# Investigating Importance of Extensive Teaching of English Modals' Functions in Context in Translation into Arabic.

*A Case Study of the Graduate College, Centre for Languages and Translation at University of Bahri in Khartoum. Sudan***.**

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*Abstract--* **This paper aims to investigate the importance of extensive teaching of modal auxiliary verb functions in context in translation into Arabic which it concerns teaching students of translation modals' functions in context extensively in separate courses to grasp the modals' functions in translating them into Arabic as they convey multiple meanings in context and they don't have exact or lexical meanings in Arabic which need be to determined in the final process and production of translation as their various and multiple functional meanings in context have been left inadvertently and they have been taken for granted when translated into specific Arabic equivalences which are mostly wrong, so full knowledge of them considered to be a major translator's skill which should not be left inadvertent to process and produce the translation accurately to match the genuine text and to avoid great loss of meaning in the translation process and the final product. Therefore, in this respect, it is recommended that lecturers of translation should teach the modals versatile and multiple meanings in context that can't be grasped easily unless they have been taught extensively in terms of translating them into Arabic. The descriptive analytical method was adopted for conducting the study. A diagnostic pre-test, a modals' functions course were taught and post-test were given to (30) master translation students at Graduate College, Centre for Languages and Translation at University of Bahri in Khartoum. Sudan. and a questionnaire was given to (15) translation lectures as tools for data collection. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) programme was used for data analysis. The findings proved the questions of study and the study recommends that teaching English modals' functions should be taught extensively to translation students to expand their knowledge of the modals' functions in context so as to find out the correct intended meaning of the modals' functions in their contexts.**

## I. INTRODUCTION

### Background

Translation students' English modals functions in context courses and their uses are not extensively taught to translation students in spite of, their multiple and various meanings in context where their meanings in context considered to be tricky and versatile. Hence, teaching them extensively to translation students in separated courses is a matter of high significance.

### Statement of the Problem

Translation students when processing translation texts into Arabic, mostly tended to be lexical ones to find the suitable equivalences in the genuine text as well as taking other parts of the language portions, however, there is a significant portion of language needed to be turn the translation students' attention to, which is the functional and multiple meanings of the modal verbs in context and this is as result of lack of extensive and separated courses of teaching their multiple meanings in context where there are specific Arabic equivalences have been taken for granted when translation students translate them into Arabic.

### Research Objectives

1. To find out the significance of teaching modal auxiliary verbs functions and uses to translation students.
2. To discover which teaching techniques are the most appropriate for teaching English modals.

### Questions of the Study

1. What is the significance of teaching modal auxiliary verbs functions and uses to translation students?
2. What are the best techniques of teaching modal auxiliary verbs functions to translation students?

### Research Hypotheses

H1/ Fully understanding of English modal verbs functions and uses help translators in many ways.

H2/ Applying the most appropriate techniques to grasp them will develop translators skills.

### Significance of the Study

This study meant to be useful to translation students' full knowledge of the modals' functions meanings in context in the translation process into Arabic to avoid loss of crucial meanings. The study is also hoped to add to knowledge.

*Limits of the study*

This study will be conducted on master degree translation students so as to investigate significance of extensive teaching modal's functions to them.

*Methodology of the Study*

According to the purpose of this research which has been mentioned above to investigate the importance of extensive teaching of modal's functions in context to translation students and in order to achieve this goal by answering the questions of the research questionnaire and the two tests were used as tools for data collection. The pre – test is intended to discover the translation students background of English modal verb functions in context from and into English. The SPSS programme will be used as an analysis tool.

## II.   LITERATURE REVIEW

*Definition of the auxiliary verb*

The term auxiliary is a Latin term – auxiliārius – which means assisting or helping. They have no meaning on their own. There is modal ones which are not conjugated and function just as auxiliary verbs which is concerned with the 'opinion and attitude' of the speaker seems a fairly helpful preliminary definition according to Palmer (2001), and they add certain kind of meanings connected with  certainty or obligation to the main verb to various meanings epistemically or deontically or both of them.

*Definition of modality*

Modality , a concept which is concerned with such semantic notions as 'possibility', 'probability', 'necessity', 'obligation', 'permission', 'intention', and 'ability which they typically expressed by modal auxiliary verbs. According to Aarts (2011) he states that "We distinguish between three types of modality in English: deontic modality, epistemic modality , and dynamic modality . Deontic modality is concerned with getting people to do things or (not) allowing them to do things, that is, with such notions as 'obligation' and 'permission'". Epistemic modality is concerned with 'knowledge' and/or 'inference'. Dynamic modality typically concerns 'ability' and 'volition'.

*Definition of Modal verb*

The modal auxiliary is any of a subgroup of auxiliary verbs that express a verb used to express the mood or tense of another verb.

They are group in pairs, except for must: will ('ll) / would ('d), can / could,  may / might,  shall / should, must. The main (central, or core) modals are:  can/could shall/should may/might will/would must.

*Definition of Function*

Function is defined as what something does or is used for such as the aim, intention, purpose, role or use and English modals do this in identifying the intention or the purpose of the written or the spoken language.

*Definition of Context*

The words or sentences surrounding any piece of written (or spoken) text. Linguistically, it is the words that are used with certain word or phrase and that helps to explain its meaning or the text in which a word or passage appears and which helps ascertain its meaning.

*Functions of Modal Auxiliary verbs*

Concerning the meanings of the modals; each modal auxiliary verb has at least two and they all in common express; possibility or probability and certainty plus at least one other meaning depend on the real subjective interpretation of the real world situation ,but there are three major dimensions on  distinction the use of modal auxiliary verbs: strength, kind and degree and more importantly taking into account the three kinds of modality: epistemic deontic, and dynamic. Therefore they convey variety of functions in context when it comes to using them according to Aarts (2011. Ch.10).

*Certainty (degrees of certainty) ordered from strong, medium to weak*

According to Swan (2016:68) the modals that can express certainty or confidence about present or future situations or predictions according to speakers knowledge are: shall, will, won't (negative certainty) ,must and can't (negative certainty)  and we have all the facts to support that.

*Probability*

The modals that convey logical reasons are: must and must not and they are highly probable, but the facts support certainty are less than will. Might  and may, may not and might not are used to express logical probability according to our knowledge as a result of plan or normality in circumstances in a positive way according to Swan (2009:334).

*Possibility*

According to Swan (2009:320) : saying that there is a possibility of something happening or being the case; can, could, will, must, can't, should, might, or may are used to express this. May is slightly more formal than could or might; otherwise there is very little difference in meaning between these modals. May is used to suggest possibility that will happen or is happening (Often similar to can) and might is used also to suggest possibility that will happen or is happening, but less definite and not very likely to happen or happening (Often similar to could). Could is used to suggest possibility that will happen or is happening (Can is not). Can in the sense of possibility it's generally logical and always true, but not in predicting future possibilities except those we can use to talk about future actions which we will be able to do because of present ability, present circumstances, present decisions etc, instead will be able to, will be possible.

*Ability*

Swan (2009:99) in expressing general ability of what people and things are able or unable to do say that : can is used to express this, because of their knowledge; strength, skill, nature, design etc. Could is used to express general ability the in past, but in particular ability other phrases are used; be able to , be manage to, be capable of, know how to.

*Obligation*

1- *Present obligation:* must is used to express strong obligation most often comes from inside the speaker; the authority of the speaker (and in questions from the hearer).

2- *Past obligation:* Must is not normally used to talk about past obligation (except in indirect speech), had to is used instead.

3- *Future obligation:* Will have to is used to talk about future obligation and will have to can be used to 'distance' the instructions making them sound less like direct orders from the speaker and (will must is impossible - but have (got) to is preferred when arrangements for the future have already been made and must can be used to give orders or instructions for the future.

In telling people that they have a duty to do things and imply the speaker's authority, ought to is used to express this; but unlike must, they do not imply that the speaker has confidence that the recommendation will be carried out or be fulfilled and to ask about our duty.

Should is used to express mild obligation, duty and similar ideas. It is less strong than must and unlike it, it is in not expressing the speaker's confidence in the occurrence of the event or state described and in questions, should is used to ask for advice or instructions.

In contracts and other legal documents, shall is used and is often used with third-person subjects to refer to obligations and duties, but shall in written language, especially in rules and regulations is not a future time use ,and the above mentioned are preferable to express ideas of these kind according to Swan (2009:336,337).

*Advisability*

Should is used in questions to ask for advice or instructions and it's more frequent than ought to which is used also to advise people (including ourselves) ,but both of them are very similar and can often replace each other according to Eastwood (2002:118).

*Permission*

In asking for and give permission; can, could and may are used to express this, and in this sense, can/could (More polite) are used to talk about things that are allowed by rules and laws ,but less formal than may which is not normally used to talk about rules and laws and has been favoured by prescriptive tradition . However, might in the sense of past permission is so rare, could is used or other phrases according to Swan (2009:100,101,318).

*Prohibition (Negative of permission)*

To say that it is wrong to do things must not / mustn't are used, or to tell people not to do things. Can't is also possible according to Cobuild (2017:147).

*Deduction*

Ought to and must can be used to express the deduction or conclusion that something is certain or highly probable: it is normal or logical, there are excellent reasons for believing it, or it is the only possible explanation for what is happening. Can't expresses negative deduction or conclusion according to Swan (2009:334, 375, 510).

*Prediction*

To expresses predictability and prediction; will and its contraction ('ll) are used (in present, past and future) which in future comprehensive prediction considered to be an auxiliary verb with no meaning and contextually it's similar to those of must - and may broadened even further to include general or habitual behavior or characteristic one, general scientific statements or timeless ones, disposition and number of traditional proverbs and Shall is used formally equivalent in this sense to Will with the 3th persons I & WE. WOULD and its contraction ('d) expresses (past prediction) according to Leech (2013:124).

*Necessity and no necessity*

Must and its parallel should and ought to are also used to express necessity, but in a weaker way or tentative and potential where the parallelism between possibility and necessity is exist in these modals. Need in the form of needn't and need I (as an auxiliary verb normally refer to immediate necessity not habitual or general one) Quirk and Greenbaum (2005:61).

*Degrees of volition*

There are three kinds or Degrees or kinds of volition are divided into three kinds which often combine with will's future implication of 'prediction' and the strong volitional will is always stressed, and cannot be contracted to 'll and it's more performative than to be more premeditative where the decision is made, and that the fulfillment of the intention is guaranteed. ,but weak-volitional will is normally unstressed, and is frequently reduced to 'll. Shall, rather than will, is traditionally considered the 'correct' form of the intermediate volition and it used in weak volition questions. Would is used in past form. So both of predictive and volitional meanings are superimposed bearing in mind other functions of will in this sense such as: promise, threat or offer, but the volitional element is reinforced by the feeling in the act of speaking Leech (2013:126).

- *Insistence (Strong volition), Intention (Intermediate volition) and willingness*

Swan (2009:617) mentions that: could not and its contracted form couldn't are used to indicate unwillingness of doing something because someone is either he/she is afraid, embarrassed or disgusted or he/she thinks it would be unfair or morally wrong.

Will not or its contracted form won't is mainly used in this sense firmly and would not and its contracted form wouldn't are used in the past, cannot or its contracted form can't are used to express or indicate unwillingness because, strong feeling is preventing someone from doing something.

*Wishes and hopes*

Wouldn't or would followed by a verb meaning 'to dislike' is used to express negative wishes or. Would or should (less common than 'would', and slightly more formal) followed by a verb meaning 'to like' such as : like, love and prefer. After the verb meaning 'to like' you put a 'to'-infinitive clause or a noun group to express wishes. May is also used to express wishes and hopes and it often comes at the beginning of the sentence according to Brown (2016:79).

*Request*

To make a request in a simple and direct way can is used, and usually can is used when you are not sure whether someone will be able to help you or not. Could is more polite and formal than Can. Can and could also can be used to make polite request in negative question tag sentence forms. Can't and couldn't are more persuasive. May and might are more formal than can and could. However, Might is unusual, and is considered by most people to be old-fashioned. Will is used to ask people to do things and would is preferred and more polite in request. Would and should like are used in declarative sentences to make request. If + will is used in polite requests. In this case, will is not a future auxiliary; it means 'are willing to according to Swan (2009:101).

*Invitation or offer*

In accepting something; will with 'you' are used to ask someone you know well informally, or to make an invitation. Would with 'you' is more polite with a verb which means to like. Wouldn't is more persuasive. Can, could, May or Shall with 'I' or 'we' is used when offering to help someone. Should with 'I' or 'you' is used when offering to help someone but uncertain whether your offer will be accepted or not. Can in a declarative sentence is used to emphasize your ability to offer help. Must with you in a declarative sentence is used make an offer or an invitation in a persuasive way according to Cobuild (1990: 167).

*Suggestion*

In making suggestions could is used in a declarative sentence. Couldn't is used in an interrogative sentence to make suggestions. Should or Ought to are used to express feeling of strong ideas as suggestions. Shouldn't or Oughtn't to are more polite in making suggestions according to strong feeling in an interrogative sentences. Might with 'you' followed by a verb which means to like or to want in a declarative sentence is used in a polite way to make suggestions. A sentences begins with It Might be followed by a noun group or adjective and a 'to' – infinitive clause is used to make a polite request. Might as well is used to make suggestions when the sensible course of actions seem to be the only way ,but you are not enthusiastic about it. May as well is used to show that it is not important to you whether your suggestion is accepted or not. Must is used to make suggestions to persuade someone you know well to do something. Shall with 'we' in interrogative sentences is used to make suggestions when the speaker is included according to Cobuild (1990: 167).

*Criticisms*

To criticize people for not doing thing could and might can be used. Could/Might have + past participle are used for criticisms in the past. Can't is used formally Hewings (1999:34).

*Hypotheticality*

Leech (2013:170) explains Hypotheticality extensively, he states that: mostly the hypothetical meaning of a modal in the past tense form alone come in the structure of unreal conditionals which is hypothetical or unlikely situations, specifically, second condition and third condition.

### III. METHODOLOGY

*The Sample*

The sample of the study was composed of thirty (30) master degree translation students in the final year (2021 - 2022) who studied two years. They participated in the study to sit for the tests from a population of (59) translation students majoring master degree at the Center of Languages and Translation - Graduate College – Bahri University in Khartoum, Khartoum State, Sudan. They were chosen purposefully to achieve the purpose of the study.

*Tools for Data Collection*

The researcher used two tests which were intended to measure the (30) translation students performance. They sat for a written pre-test, attended an extensive course of modal auxiliary verb functions in context for three months and they sat for a post – test nearly similar to the pre-test after finishing the course as a tool of data collection.

*Content of the Pre – test*

The researcher used the experimental method; the pre-test which was conducted on the specified experimental group and it was composed of (40) simple and miscellaneous modal auxiliary verb functions' sentences which consisted of most the modals and some specific uses of the modals in context to be translated from English into Arabic and vice versa as a tool for data collection.

*Content of the Modals' Functions Course*

The modals' functions course was an extensive course of modal auxiliary verb functions which was designed to achieve the study objectives in helping translation students grasping modal auxiliary verb functions in context.

*Content the Post – test*

The post-test was nearly similar to the pre-test which was also composed of (40) simple modal auxiliary verb functions' sentences which consisted of all the modals and some specific uses of them in context.

*Validity of the Test*

Face validity was used for both the pre – test and the post – test. Two associate professors read and judged the two tests and they validated them.

*Reliability of the Test*

The split half method was used by splitting the items of the tests into two halves, a first and a second test half ,to measure the reliability or the test quality in order to get the expected correlation. The split-half correlation was computed by SPSS ( Statistical Package for Social Sciences). The tests were reliable.

*Instruments for Data Analysis*

The SPSS programme (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) was used for data analysis using percentages, frequency, mean and rank.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

*Results of the Pre – test*

The students sat for to the pre – test in order to discover their performance in the test and to what degree they would translate the modals' functions in context in the test statements from English into Arabic and vice versa. The test total score is (40) marks and the pass score is (20) marks and the results will be displayed in the following table:

**Table (4.1.1)**
**Students' Performance in the Pre - test**

|  |  |  | Correct translation | Incorrect translation |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Number of items | 20 | From English into Arabic | 1,2 ,6 ,7 ,9 ,10 ,13, 16,17 ,18 ,19. | 3, 4 ,5 ,8 ,11 ,12 ,14 ,15 ,20. |
| Number of items | 20 | From Arabic into English | 4, 5, 12 ,13 ,14 ,15 ,16. | 1, 2, 3,6 , 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 17, 18, 19, 20. |
| Percentage |  |  | 56.7% | 43.3% |
| Number of students |  |  | 17 | 13 |

The above table (4.1.1) shows the students performance in the pre – test. There were (17) students with percentage of (56.7%) who answered correctly, while the other (13) students scored incorrect answers in the test with percentage of (43.3%). They gave incorrect answers in the statements: (3), (4), (5), (8), (11), (12), (14), (15), and (20) from English into Arabic and the statements: (1), (2), (3), (6), (7), (8), (9), (10), and (11 )respectively, and (17) to (20) statements from Arabic into English. This indicates the results of the (13) students out of (30) ones who answered incorrectly means that their poor knowledge of translating modal functions in context.

*Results of the Post – test*

The objective of the post – test which the students took was to find out the effect of the course of the modals' functions in context which they were lectured for two months and it was nearly similar to the pre – test to translate statements from English into Arabic and vice versa. Noting that, the test total score is (40) marks and the pass score is (20) marks and the results will be presented in the following table:

**Table (4.2.1.)**
**Students' Performance in the post- test**

|  |  |  | Correct translation | Incorrect translation |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Number of items | 20 | From English into Arabic | 1,2 , 3, 4, 5, 6 ,7 , 8, 9 ,10 11 , 12, 13, 16,17 ,18 ,19. | 14 ,15 ,20. |
| Number of items | 20 | From Arabic into English | 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 ,13 ,14 ,15 ,17. | 16 18, 19, 20. |
| Percentage |  |  | 88.2% | 11.8% |
| Number of students |  |  | 30 | -- |

The table (4.2.1) illustrates the whole (30) students with percentage of (88.2%) answered correctly, however, there were incorrect answers in the test with percentage of (11.8%). The incorrect answers in the statements were: (14), (15) and (20) from English into Arabic and the statements: (16), (18), (19) and (20) from Arabic into English. This indicates that the results of the whole students who passed the test, were relatively advanced in grasping the modals' functions course to translate modals' functions correctly in context which in comparison to the pre – test results, the correct answers in post – test significantly exceeded with percentage of (31.5%).

## V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

*Conclusion.*

The present study is a contribution to turn the translation students' attention to the significance of the modals' functions to be taken care to in context for their multiple meanings in context to achieve accuracy criterion in translation into Arabic. The study reached the findings below:

1. Translation students have seriously - limited knowledge in terms of modals' functions.

2. Advertency of grasping modals' functions and their specific uses leads to decrease loss in translation as they convey many and multiple meanings in context.

3. Grasping modal verbs and their functions and uses in context help improve interpretation skill to translation students.

4. Functional meaning has to be considered in the translation process.

*Recommendations*

1. Translators should expand their knowledge of the modals' functions in context so as to find out the correct intended meaning of the modals' functions.

2. All language aspects should be considered in the translation process to avoid crucial loss in meaning.

3. Improving proper translation skills to translation students is a continuous process.

4. There are meanings beyond the lexical ones should be considered.

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