

دراسة المعيارية كمنهج اسلوبي في تحليل ادراك الطلبة العراقيين المتعلمين للغة الإنكليزية كلغة اجنبية

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**A Study of Modality as a Stylistic Approach in the Analysis
of Awareness of Iraqi EFL University Students**

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Abstract

It has been noticed that modality constitutes one of the essential areas in linguistics especially in stylistics. The complication of multi meanings and uses of modal verbs in their different functions formed a real challenge to IFL students. Modality refers to the speaker's attitude and responses ranging from desire to obligation and duty, certainty or uncertainty concerning the likelihood of the propositional meaning of the utterance.

The present study investigates the role of teaching models verbs as a stylistic approach in intensifying IFL proficiency and awareness in the Department of English, Faculty of Arts, University of Kufa. This study tries to answer the following questions:

- 1) To what extent EFL students are able to master and distinguish modals in both production and recognition levels.
- 2) To what extent teaching modals in relation to their function and context is effective in enhancing EFL ability in learning and communication.
- 3) To show the syntactic and semantic characteristics of modal verbs and how students are able to recognize their function and uses.

Key words : modal auxiliary verbs , learning , functions , meanings , awareness .

المستخلص

لوحظ ان المعيارية تشكل احد المجالات الاساسية في علم اللغة خاصتا في علم الاسلوبية. شكلت تعقيدات المعاني المتعددة واستخدامات الافعال القياسية في وظائفها المختلفة تحديا حقيقيا للطلاب المتعلمين للغة الانكليزية كلغة اجنبية. تشير المعيارية الى موقف المتحدث واستجاباته التي تتراوح من الرغبة الى الالتزام والواجب واليقين او عدم اليقين فيما يتعلق باحتمالية المعنى المقترح لحديث الكلام.

تتناول الدراسة الحالية التفصي عن دور تدريس الافعال القياسية كمنهج اسلوبي في تقوية الاداء والوعي للطلاب العراقيين المتعلمين للغة الانكليزية كلغة اجنبية في قسم اللغة الانكليزية - جامعة الكوفة . تحاول الدراسة الاجابة على الاسئلة التالية:

- ١) الى اي مدى يستطيع الطلاب المتعلمين للغة الانكليزية كلغة اجنبية اتقان وتميز الافعال القياسية في كل مستويات الانتاج والتعرف.
- ٢) الى اي مدى تكون طرق تدريس الافعال القياسية فيما يتعلق بوظيفتها وسياقها فعالة في تعزيز قدرة الطلاب المتعلمين للغة الانكليزية في التعلم والتواصل.
- ٣) اظهار الخصائص النحوية والدلالية للأفعال القياسية وكيف يستطيع الطلاب التعرف على وظيفتها واستخداماتها.

الكلمات الافتتاحية: الافعال القياسية، التعلم ، الوظائف، المعاني ، الادراك

1.Introduction

Modality is a term which shows a range of semantic notions such as ability ,possibility ,probability, obligation. It is an aspect of meaning that belongs to the level of the sentences. Modality can be expressed by modal verbs and semi modals which convey attitudes and opinions of speaker's towards actions, states and conditions.

In the present study the investigation of modal auxiliaries is carried out and how their syntactic and semantic features are exposed to different uses. It is hypothesized that modal auxiliaries and their various functions and uses are very important in learning and communication. The procedures followed in this study are exploring modality and its different types with indication of the modal verbs and their main functions and meanings. Furthermore, a conducted test is applied to 40 students to show students' ability in recognition and production levels and how learning their functions can be a good trigger to student's awareness of the language.

It is hoped that this study is very important for the teachers of English grammar and for the students since its results can be helpful in dealing with modals syntactically and semantically in reference to different contexts and situations in order to overcome their difficulty and complexity.

2.The Concept of Modality

Modality is considered as one of the challenging areas because of its complexity and elusiveness. Many speakers as well as learners of English language face difficulty in using and dealing with them. The conceptual explanation of modality is essential in relation to the context of utterance.

Lyons(1977:425) illustrates that modality is concerned with the opinion and attitude of the speaker. Simpson(1990:60) regards modality as "a speaker's attitude or opinion about the truth of a proposition expressed by a sentence and towards a situation or event described by a sentence". Quirk et al. (1985: 219) define modality as "the manner in which the meaning of a clause is qualified so as to reflect the speaker's judgment of the likelihood of the proposition it expresses being true". Moreover, modality can be realized through many ways such as modal auxiliaries , lexical verbs and modal adjuncts. Simpson(2000:43) argues that not merely modal auxiliaries are central to the modal system, but also modality can be represented through the use of other devices such as modal lexical verbs I think, adjectives be.....that (it is certain that) and

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modal adverbs. Kreider(1998:301) adds that modality is a term that covers necessity, possibility and it is frequently evident through the use of modal verbs which are (can, could, may, might, will, would, must, should, ought to, need, have to ,have got to)

According to Fowler(1996:166-7) modality is " the grammar of explicit comment, by which people express their degree of commitment to the truth of the propositions they utter, and their views on the desirability of state of affairs referred to". In the sentence 'George must already have received my present', the speaker shows some degree of confidence on the actuality of what is expressed in the utterance, and at the same time the speaker can express some wish or desire as in 'I wish George had already received my present (Norgaard et al.,2010:114)

Quirk et al (1985) distinguishes between intrinsic and extrinsic modality. Meaning related to permission, obligation, and volition is referred to as intrinsic modality which involves actions and events that human directly control whereas extrinsic modality refers to the logical states of events or states, it involves human judgment of what is or is not likely to happen. It is related to assessment of likelihood: possibility, necessity, or prediction (Ibid).

In the present study the focus will be on the use modal verbs as they are considered the backbone of expressing different meanings and functions of modality.

2.1 Epistemic Modality

The term epistemic is derived from the Greek word meaning 'understanding' or 'knowledge' and it is interpreted as showing speaker's attitude to the truth of value or factual status of the proposition. Papafragou (2000:3) preserves that "epistemic modality is concerned with the necessity or possibility of an inference drawn from available evidence' 'Huddleston and Pullum(2002:178) on the other hand refers to modality as" the speaker's attitude to the factuality of past or present time situations". Mainly, it is modality of proposition (rather than action) and it specially expresses "judgments about the probability of the truth of the propositions"(Palmer,1990:5).

Declerck (2011,33) argues that "epistemic utterance expresses the speaker's evaluation of the relation between the modal world in which the situation actualizes and the factual world". He states that the epistemic modal world is in a special relation to the factual or to a future extension of it. Similarly, Nuyts (2005:10) argues that epistemic modality is " an

indication of the estimation of the chances that the state of affairs expressed in the clause applies in the world or not, or of the degree of probability of the state of affairs.

2.2 Deontic Modality

The term deontic is originated from the Greek word 'deon' which means duty. According to Lyons (1977:823), deontic modality is "the necessity and possibility of acts performed by morally responsible agents". Lyons (1977:823) also states that in deontic modality there is imposition upon someone in order to perform or refrain from performing a particular act 'There is an expression of a preposition that describes the state of affairs. According to Coutes (1983:83), deontic modality covers a range of meanings which involves obligation, permission and necessity.

Nuyts (2005:8) defines deontic modality as an indication of the degree of moral desirability of the state of affairs expressed in the utterance typically on the behalf of the speaker. He preserves that more complexity is found with expression of permission, obligation and interdiction as they involve an assessment of the degree of moral acceptability of state of affairs and its reflection into action terms the involvement of an action to instigate or to hinder another person's actions or positions.

Saeed (2003:136) also emphasizes that deontic modals cover two kinds of social knowledge which are obligation and permission. 'obligation' deals with enforcing something to be done by someone, while 'permission' includes the authority of someone in permitting somebody else to do something.

3. Modal Auxiliary Verbs

The concept of modality can be expressed by ten modal auxiliaries (can/could, will/would, may/ might, shall/should, ought and must). They differ from other auxiliaries (do, be , have) in that they have no s-forms, ing-forms, or participles. They are invariant forms taking the role of auxiliary , they precede the negative particle not in negation and precede the subject in yes –no questions. They are followed in the verb phrase by a bare infinitive verb (e.g. can drive, would go). Furthermore, the past forms of modals sometimes express the same meaning as the present or simple forms. They also occur in statements which refer to future time. Thus, it is necessary to remember that the form of a modal does not necessary show the time reference of the sentence in which it is used (Praninskas,1975:234).

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In addition, verb phrases with negated modals do not always express the opposite of affirmative ones; questions asked with one modal sometimes requires answers expressed with another. Generally, the meanings of modal are complex and not clear in many cases, so careful experience and awareness are needed to tackle and disambiguate such cumbersome (Biber et al., 1999:4 83).

3.1 Meaning and Characteristics of Modal Auxiliary Verbs

Each of the modal auxiliaries can be used with more than one meaning. In the following sub-sections the meanings and functions of modal verbs will be shown in relation to situation and context in which they are used.

3.1.1 Can / Could (ability, possibility, opportunity, permission, request)

A. Present and past ability, affirmative and negative

- (1) Ali can read English very well
- (2) She can't read without getting a headache.
- (3) My father could speak five languages.(general ability)

B. Future possibility (can or could) (Praninskas,1975:234)

- (4) The doctor can see you at 3:30

C. Present or future impossibility, contrary –to- fact (could)

- (3) She could be reading her assignment now if she didn't have work.
- (6) She could read her assignment tomorrow evening if she didn't have a class.

D. Past impossibility inferred (could have + past participle) (Ibid:235)

- (7) She couldn't have gone to the cinema this weekend.

E. Past opportunity not realized(could have + past participle)

- (8) He could have read his report while he waited for the doctor.

F. Present or future permission (can/could) (Praninskas,1975:234)

- (9) You can leave now.
- (10) You can leave at 4:30

Also can is used to express request and suggestions as in the following:

- (11) Could I have your mobile number?
- (12) Could you lend me four pounds until tomorrow ?
- (13) You could call me this evening to go to the theater.(Murphy,2012:54)

3.1.2 Will/ Would (promise, agreement, request, contrary to fact)

A. Future plan, promise ,or agreement

- 14) I will come at seven o'clock . (this is a definite appointment)(

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B. Continuing or completion future activity

15) At midnight she will be reading her assignment.(will+be+ ing)(

(16) By tomorrow evening she will have finished her homework.(will+have+p.p)

C. Polite request (will or would) (Praninskas,1975:236)

(17) Will you please close the door?

(18) Would you please open the door?

D. Present and past contrary to fact statement (conditional)

19) If I didn't have a headache now, I would be reading my exam.(

20) If I hadn't have a headache , I would have read my exam. (Ibid)(

E. Also this modal can express prediction, intention and willingness as in the following sentences:

(21) I will come tomorrow

(22) It will rain this evening(

I will sign the contract in the next session . (Murphy,2012:72) 23) (

3.1.3 Shall / Should /Ought (advisability, obligation, expectation, chance)

A. Question and statement of advisability (shall or should)

(24) Shall we go to France next month?

(25) You should be careful crossing the street.

(26) You ought to study well tonight.
(Praninskas,1975:236)

B. Unfulfilled obligation, present and past(should or ought)

27) I should have read my assignment yesterday (I didn't)(

I should be reading my assignment.(I am not) 28) (

C. Expectation or likelihood (should or ought)

29) It is seven o' clock. The guests should be arriving soon. (Ibid)(

30) Shahad is bright and she works hard. She ought to pass the exam.(

D. Chance happening as a condition

(31) Should you see Ali, give him my regards.

3.1.4 May / Might (permission, possibility, request, probability)

A. present ,past or future permission and to express request

(32) Ali said, "you may leave at 4.30".

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May I use your pen please? 33)(

Miss Allen had permission to leave class early. (Murphy,2012:58-60)
(34)

B. possibility about present, future and past activity (may or might)

(35) Ali might be at home today.

George may be absent tomorrow. (Praninskas,1975:238) 36)(

Baker may have lost his watch at the night club.(may +have +p.p) (37)

C. probability

(38) We may go climbing in the Alps next week.

It may rain tomorrow. (39)

I might get a job soon. (Swan,1984:198-200) 40)(

3.1.5 Must (necessity , abstention, deduction, obligation)

A. necessity in present and future

(41) Students must read English

The lecture must begin right now. (Praninskas,1975:238) (42)

B. Abstention is expressed by the negative

43) We must not neglect our eyes.(

C. Lack of necessity is expressed by 'Have to'.

44) Jane doesn't have to wear glasses.(

Must has no past tense so past necessity is expressed by 'Have to'

She had to leave class early yesterday. (Ibid) (45)

'Have to' is used to express needs and requirements which are less necessary

Than 'must': I have to buy a new car. My car is getting old.
(Murphy,2012:62)

D. Deduction about a present, future or past situation

46) She is frowning. Her head must be aching.(

It is getting very dark out. It must be going to rain. (Praninskas,1975:239)
47)(

He seemed very tired. He must have got to bed very late.(Ibid) (48)

E. Obligation to give strong advice or orders

I really must stop smoking. (49)

(50) You must be here before eight o' clock. (Swan,1984:206)

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These modal verbs and their different classifications and types can be explained in the following figure:

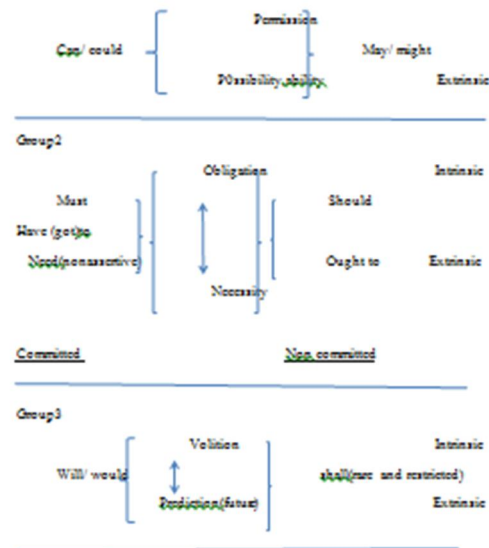


Figure (1) Meanings of the Modals adopted from Quirk et.al (1985,221)

4. Analysis of Data

4.1 Data Description and Method of Analysis

The sample of the test consists of 40 randomly selected students out of a population of 120 learners studying English as a foreign language at the Department of English, faculty of Arts, University of Kufa. The subject of modal verbs is exposed and explained to students through many courses particularly in grammar. Students are given instructions to different uses and functions of modals in relation of various situations and contexts. In addition, students are engaged in different exercises and tips and given chances to practice and repeat them in many situations. The test took 90 minutes and it is constructed to show to what extent learners able to master syntactic and semantic features of modal verbs and also to show students' ability to distinguish modals in recognition and production levels. The test consists of four questions and each question consists of ten items. The first and second questions (multiple choices and identification of the functions of each modal) are used to measure students' response at the recognition level whereas the third and fourth questions (change structure and make sentences concerning modal verbs in accordance to differences in meaning) are used to measure

students' response at the production level.(For more details see Appendix '1')

4.2 Discussion of Results

According to the analysis of the test, table (1) and table (2) indicate students' achievement at the recognition level. Table (1) below shows the highest rates of the correct answers of question (1) by the tenth item (don't have to) (62.5%), then by the second item (shall) (57.5%), then the ninth item (could) got (52%5) whereas the forth (should) and the sixth item(have to) have the same scores (50%). However, the least rate is scored by the first item(must lose) (25%), then by the seventh item(was able to) (27.5%), and the third (ought to) and the fifth item(must have stayed) have the same scores(32.5%). In table(2) the answers of the test indicates that the highest answers are scored by the fifth item(could) (70%), then by the eighth item(could)(57.5%), and the by the first item(ought to) (50%). The picture in the lowest rates shows that the forth item (must+be+p.p) and the tenth item(should) score the same rates (25%) , then the third (must be+ing) and ninth item(must) score the same rate(32.5%), whereas

The second item (may) scores (35%).

These rates of the correct answers of the total number of students(40) at the recognition level show that students face difficulty in mastering and recognizing the syntactic and semantic features of modals and their functions. Some modals are common for them to be used in everyday speech and communication such as 'could' in ability ,request and permission and 'shall' in suggestion and advice, and 'will' in promise and others are difficult especially in the exercise of multiple choice such as 'must' in deduction and obligation and 'should' in expectation. So, it is not easy to explicate this indeterminate meaning of all these modal auxiliaries without real use and practice.

At the production level ,tables (3) and (4) show student' achievements with difference scores with different modal verbs and in different situations and exercises. The results of the corrected answers of the production level in question (3) in table(3) show that the forth item(will) scores (75%), then the second item(should, had better) (60%), whereas the first(may not) and the eighth item(cannot) have the same percentage(50%). However, the lowest rate is scored by the seventh item(could have +p.p)(10%), and then by the fifth item(should)(20%) ,and then also by the third one(should)(25%), and the ninth item(must) (35%).

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This shows that students also face difficulty in the production level because they are not able to choose the appropriate modal according to the function of sentence structure especially in the past opportunities (could have+p.p) and in obligation(should) due to their less communicative contextual contact with the different meanings of modals

In table(4), the rates of corrected answers of the production level in question(4) indicate that the seventh item (we must) scores the highest rate(75%) then followed by the eighth item (we have to)(67.5%) , then by the second one(we don't have to)(62.5%),and by the sixth(we must)(60%).The lowest rates of the items are shown in the fourth(we don't have to)(40%) ,and the third(we mustn't) (45),and the ninth one(we don't have to) scores(50%).This exercise also reflects students' ability and understanding to differentiate what is necessary to do or things which we don't have to do by making sentences and using the appropriate modal. Even though students show good results in this level in comparison with the previous exercises ,still students face difficulty in dealing with multi meanings and uses of modal verbs in their different functions.

Table 1 : The rates of corrected answers at the recognition level in question (1)

Item No.	Type of model	Function	Frequency	Percentage of Corrected answers
1	Must lose	Deduction	10	25
2	Shall	Suggestion	23	57.5
3	Ought to	Likelihood	13	32.5
4	Should	Advice	20	50
5	Must have stayed	Necessity	13	32.5
6	Have to	Obligation	20	50
7	Was able to	Ability	11	27.5
8	Will	Promise	18	45
9	Could	Permission	21	52.5
10	Don't have to	Lack of necessity	25	62.5

Table 2 : The rates of corrected answers at the recognition level in question (2)

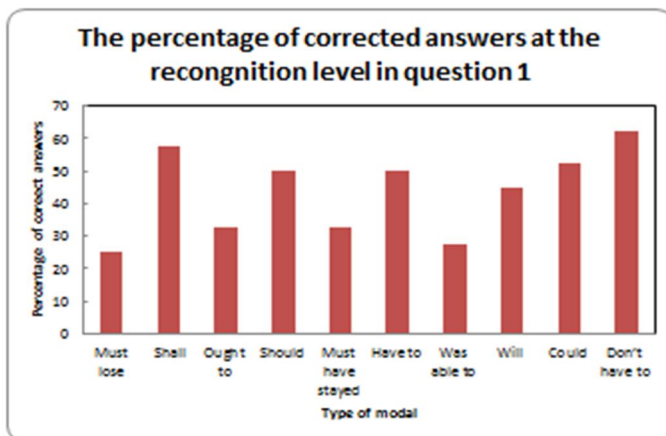
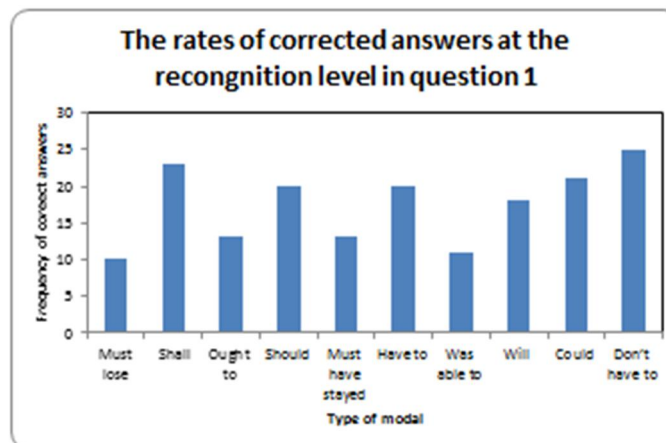
Item No.	Type of model	Function	Frequency	Percentage of Corrected answers
1	ought to	Advice	20	50
2	may	Permission	14	35
3	Must be+ing	Deduction	13	32.5
4	Must be +p.p	Obligation	10	25
5	Could	Request	28	70
6	May be +ing	Probability	18	45
7	Should	Advice	17	42.5
8	Could	Ability	23	57.5
9	Must	Necessity	13	32.5
10	Should	Expectation	10	25

Table 3 The rates of corrected answers at the production level in question (3)

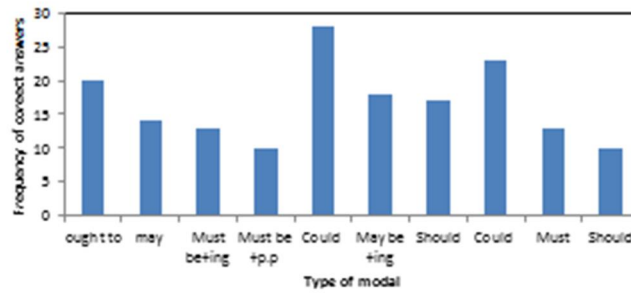
Item No.	Functions of sentence structure	The appropriate modal type	Frequency	Percentage of Corrected answers
1	Probability	May not	20	50
2	Advisability	Should, had better	24	60
3	Obligation	should	10	25
4	Promise	will	30	75
5	Obligation	should	8	20
6	guess	may	18	45
7	Past opportunity not realized	Could have +p.p	4	10
8	Inability	Negative cannot	20	50
9	necessity	must	14	35
10	Permission	May ,can	17	42.5

Table 4: The rates of corrected answers at the production level in question (4)

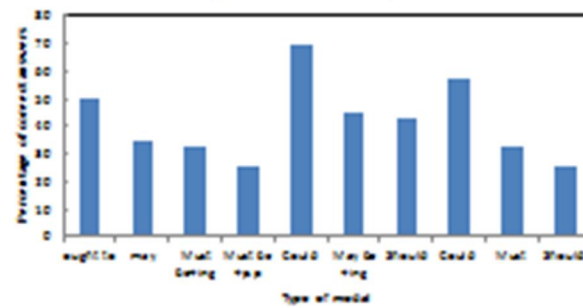
Item No.	The appropriate modal verbs	Frequency	Percentage of Corrected answers
1	we must	30	75
2	we don't have to	25	62.5
3	we mustn't	18	45
4	we don't have to	16	40
5	we mustn't	23	57.5
6	we must	24	60
7	we must	30	75
8	we have to	27	67.5
9	we don't have to	20	50
10	we mustn't	22	55



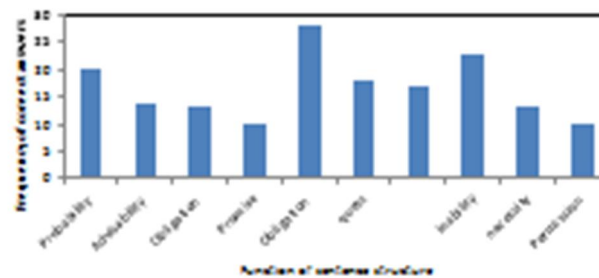
The rates of corrected answers at the recognition level in question 2

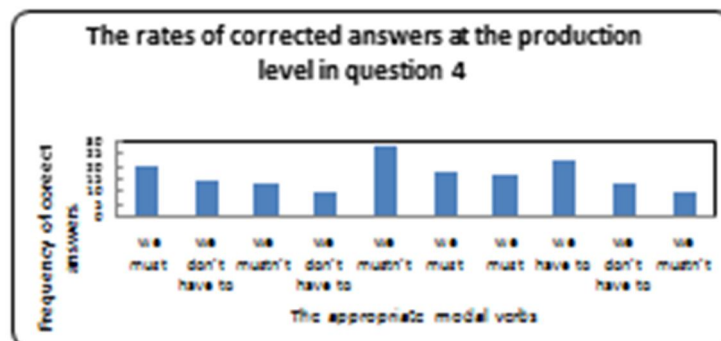
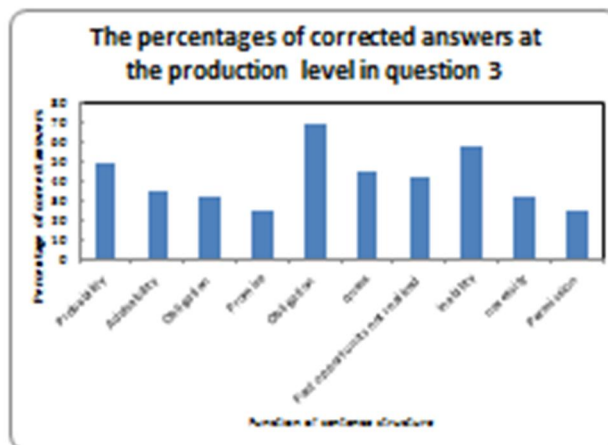
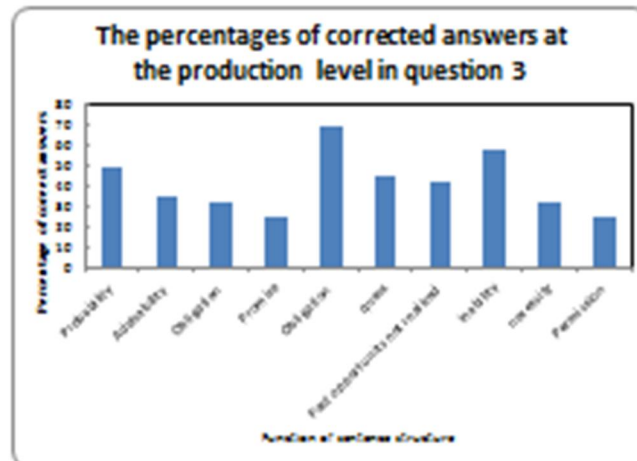


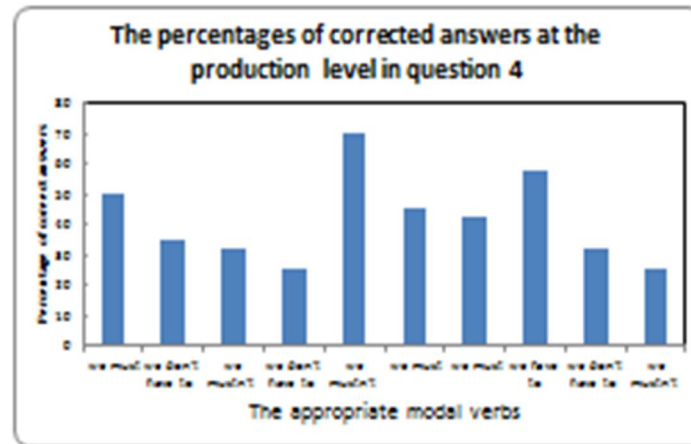
The percentage of corrected answers at the recognition level in question 2



The rates of corrected answers at the production level in question 3







5. Conclusions and Recommendations

In reference of what has been discussed earlier, the following findings can be drawn:

- The concept of modality can be expressed by ten modal auxiliaries (can/could, will/would, may/ might, shall/should, ought and must). These are used to show attitude and opinion of speakers' towards actions and conditions by expressing different functions such as permission, possibility, ability, obligation, necessity, volition and prediction.
- The results of the test (question 1,2,3,4) show that students response of the correct answers are different. Some of them score high rates and others are very low ,and this indicates that Iraqi IFL students are not able to choose and distinguish the appropriate modal verb according to the function of sentence structure and also face difficulty in both recognition and production levels.
- In teaching modals, it is necessary to select the most suitable materials for students and to choose a modal according to the context and to show how different modal verbs can be used in different situations.
- These results can be a guide to the teachers in dealing with new ways and materials in teaching grammar. Learning rules only can be boring and frustrating, so learners should be subjected to different tricks and tips such as games, working in pairs, and using songs or telling stories that contains different common modal verbs. This can lead students into good ,enjoyable and realistic atmosphere.
- Due to the significance of modal auxiliary verbs and their wide uses in communication and learning, teachers of English language should deal and explicate them not only in one stage of learning(for example in the second year) but in all stages. This can eliminate their errors and gives them much time to practice ,reuse, and master them in different situations.

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Appendix(1)

The Test

Q1/ Choose the appropriate verb phrase from these in parentheses:

1. I can't find my key. I (must lose, must have lost, might lose) it.
2. Where(shall, will) we have lunch? Let's go to the restaurant.
3. I haven't written to my father lately, but I (should, ought, must) to.
4. You don't look well. You (could, need to, should) see a doctor.
5. She (must have stayed, had to stay, should have stayed) at home Yesterday because her son was sick.
6. I (have to, should, must) work hard from 8:00 to 3:30 every day.
7. Though he was ill last week, he (may , able to, might) get out of the Burning building.

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8. "I(will, shall, would) do whatever you advise", George said to the doctor.
9. We were totally free. We (might, must, could) do what we wanted.
10. The windows look clean. You (can't, may not to, don't have to) wash them.

Q2/ Identify the function of the modal verbs in the following sentences using the words between brackets.

(obligation, probability, request, necessity, deduction, expectation, advice, permission, ability).

1. We ought to be careful crossing streets.
2. At 4:30 the instructor said , "you may leave now".
3. It is getting very dark out. It must be going to rain.
4. Application for the job must be received by 15 June.
5. Could you lend me five pounds until tomorrow? 'yes of course'.
6. George may be writing to his father.
7. My father should see a doctor as soon as possible.
8. My grandfather could speak three languages perfectly.
9. Students must read their assignments.
10. It is nine o'clock. The quests should be arriving soon.

Q3/Change the following sentences in such a way that one of the modal auxiliaries appears in each. Chose the modal which best express the meaning of each.

Example: He has permission to leave class early.

Answer: He may leave class early.

1. Perhaps students don't always know how to study.
2. It is advisable for Mr. George to go to the doctor.
3. They are obliged to do their best work.
4. She promises to go this afternoon.
5. Teachers are obliged to help their students.
6. I guess she will go at 4:30.
7. He had the ability to pass biology if he had tried.
8. He is not able to go to the theater at 7:30.
9. It is necessary for all students to have ID cards.
10. He has permission to leave the meeting and go home.

Q4/ following is a list of activities . Some of them we must do , some we must not do, and others we don't have to do. Make the appropriate sentence for each of them.

Example: buy expensive clothes.

Answer: we don't have to buy expensive clothes.

1. Obey the law
2. Go to the movies.
3. eat heavy meals.
4. wear a suit when you go to your work.
5. cross the street against a red light.
6. improve our English language.
7. pay fees of electricity bills
8. get up early.
9. go swimming.
10. take other people's belongings.