanič 2001; Jespersen 1933). In
terms of these works, SHALL is one of the auxiliary verbs expressing the future. In addition to expressing the future, it can, as a modal verb, perform the semantic function of giving promise, describing obligation, volition, requiring and helping to form interrogative sentences.

However, there are three aspects of SHALL which have not been discussed widely in these grammar books. **Firstly**, the diachronic change in the use of SHALL, although referred to by some researchers, has not been fully described in grammar books. English has been evolving all the time and the meanings and functions of English words have changed over time. However, the majority of grammar books explain only the present use of SHALL, ignoring the changes. Some other linguists have noticed the necessity to explore the changes in how SHALL as well as other modal verbs are being used. Corpus Linguistics, in particular, provides a new way to carry out diachronic study. Employing a corpus linguistics method, Leech (2003) and Millar (2009) have investigated the change of modal verbs over time. Leech focuses on the thirty-year period from 1961 to 1991 and Millar studies the 1900s onwards, using corpora in the Brown family (LOB corpus, F-LOB corpus, Brown Corpus and Frown Corpus) and the Times Magazine Corpus respectively. In their study, the use of SHALL is shown to decline dramatically between the 1920s and 2000s. However, what that they do not explore is how the use of SHALL changed before 1900.

**Secondly**, the majority of grammar books illustrate the semantic functions of SHALL in general rather than in a specific context. However, as discussed by many researchers, words’ meanings depend greatly on the context (Bonelli 2001; Sinclair 1998, 1996). As in the case of other modal verbs, SHALL performs differently in different contexts. Some researchers who are interested in lexical meaning turn their interests in modals on different contexts (Biber, Leech et al,1999). In their study, modal verbs are studied in four different corpora—conversation, fiction, news and academic writing. One aspect, however, which has not been explored, is about political speeches and inaugural addresses in particular. Modals in these speeches tend to perform differently from those in other genres, mainly because words in political speeches are written with the intention of influencing the public and the whole nation.

**Finally**, many grammar books ((Leech & Svartvik 1975; Young 1984; Freeborn 1987) point out that the semantic function of SHALL depends greatly on the personal pronoun
subject collocating with it; however, most of them ignore the relationship between SHALL and the pronoun collocating with it.

Based on the discussion above, the majority of studies on modal verbs have not put enough emphasis on (1) the diachronic change of how SHALL is being used over time; (2) the semantic functions of SHALL in political speeches and (3) the relationship between SHALL and its collocated pronoun. This study, therefore, aims to highlight the three aspects by employing a corpus study on the modal verb SHALL when it is collocated with the first person plural (It should be pointed out that, this study only focuses on the first personal plural pronoun, namely WE) in political speeches, precisely in inaugural addresses of American presidents (IAAP).

Motivated by this goal, the research questions of this study can be summarized as the following:

1. When WE is the subject, how the use of SHALL has changed over the 220 years in American presidents’ inaugural addresses; what is missing in Millar’s (2009) and Leech’s research (2003);
2. What are the semantic functions of SHALL when it is collocated with WE in IAAP;
3. What is the relationship between the subject WE and the semantic function of SHALL.

The structure of this study is as follows. After the introduction, the second part discusses relevant issues involved in the process of corpus compilation. The third part presents a primary observation of SHALL in the corpus. It shows a similar trend of SHALL to both Millar (2009) and Leech’s (2003) observation and emphasizes the use of SHALL which has not been studied before. The fourth part introduces different classifications of WE and different WEs in the IAAP. The fifth part then explains the different semantic functions of SHALL when it is collocated with WE in IAAP. The sixth section presents the trends of how the three categories of WE are used in the corpus and the final part brings the study to a close by summarizing the observations in the study and by reflecting on the value of the study in terms of its aims.
Corpus Compilation

The corpus used in this study -- the Inaugural Addresses of American Presidents (IAAP) -- is a collection of 131, 161 words, spanning the period from 1789 to 2009 (220 years). It compromises 56 speeches of all the 39 presidents in America history who gave such a speech (or speeches). Five presidents did not give inaugural address at all, namely, John Tyler (10th president), Millard Fillmore (13th president), Andrew Johnson (17th president), Chester A. Arthur (21st president) and Gerald Ford (38th president). Therefore, the corpus as it stands is, as far as I am aware, completely representative of US president’s inaugural addresses up to 2009.

An important decision concerned the time span of each sub-corpus. The diachronic study of SHALL is based on the comparison of four sub-corpora, categorized in terms of the time. Ideally, 220 years divided by 4 is 55 years in each period; however, because 55 cannot be divided by four, the length of a term for a president and some presidents resigned or quit before their terms ended, 55 years per period is not feasible. This paper keeps the time span consistent with the service term of the last president in that period. For instance, the second period is supposed to be from 1844 to 1899; however, since the president serving around 1899 is William McKinley, from 1897 to 1901, the second period is actually from 1844 to 1901. The final periods are grouped as Table 1 lists.

Table 1: Time span of each sub-corpora

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of Token</td>
<td>35,719</td>
<td>36,664</td>
<td>31,108</td>
<td>28,233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of word Type</td>
<td>4,456</td>
<td>4,564</td>
<td>4,263</td>
<td>3,839</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of Speeches</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Another problem involved in the diachronic study is that the four sub-corpora are of different sizes. We can observe from Table 1 above that the second corpus is comparatively bigger than the other corpora and the fourth one is relatively smaller. To standardize the data across the four periods, all the data reported in this paper will be presented as standardized figures. These figures are:
Raw Frequency (**Fre**): The occurrences of a word;

Percentage of Each Period (**PEP**): Divide the **Fre** with the number of running words in each sub-corpus;

Percentage of the Whole Period (**PWP**): Divide the **Fre** with the number of running words in the whole corpus;

*Preliminary observation of SHALL in the IAAP*

This section presents some prime observations in the IAAP and compares these results with those from Millar’s (2009) and Leech’s (2003).

Both Millar (2009) and Leech (2003) have illustrated that the use of SHALL decreases after 1900. Millar (2009: 199) observes a 95.6% decrease of SHALL in the TIME Magazine Corpus (Created by Mark Davies) from the 1920s to the 2000s by comparing the relative frequencies per decade (words per million in each decade). Leech’s study (2003: 228) also shows a decrease (43.7% in British English and 43.8% in American English) from 1961-1991 according to the raw frequency -- **Fre** in this study.

This study also shows a decreasing tendency in the use of SHALL in IAAP from 1901 onwards. Table 2 below shows the three parameters of SHALL—**Fre**, **PEP** and **PWP** in each period and the whole corpus in the IAAP. It can be observed from the table that, in terms of the **PEP**, SHALL decreases from 0.24% to 0.15%, from the third to the fourth period (from 1901 to 2009). The **PWP** also shows a decrease during that period from 0.057% to 0.031%. This is consistent with what Leech observes.

*Table 2: Fre, PEP and PWP of SHALL in the IAAP*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Fre</th>
<th><strong>PEP</strong></th>
<th><strong>PWP</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1789-1844</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>0.18%</td>
<td>0.048%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1845-1901</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>0.37%</td>
<td>0.102%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901-1953</td>
<td>75</td>
<td><strong>0.24%</strong></td>
<td><strong>0.057%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1953-2009</td>
<td>41</td>
<td><strong>0.15%</strong></td>
<td><strong>0.031%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHOLE</td>
<td>314</td>
<td>0.24%</td>
<td>0.238%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
However, Table 3 also shows that, before 1901 (which Millar and Leech did not explore in their studies), over the approximately 100 years period from 1789 to 1901, the data show a sharp increase in IAAP -- from 63 to 135 according to Fre, from 0.048% to 0.102% in terms of PWP and from 0.18% to 0.37% based on the PEP. This change implies that before the decrease of SHALL in both Millar and Leech’s study, SHALL had been increasing steeply.

Compared with the first period (from 1789 to 1844), the fourth period (from 1953 to 2009) shows a decrease of SHALL, with a difference of 16.7% in terms of the PEP (from 0.18% to 0.15%). This decrease is far less than the 94.5% in Millar’s study; and also less than what Leech observed (43.8%).

In conclusion, the trend of SHALL between the year 1901 and 2009 in IAAP is consistent with what Millar (2009: 199) and Leech (2003: 228) observe, but before 1901, this tendency had reversed sharply.

Inclusive and exclusive WE in IAAP

Having explored the distribution of SHALL in IAAP, we now turn to one of its collocated subjects, namely, WE. This section will examine how to distinguish different WEs into different categories and how these different kinds of WE are embodied in IAAP.

Billig (1995: 90) points out that ‘WE’ can be ambiguous, indicating several entities and suggesting “harmony of interests and identities”. Therefore, what WE refers to varies. WE in this study is not an exception.

As is claimed by Bastow (2006: 53), WE can be distinguished in two ways. One distinction is the “dual (‘I’ and one other person) and the collective (‘I’ and more than one other person)”. The collective WE predominates in most kinds of oratory. In the IAAP, no examples of dual WE are found.

The second distinction is also discussed by Biber el. at. (2000: 329, 330) and Wales (1996: 58)—between the ‘exclusive’ WE, where the addressee or addressees are excluded and
“inclusive’ WE (whether dual or collective ‘you and I’), which includes addressee(s). An example of exclusive WE might be found when the guests ask the hostess if they can put their coats on the hanger, “Shall WE put our coats here?” while an example of inclusive WE might be: “Shall WE go together?” (you and I together).

The corpus shows that there are three categories in this study, namely, exclusive WE, inclusive WE and the indeterminate WE. We now come to the examples of the two types in the IAAP.

In the following extracts from the IAPP, we find the exclusive WE can either refer to the president himself or the government or party which is led by the president. Expressions which are underlined in the example indicate that the WE is exclusive. In “Our fellow-citizens” and “all of our people”, since “our” modifies the “citizens” and “people”, WE and people (or citizens) are two different entities. Therefore, WE is exclusive in this sentence. From another point of view, “adding much to the convenience and comfort of our fellow-citizens” and “plan for the day when our wealth...” shows the promise given by the president. The promise is what he will do in the future and what obliges him to commit a future action. This cannot be done by the citizens; rather, this can only be done by the president and the government led by him. Therefore, WE refers to the president and the government led by him. It is an exclusive WE.

By thus facilitating the intercourse between the States WE SHALL add much to the convenience and comfort of our fellow-citizens, much to the ornament of the country, and, what is of greater importance, WE SHALL shorten distances, and, by making each part more accessible to and dependent on the other, WE SHALL bind the Union more closely together.

(James Monroe 4, March 1817)

For all of our people, we will ……We SHALL plan now for the day when our wealth can be transferred from the destruction of war abroad to the urgent needs of our people at home….

(Richard Milhous Nixon 20, Jan, 1969)

Unlike the exclusive WE, the inclusive WE, as is shown in the following examples, refers either to (1) both the president and the audience, or (2) the nation consisting of the president and the citizens. Phrases underlined in the examples below suggest that WE is inclusive. “We Americans” clearly shows that WE does not only refer to the president and the
government, but also to Americans, including the audience who are listening to his speech. “For our children” and “for our children and our children’s children” demonstrates the goal of the act (the aim of this act). It is unlikely for the president to secure homes only for his children or only for the children of government officers. Rather, homes should be secured for the children of all the American citizens. Thus, WE in these cases, is inclusive.

We Americans of today, together with our allies, are passing through a period of supreme test—successfully and honorably—WE SHALL perform a service of historic importance which men and women and children will honor throughout all time...I know that it is America’s purpose that WE SHALL not fail.

(James Buchanan 4, March, 1857)

But if we hold the faith of the men in our mighty past who created these ideals, WE SHALL leave them heightened and strengthened for our children (Herbert C. Hoover 4, March, 1929)

We SHALL thus not only best promote the prosperity of the new States and Territories, by furnishing them a hardy and independent race of honest and industrious citizens, but (WE) SHALL secure homes for our children and our children’s children, as well as for those exiles from foreign shores who may seek in this country to improve their condition and to enjoy the blessings of civil and religious liberty.

(James Buchanan 4, March, 1857)

In addition to inclusive and exclusive WE, some WEs cannot be easily grouped as typically exclusive or inclusive. As is illustrated in the extracts below, WE in these two sentences is ambiguous. It can refer to either the president/government or to the president/government as well as all American citizens. It can also be an abstract concept which does not refer to anyone in particular. WEs like this are termed indeterminate in this study.

If WE SHALL suppose that American slavery is one of those offenses which, in the providence of God, must needs come, but which, having continued through His appointed time, He now wills to remove, and that He gives to both North and South this terrible war as the woe due to those by whom the offense came, SHALL WE discern therein any departure from those divine attributes which the believers in a living God always ascribe to Him?

(Abraham Lincoln, 4 March, 1865)

Our past history forbids that WE SHALL in the future acquire territory unless this be sanctioned by the laws of justice and honor. Acting on this principle, no nation will have a right to interfere or to complain if in the progress of events WE SHALL still further extend our possessions.

(James Buchanan, 4 March, 1857)
Before further discussion, it should be highlighted that this study focuses largely on the distinction between exclusive and inclusive WE; indeterminate WE deserves a study of its own.

**Semantic functions of SHALL collocating with WE in IAAP**

The previous section explains different kinds of WE in IAAP. This section connects different semantic functions of SHALL to different classifications of WE in IAAP. In other words, this section tries to suggest that the pronoun subject of SHALL – mainly inclusive and exclusive WE – has an impact on the semantic function of SHALL.

Before demonstrating the relationship between the semantic functions of SHALL and its subject WE, it is necessary to explain the three functions of SHALL first to prevent from potential confusion, namely, promise, prediction and requiring.

a. **Promise**

   “On more traditional accounts, a promise is the expression of an act of will or an intention to act” (Smith 2003: 9). In speech act theory, promise is concluded as a category of performatives—commissives which also include declarations or announcements of intention as well as espousals (Austin 1962:150). When a speaker is giving a promise, he is obliged to vouch for the truth of all the statements he makes; therefore, he is obliged to commit himself to carry out a future action to keep the promise in the future.

b. **Prediction**

   Prediction is a claim or a statement that an event (or events) which will occur in the future. There is sometimes ambiguity between prediction and promise. The difference between prediction and promise can be defined in two aspects: Firstly, a promise puts the speaker under a future obligation while a prediction does not. In terms of Austin (1962: 10), when a speaker is giving a promise, he actually obliges himself to a future action which is his obligation. However, when the speaker is predicting something, what will happen in the future is not his obligation; rather, it may have nothing to do with the speaker at all.

   Secondly, Sperber and Wilson (1986: 245) point out that the future event which is predicted in a prediction should be “at least partly beyond” the speaker’s control. Therefore, according to their argument, a prediction is partly unpredictable.
makes another difference between a promise and a prediction. In their argument, the future event partly being *beyond the speaker’s control* is the key account that makes a prediction. If the president is giving a promise, he is committing himself to perform some act in the future; and the act is under his control. He can either do it or not to make the prediction *happy or unhappy* (Austin 1962: 13-24). However, if he is predicting an event, the event is at least partly beyond his control.

c. Requiring
When someone is giving a requiring, he is asking or expecting other people to do something.

In terms of the concordance lines from IAAP, there is a high possibility that there is a relationship between the semantic functions of SHALL and the category to which WE belongs. In other words, whether WE is exclusive or inclusive has a great impact on the semantic functions of SHALL. After examining the three semantic functions of SHALL, namely, giving promises, predicting events and requiring, we now turn our attention to the corpus evidence to illustrate the internal relationship between WE (both exclusive and inclusive) and the four semantic functions of SHALL.

a. Exclusive WE
In the IAAP, the concordance lines show that when SHALL collocates with an exclusive WE (Italic, bold and underlined), it tends to be used to give promise. Take the citation below as an example. *Adding much to the convenience and comfort of the fellow-citizens, shorten distances and bind the Union more closely together* are all promises given by the presidents.

By thus facilitating the intercourse between the States *WE SHALL* add much to the convenience and comfort of our fellow-citizens, much to the ornament of the country, and, what is of greater importance, *WE SHALL* shorten distances, and, by making each part more accessible to and dependent on the other, *WE SHALL* bind the Union more closely together. (James Monroe 4, March 1817)

b. Inclusive We
The inclusive WE in IAAP (Italic and bold) tends to be used as a device to soften what the speaker requires the people to do. In the following
example, the phrase *We Americans of today* indicates that WE in the following paragraph is inclusive.

We Americans of today, together with our allies, are passing through a period of supreme test—successfully and honorably…. In the days and in the years that are to come *WE SHALL work for* a just and honorable peace, a durable peace, as today we work and fight for total victory in war. We can and we will achieve such a peace. *WE SHALL strive for perfection.* (Franklin D. Roosevelt 20 January, 1945)

A possible reason for using inclusive WE as a device to require someone to do something in an indirect way is its psychological force. Brown and Gilman (1960) claimed that WE expresses the ‘solidarity semantic’. When WE is used as the subject, the audience are likely to have a feeling that they are actively participating in the proposition, and therefore, get a psychological indication that they are sharing their perspectives with the presidents. Goodin (1980) also states that the (inclusive) WE is a device to claim “hidden co-operation”; one of the important techniques an orator can use to appeal to audience prejudices is to claim to share a perspective with the audience. For Brown and Gilman, it is one of the possible ways for the presidents to make the audience feel the nation is united (1960) and to give the impression that he is speaking more on behalf of the audience rather than the government or the president himself.

*Trends of three categories of WE in IAAP*

Previous sections have explained that (1) there are three categories of WE in IAAP and this research only focuses on two kinds of WE – inclusive and exclusive WE; and (2) the presidents tend to use exclusive WE to give promise or predict something in the future and inclusive WE to soften his requiring. This section focuses on the trends of three categories of WE in IAAP.

Table 3 below displays the three main parameters of different WEs which collocate with SHALL (exclusive, inclusive and indeterminate) in each period. It should be stressed here that instead of dividing the Fre by the total number of running words in each sub-corpus, the second column on the right – PEP (SHALL) – divides the Fre by the total number of WE collocating with SHALL in that period. Similarly, instead of using the total number of running words in the IAAP, the PWP (SHALL) divides the Fre by the total number of WE which is used as the grammatical subject of SHALL in the IAAP.
Table 3 Three categories of WE in the IAAP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Fre</th>
<th>PEP (SHALL)</th>
<th>PWP (SHALL)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1789-1844</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inclusive</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>1.16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exclusive</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>62.5%</td>
<td>5.81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indeterminate</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>2.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total in the First Period</td>
<td><strong>8</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
<td><strong>9.30%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1845-1901</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inclusive</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>21.43%</td>
<td>3.49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exclusive</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>42.86%</td>
<td>6.98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indeterminate</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>35.71%</td>
<td>5.81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total in the Second Period</td>
<td><strong>14</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
<td><strong>16.28%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901-1953</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inclusive</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>51.52%</td>
<td>16.77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exclusive</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>36.36%</td>
<td>13.95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indeterminate</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12.12%</td>
<td>4.65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total in the Third Period</td>
<td><strong>33</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
<td><strong>38.37%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1953-2009</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inclusive</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>35.48%</td>
<td>12.79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exclusive</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>54.84%</td>
<td>16.77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indeterminate</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9.68%</td>
<td>3.49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total in the Fourth Period</td>
<td><strong>31</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
<td><strong>36.47%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inclusive</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>37.21%</td>
<td>37.21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exclusive</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>46.51%</td>
<td>46.51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indeterminate</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>16.28%</td>
<td>16.28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (WE SHALL) in IAAP</td>
<td><strong>83</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We can observe from the table above that WE which are used as the grammatical subject of SHALL occur altogether 86 times in the corpus. The exclusive WE is used most frequently, accounting for 46.51% (39 times), followed by the inclusive WE (37.21%, 30
Furthermore, the use of WE maintains an ascending trend in the first three periods, from 8 times to 33 times. After that, a slight drop occurs in the fourth period.

**Figure 1 PWP of Different WE collocating with SHALL**

![Graph showing the PWP of different WE collocating with SHALL](image)

Figure 1 provides a clearer overview of the trends of different WE in terms of the PWP (SHALL). Indeterminate WE, in general, is used less than the other two kinds of WE; it reaches its highest point in the second period. The exclusive WE increases significantly across the four periods. From 1789 to 1954, the inclusive WE ascends even more prominently than the exclusive WE; after the year 1954, the inclusive WE drops suddenly from 16.77% to 12.79%. This gives rise to two conclusions.

**Firstly**, from 1953 to 2009, the slight decrease (from 33 to 31 as is shown in table 3) of WE which are used as the grammatical subject of SHALL is caused mainly by the inclusive and indeterminate WE. Before 1953, both exclusive and inclusive WE are increasingly used and this contributes to the ascending trend of WE used as the grammatical subject in that period in the IAAP. After that, the exclusive WE keeps growing while the inclusive one begins to decrease. However, the decrease is faster; and this leads to the overall slight decrease in the fourth period. **Secondly**, it seems that the presidents tend to promise more in their inaugural speeches. Figure 1 shows an increased use of exclusive WE which are collocated with SHALL in IAAP. As discussed before, the primary semantic function of the exclusive WE when it collocates with SHALL is to give a promise. The increasing use of the exclusive WE indicates
a trend that presidents tend to use WE SHALL to give more promises in their inaugural speeches.

In terms of the PEP (SHALL), we can gain a clearer sight of the distribution of the three usages of WE. Figure 2 below shows the proportion of different WEs across the four periods in IAAP. As it shows, inclusive WE is used relatively frequently in the third period while exclusive WE occurs comparatively more in the first period. In the four periods of IAAP, the second period behaves quite differently from the others since the number of indeterminate WE even exceeds that of inclusive WE, accounting for 35.71%.

**Figure 2 WE Distribution in Four Periods**

![Bar chart showing WE distribution across four periods.](chart.png)

**Discussion and Conclusion**

This study has attempted to show how WE SHALL changes in IAAP through the 220 years of American history, particularly when the grammatical subject of SHALL is exclusive / inclusive WE. The difference is mainly reflected in the frequencies of WE, both exclusive and inclusive. Consequently, the frequency changes of exclusive WE and inclusive WE contribute
to the different frequency of WE as a whole and the different semantic scope of WE SHALL in different periods.

Firstly, this study illustrates the detailed corpus data changes. As was observed by both Leech (2003: 228) and Millar (2009: 199), this study shows that the use of SHALL decreases significantly after the year 1901. However, what has not been discussed in neither Millar nor Leech’s research is the use of SHALL before 1901. This study shows that before the year 1901, SHALL increased almost 114.3% in terms of Fre, from 63 to 135, 105.6% according to PEP, from 0.18% to 0.37% and 112.5 % in terms of PWP, from 0.048% to 0.102%, according to the PEP between the year 1789 and 1901. Due to its limited space, this study can only show a trend in IAAP. Whether this reflects a change in the common usage of SHALL still needs further exploration.

Secondly, this study introduces the distinctions of WE and the semantic functions of SHALL (collocating with WE). As we have noted, WE is distinguished between (1) the “dual” WE and “collective” WE; (2) the “exclusive” WE and” inclusive” WE. Since all the WEs occurring in IAAP are collective, we mainly turned our attention to the “exclusive” and “inclusive” WE. In IAAP, another group of WEs is termed as determinate for it can hardly be grouped as exclusive nor inclusive. The exclusive WE is predominant across the four periods, except during the third period where the inclusive WE is more common.

Three semantic functions of SHALL when it collocates with WE, namely, giving promise, predicting, and requiring, as well as the relationships between these semantic functions and the grammatical subject – WE – have also been discussed in detail. The IAAP concordance lines show that exclusive WEs are used in combination with SHALL to give a promise or to predict future events while inclusive WEs are used by presidents to state what they require from their citizens.

Looking closer at the frequency of exclusive WE and inclusive WE collocating with SHALL, we can observe that, in terms of the PWP, the exclusive WE keeps increasing through the four periods, from 5.81% in the first period to 16.77% in the fourth period. As has been discussed, the exclusive WE is used more often to give a promise. Therefore, the ascending use of the exclusive WE indicates that in the inaugural addresses, the presidents tend to give
more and more promises over time. This causes the semantic scope of WE SHALL to change over the four periods. In most periods (1, 2, and 4), the exclusive WE is used most frequently which shows that when the president uses WE SHALL, he is more likely to give a promise. However, in the third period, the PWP of the inclusive WE exceeds that of the exclusive WE. In the third period we see a change the semantic range of WE SHALL from giving promise to predicting or requiring.

This study adds a new perspective to our understanding of SHALL from the traditional grammar books which focus more on the semantic change of SHALL regardless of its subject. It presents the statistical change of WE SHALL as well as a study of the deeper relationship between the semantic function of SHALL and the exclusive and inclusive WE, providing a possible new perspective for further research.

REFERENCES:


Education.


