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T Investigating EFL College Students' Performance in Analyzing Modality Verbs: Discourse Analysis Study

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Abstract

Modal verbs play a crucial role in the English language, as they help express various degrees of possibility, ability, permission, necessity, and obligation. The problem of this study is that fourth year college students face serious difficulties in identifying the different meanings and the functions of the modal verbs used in the text. The purpose of the current study is (1) to determine whether fourth-year college students are able to correctly identify the types of modal verbs (2) to determine whether fourth-year college students are capable of correctly identifying function of English modals and employing them. It is hypothesized that students are unable to understand the meanings of the modal verbs and that students are unable to understand the types and the functions of the modal verbs. This study explores the different modal verbs along with their meanings and usage. Modality, which is the speaker's attitude or point of view towards the action or state being described by the main verb in a sentence, is expressed by a particular type of

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auxiliary verb known as a modal verb. By signifying possibility, necessity, capability, permission, and other related ideas, modal verbs change the meaning of the main verb. The sample was randomly selected from the population, which includes (180) male and female students. The reason behind choosing was that student in the first, second, and third years of study were exposed to English modals in their course materials, so they should be familiar with them. The sample consisted of **100** students in total and the diagnostic test was used in this study. The results explore that fourth-year college students are unable to accurately determine the types and the functions of English modal verbs. According to the obtained results and the conclusions the researcher has reached it is recommended that (1) Encourage students to read and to listen to the English material that have modals. (2) Provide extensive explanations of modal usage and their meanings.

Keywords: modals, modality, epistemic, deontic and dynamic modality, discourse

استقصاء الأداء التحليلي لطلبة الجامعة الدارسين للغة الإنكليزية لغة أجنبية في تحليل

الأفعال الناقصة: دراسة تحليل الخطاب

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المستخلص

تلعب الأفعال المساعدة الناقصة (الشرطية) دورًا مهمًا في اللغة الإنكليزية، فهي تساعد على التعبير عن درجات مختلفة من الإمكانية والقدرة والإذن والضرورة والالتزام. وتتمثل مشكلة هذه الدراسة في أن طلاب السنة الرابعة الجامعية يواجهون صعوبات جمة في تحديد المعاني المختلفة ووظائف الأفعال الناقصة المستخدمة في النص. والغرض من الدراسة الحالية هو (1) تحديد ما إذا كان طلاب السنة الرابعة الجامعية قادرين على تحديد أنواع الأفعال الناقصة بشكل صحيح (2) تحديد ما إذا كان طلاب السنة الرابعة الجامعية قادرين على تحديد وظائف الأفعال الناقصة الإنكليزية وتوظيفها بشكل صحيح. ويفترض أن الطلاب غير قادرين على فهم معاني الأفعال الناقصة وأن الطلاب غير قادرين على فهم أنواع الأفعال الناقصة ووظائفها. تستكشف هذه الدراسة الأفعال الناقصة المختلفة مع معانيها واستخداماتها. يتم التعبير عن الشرطية، وهي موقف المتكلم أو وجهة نظره تجاه الفعل أو الحالة التي يصفها الفعل الرئيسي في الجملة، بنوع معين من الأفعال

المساعدة المعروفة باسم الفعل الناقص. ومن خلال الدلالة على الإمكانية والضرورة والقدرة والإذن وغيرها من الأفكار ذات الصلة، تغير أفعال الشرط معنى الفعل الرئيسي. وقد تم اختيار العينة عشوائياً من المجموعة السكانية التي تضم (180) طالباً وطالبة وكان السبب وراء الاختيار هو أن الطلاب في السنوات الأولى والثانية والثالثة من الدراسة قد تعرضوا لمصطلحات اللغة الإنكليزية في موادهم الدراسية، لذا يجب أن يكونوا على دراية بها. تكونت العينة من 100 طالب في المجموع، واستخدم في هذه الدراسة الاختبار التشخيصي. كشفت النتائج أن طلاب السنة الرابعة في الكلية غير قادرين على تحديد أنواع الأفعال الناقصة الإنكليزية ووظائفها بدقة. ووفقاً للنتائج التي تم الحصول عليها والاستنتاجات التي توصل إليها الباحث، يوصى بما يلي: (1) تشجيع الطلاب على قراءة واستماع المواد الإنكليزية التي تحتوي على الأفعال الناقصة. (2) تقديم شروح مستفيضة لاستخدامات الأفعال الناقصة ومعانيها.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الأفعال المساعدة، الشرطية، المعرفية، المنطقية، الأفعال الحركية، تحليل خطاب

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Problem of the Study

One problem that students face in analyzing discourse modality is understanding the concept itself. Modality refers to the expression of possibility, necessity, or uncertainty in language. It involves examining how speakers or writers convey their attitudes, beliefs, or judgments towards the information they are presenting. Students may struggle with identifying and categorizing different modal expressions accurately. For example, distinguishing between modal verbs (e.g., can, could, may) and adverbs (e.g., possibly, probably) that indicate modality can be challenging. Additionally, recognizing subtle modal cues such as hedging (e.g., I think, it seems) or intensifiers (e.g., definitely, certainly) requires a keen eye for detail.

Another difficulty lies in interpreting the intended meaning behind modal expressions. Modalities can vary across different contexts and cultures, making it essential to consider the broader context in which they are used. Students need to analyze not only individual modal expressions but also their relationships with other linguistic features within a discourse. Furthermore, students may struggle with applying their understanding of modality to real-world texts or spoken conversations. Analyzing discourse modality requires considering factors such as tone of voice, body language, and cultural norms that influence how modality is expressed and interpreted.

1.2 The Aims of the Study

The current study aims at finding out:

1. whether fourth-year college students are able to correctly identify the types of the modal verbs
2. whether fourth-year college students are capable of correctly identifying the function of English modals.

1.3 The Hypotheses

1. It is hypothesized that fourth-year college students are unable to fully understand the types *epistemic, deontic, and dynamic Modality*. of English modals and apply them.
2. It is hypothesized that fourth-year college students are unable to fully understand the function of English modals ((1) **Possibility** (2) **Ability** (3) **Permission, etc..**) and apply them.

1.4 Limits of the Study

This study is conducted on fourth-year college students at the College of Education for Humanities at the University of Diyala during the 2023–2024 academic year. Also, it is limited for only three types of modality: *epistemic, deontic, and dynamic Modality*.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Modality

The way a speaker or writer displays their attitude or level of assurance regarding a statement or proposition is known as their modality. It is frequently used to express the speaker's viewpoint, conviction, likelihood, necessity, capacity, or duty. The sorts of modality that modal verbs and adjuncts can typically use to express can be used to consider and provide modality meaning (Fontaine, 2013).

The language idea of modalities has been applied in a variety of ways in scientific literature (Palmer 2001; Frawley 2006; Egan and Weatherson 2011). The three basic semantic properties that define modality are dynamic, deontic, and epistemic. That youngster can sing. Traditional definitions of dynamic modality include attributing a capacity to the clause's subject-participant. We should be grateful for all she has done for us, so we must find a method to express our thanks to her. This is how the deontic modality is typically defined. And the usual definition of the epistemic modality in terms of permission and responsibility is coherence. (Egan and Weatherson 2011; Egan and Frawley 2006; Palmer 2001) John will be there.

2.2 Modality in Textual Discourse Analysis

The words "**discourse analysis**" and "discurrere," both of which mean "to run back and forth," are derived from the Greek verb *verbanaluein*, which means "to deconstruct." The phrase "discourse analysis" has been popular in recent years across a wide range of academic fields, including sociology, history, cultural studies, philosophy, literary

analysis, psychology, and anthropology. Discourse analysis is understood differently in each of these fields, including as a social science approach, a branch of linguistics, a critical paradigm, and more (Krzyzanowski & Wodak, 2008). The interpretation of language in its context is called discourse analysis. Studying language in its circumstances is the goal of discourse analysis. Discourse analysis examines spoken and written language in a variety of figures of speech, from everyday speech to highly formalized forms of discourse (McCarthy, 2000).

Discourse analysis encompasses the study of spoken and written language and includes examining the structure and functions of language. Additional social and cultural aspects that support our comprehension and interpretation of various texts and talk kinds are also found by discourse analysis as linguistic qualities that characterize different genres. Discourse has given rise to many different academic disciplines, including sociolinguistics, or sociology, anthropology, and social psychology, to name a few. As a result, discourse analysis adopts a variety of analytical stances and theoretical viewpoints, including speech act theory, interacting sociolinguistics, ethnography for communication, pragmatics, conversational analysis, and variation analysis (Schiffrin, 1994 as cited in Darwish, 2011).

Modality frequently matches the social role. Modality is used to describe the areas between extremely positive and negative ranges. It can convey the speaker's opinion on a particular subject as well as the degree of formality and power dynamics. Therefore, it plays a crucial role in social communication. Personal pronouns, tense, notional verbs, direct and indirect speeches, as well as modal verbs, modal adverbs, and adjectives, can all be utilized to communicate the modalization in English (Wang, 2010). Modality is described as "the way in which the meaning of the clause is qualified to the speaker's decision about the probability of the proposition" (Quirk, Greenbaun, Leech & Svartvik, 1985).

Additionally, modality is examined by looking at the definitions of modal verbs. According to the elements of meaning that constrain it, modalities are separated into two categories: those that involve two different types of intrinsic human predominance (such as "permission, obligation, and volition") and those that involve human decision-making (such as "possibility, prediction, and necessity"; Quirk et al., 1985).

According to Fairclough (2013), grammatical modality is linked to relational and expressive values. Modality is linked to the strength of the speakers or authors as well as to the direction of that strength. Therefore, expressive modality is related with the speaker or writer's power with respect to the truth or probability of a representation of reality, whereas relational modality is associated with the power of one participant in relation to others. Additionally, modal verbs like (may, might, must, should, can, can't, and must) as well as adverbs and tense can be used to show modality. Modality is therefore a topic of ideological concern. The emphasis will be on how social relationships and social identities are identified in sentences within the grammar of "modality" (Fairclough, 1989).

According to Halliday (2004) modality refers to likelihood and desirability for a proposition, respectively. When a claim is evaluated in terms of the degree of likelihood or obligation attached to it, it may become controversial. In other words, the modality system constructs the area of ambiguity that falls between "yes" and "no" by reflecting the

numerous shades that exist between positive or negative poles. According to Halliday (2004), the positive and negative poles in a statement signify assertion or denial; the meaning is positive in "it is so" and negative in "it isn't so." In other terms, Halliday distinguishes between two categories of possible intermediate outcomes: Degrees of likelihood are (i) "possibly/probably/certainly" and (ii) "sometimes/usually/always"; respectively. Degrees of probability are the same as "either yes or no," which means that they can be either yes or no with varying degrees of possibility. The 'both yes and no' counterpart of degrees of equality is 'sometimes yes, sometimes no, with different levels of frequency associated. The term "modality" perfectly belongs to these scales of probability and regularity.

2.3 Types of Modality

Three types of modalities are distinguished by Nuyts (2006): dynamic, deontic, and epistemic.

1. Epistemic Modality: Epistemic modality (henceforth EM), as defined by Simpson (1993), is crucial for the examination of point of view in fiction because it is "concerned with the speaker's confidence or lack thereof in the accuracy of a proposition expressed." This type of modality is used to express the speaker's degree of certainty or belief about a statement. For example, "It may rain tomorrow" suggests a possibility but not certainty, while "It will rain tomorrow" expresses a high degree of certainty.

Palmer (2001) claim that epistemic modality can be distinguished from other types of modality quite easily. Speaker interaction is marked by the words "may" (possibility) and "must" (necessity), which indicate judgements rather than claims. It is thought of as the modal of ideas rather than of action, states, and occurrences and has to do with the attitude of the speaker.

Epistemic Modality involves the syntax of explanatory comment, according to Fowler (1983). It is a way for people to express how committed they are to the propositions they make and how they feel about whether the situations of events they are referring to are desirable or not. This suggests that the EM (modalization) system allows speakers and writers to claim or refute their proposition with varied degrees of assurance about the probability (possibility, probability, certainty, etc.) of something and its frequency (sometimes, usually, always, etc.). Three factors system of type, value, and orientation—typically interact to make a purposeful use of EM in the interpersonal meta-function (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004).

In a clause or a statement, modalization (epistemic modality) can be stated in one of three ways:

- 1) The application of a definite modal verb or operator, such as "might," "ought," or "must," for example. It's possible that Peter took the book.
- 2) The application of adverbs or mood adjectival, such as "possibly," "probably," "certainly," etc. E-zine likely has a talent for writing.

3) Using both a Mood Adjunct and a Modal Finite, for example: *That boy will* (modal adjunct) *likely need your assistance*.

"Epistemic speech expresses the speaker's judgement of the relationship between the mode world in which the event results in and the factual reality," according to Declerck (2011). He claims that the factual or a potential extension of it have a special relationship to the epistemic modal world.

Nuyts (2005) makes the similar claim that the epistemic modality is "an signal of the appraisal of the possibility that the state of affairs stated in the clause occurs in the world at large or not, or of the level of likelihood for the state of affairs."

2. Deontic Modality: It is the modality system of responsibility that deals with a speaker's attitude towards the level of obligation associated to the completion of specific activities, according to Simpson (1993). It also contains modal auxiliaries like "You may, you should, and you must leave." These modal auxiliaries, in turn, express varying degrees of consent, obligation, and need. This type of modality is used to express the speaker's opinion about what should or must happen. For example, "You should study for the exam" suggests advice or recommendation, while "You must submit your assignment by Friday" expresses an obligation. Deontic modality is named after the Greek word "deon", which signifies a responsibility that must be performed. (Li:2004).

According to Palmer (2001), "deontic modality means occurrences that have not been actualized, processes that have not yet occurred place but have only potential."

According to Hoyer L. (2014), deontic modality is connected to the likelihood and necessity of acts as a result of the speaker's permission to do action or imposition of some actions in the future.

For instance, "Let me sing." (permission).

Deontic modality is described by Nuyts (2005) as a measure of how morally desirable the state of circumstances represented in the utterance is, often on the speaker's behalf. He maintains that the expression of permission, obligation, and interdiction involve more complexity because they involve determining the moral acceptability of a situation and how it manifests in action terms, including taking steps to encourage or obstruct the actions or positions of other people.

Deontic modals, which include obligation and permission, include two categories of social knowledge, according to Saeed (2003). 'Obligation' refers to requiring someone to do something, whereas 'permission' refers to someone's power to authorise another person to perform a task.

3. Dynamic Modality: In linguistics, dynamic modality is sometimes referred to as voluntary modality and inherent modality. (Hengeveld K., 1988) and (Goossens, 1985). Semantic ambiguities may be comparable to other modalities while discussing dynamic modality, so keep that in mind as well. This indicates that it's crucial to determine whether

an action is motivated by necessity, capacity, or need when examining a sentence. This type of modality is used to express ability or possibility. For example, "I can swim" indicates the speaker's ability to swim, while "She might come to the party" suggests a possibility but not certainty.

The dynamic modality refers to the subject's (canonically animate) capacity to carry out the action specified in the utterance's proposition. Therefore, it is subject-oriented. It does not include the speaker's attitude towards the factuality or actualization of the circumstance, which is thought to be essential to modal meaning, making it less crucial to modality than deontic permission. Additionally, unlike deontic and epistemic modality, dynamic modality does not often apply to the modal auxiliaries (Warnsby, 2006).

Modality can be expressed through various linguistic devices such as modal verbs (e.g., can, could, may, might, must), adverbs (e.g., certainly, possibly), and other expressions (e.g., have to, need to). The choice of modality can greatly influence the tone and meaning of a statement

The dynamic modality, according to Nuyts, contains three subtypes:

The first-argument participant, who is typically the agent, is given talents, capacities, requirements, or necessities as part of a participant-inherent dynamic modality.

Swimmers, for instance, may swim for several hours, but not anyone has the energy to finish.

An ability, capacity, or requirement of a participant that is "determined by the local circumstances" (and may therefore be partially outside of their power and control) is referred to as a participant-imposed dynamic modality.

For instance: The company must be liquidated due to financial problems.

A potential or necessity/inevitability that is inherent in the circumstance indicated in the phrase as a whole is called a situational dynamic modality, according to Nuyts (2006).

For example: ***It is possible to transfer the money in advance if necessary.***

The three dynamic modality subtypes are exceedingly difficult to understand, and it is frequently hard to tell them apart. Here, we address the challenge of drawing distinct distinctions between the various modalities' kinds and subtypes. There are differences of opinion among linguists about participant-imposed dynamic modality, participant-imposed dynamic modality, and situational dynamic modality, which makes it more difficult to define the latter.

Additionally, we came to the conclusion that situational, participant-imposed, participant-inherent, and participant-imposed subcategories of modality must be removed because they play a considerably greater functional role than those identified in dynamic modality and are also present in other forms of modality.

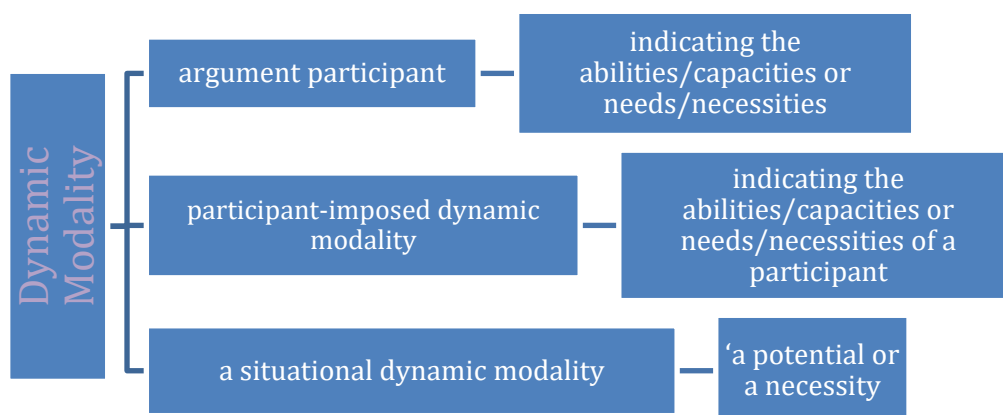


Figure (1) Functions of Dynamic Modality

According to Biber et al. (2002), there are three categories for modal verbs depending on whether they have intrinsic or extrinsic meanings (the first meaning in each of the pairings below is intrinsic and the second one is extrinsic):

1. *Can, could, may, and might are used in the permission/possibility category;*
2. *must and should are used in the obligation/necessity category; and will,*
3. *would, and shall are used in the volition/prediction category.*

As was already mentioned, the majority of modal verbs have many meanings. Table (1) lists the several meanings that each modal verb can imply along with instances of each meaning (the meanings are categorised here based on Greenbaum and Quirk, 1999).

Table (1)

The Meanings and Functions of Modal

No.	Modal	Function	Example
1	Can	(1) Possibility (2) Ability (3) Permission	(1) Smoking can be dangerous (2) I can swim. (3) He can come
2	Could	(1) Possibility (2) Ability (3) Permission	(1) She could visit the ruins (2) May could speak three languages (3) he could leave now
3	May	(1) Possibility (2) Permission	(1) I may arrive at 10 a.m. (2) May I use your pen?
4	might	(1) Possibility (2) Permission	(1) He might go to the north. (2) The man might ask for course meal.
5	must	(1) Necessity (2) Obligation	(1) you must wear your seat belt while driving (2) you must give up smoking
6	shall	(1) Prediction (2) Volition	(1) I shall get the full information next week (2) I shall share the money with you
7	should	obligation	You should do your work
8	Will	(1) Prediction (2) Volition	(1) It will rain today (2) I will help you with your work.

9	would	(1) Prediction (2) Volition	(1) He would pass the test (2) I would like to come to the party
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As can be seen, the majority of modal verbs in English have more than one meaning, making the modal verb system fairly complicated. Polysemous verbs present a significant difficulty to non-native English speakers since they are difficult to conjugate.

3.4 Previous Studies

Maks and Vossen (2010) examine the saliency of deontic constructions in election manifestos. To them, election manifestos have a predominant use of deontic constructions that seem to fit very well the expression of principles, behaviour and policies as advocated in manifestos. Their study shows that the principles and policy measures captured in a manifesto are often linguistically realized with deontic structures of modal verbs and adjectives. This, according to them, is because the message of a political manifesto is intended to be re-(assuring). Hence, the use of deontic modals seems appropriate since such verbs echo a certain level of commitment, zeal and enthusiasm by the political party. Shayegh (2012) proposes a critical discourse analysis of modalities in the political discourses of Martin Luther King and Barack Obama using a paradigm that combines Hallidays' Systemic Functional Grammar and Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) theory. According to Shayegh's research, both speakers largely rely on the modal will to argue that information is accurate in terms of probability and regularity. In their research, Nartey and Yankson (2014) looked at the semantic foundations of modals in the 2012 manifesto of the New Patriotic Party (NPP) in Ghana. In essence, their research shows that modal auxiliary verbs can clarify the various shades of meaning that are typical of political debates. According to Nartey and Yankson (2014), modals are used in manifestos to convey "a sense of intention, promise, obligation, and necessity in a deliberate and strategic effort to convince the electorate."

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 The Adopted Model

One possible model for modal verbs related to epistemic, deontic, and dynamic meanings with discourse analysis is the *Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL)* model. SFL is a linguistic framework that focuses on the functional aspects of language and how it is used in different contexts.

In SFL, modal verbs are analyzed based on their interpersonal function, which includes epistemic (related to knowledge and certainty), deontic (related to obligation and permission), and dynamic (related to ability and possibility) meanings. These meanings are considered in relation to the discourse context in which they occur. By analyzing the use of modal verbs in different discourses, SFL provides a comprehensive framework for understanding how speakers express their epistemic beliefs, deontic obligations/permissions/necessities, and dynamic abilities/possibilities within specific contexts.

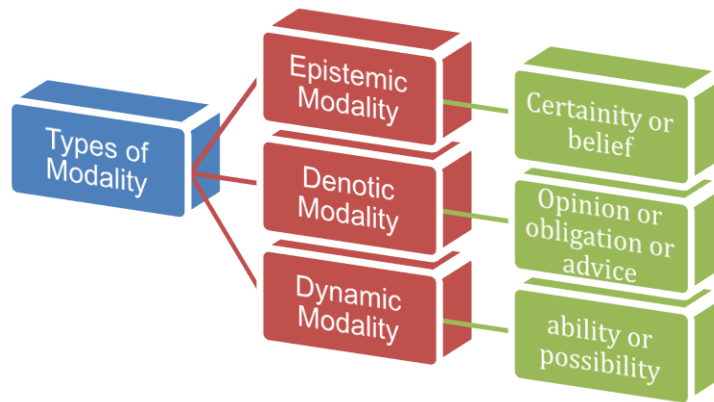


Figure (2) The Adopted Model

3.2 Population and Sampling

Lodico, et al. (2006) defined the population as a sizable group of people to with whom the scholar needs to generalize the study's findings. While Richards, et al. (1992) claim that a population refers to any collection of things, people, etc., from which a sample can be selected, they disagree.

The sample, on the other hand is defined as "the processes of selecting a sample" by Richards and Schmidt (2010). Frey, et al. (2000) assert that a sample is a subset of the population.

The population of the current study consists of **(180)** and the sample of the current study is **(100)** students from the fourth year from Department of English at university of Diyala, as shown in table (1)

Table (1)

The Population and the sample of the study

Stage	Population	Sample	Percentage
Fourth Year	180	100	55%

3.3 Test Construction

In this study, the test contains two questions, each question contains ten items: the first one is to identify *the types of modality*, whether it is epistemic, dynamic, or deontic, whereas the second question is to identify *the functions of modality*, whether they are prediction, possibility, ability, obligation, Volition or permission. See **Appendix (1)**

3.4 The Validity and the Reliability of the test

A test, according to Aljuboory (2014), is a tool that works best for obtaining data regarding students' performance and accomplishments during a specific course of study. It is a technique or process for evaluating a person's aptitude, expertise, or performance in a specific area of life. Taherdoost (2016) asserts that validity examines what is supported by the data to be measured. Face validity, as defined by Harris (2007), is "the way the test looks to the examinees, testing administrators, educators, and the like.", Another idea of validity is content validity. According to Pennington (2003), the content validity refers to the extent to which the measure means accurately represent all aspects of the concept. According to Ravitch (2007), testing, a metric for consistency, explains reliability.

3.4 Item Analyses

The term "**item difficulty**" describes how easy or tough an item seems to be for a specific number of tests. Just the proportion of students who correctly reply to the object is reflected. The best test item will have a difficulty rating that ranges from 0.15 to 0.85 (Brown 2010).

3.4 Discrimination Power means calculating how closely a given item's findings match those of the entire test is known as discrimination power, according to Alderson (1995). According to Ebel (1972), an item is considered acceptable if its DP (Difficulty Power) is 0.30 or higher. Conversely, if the item's DP is less than 0.30, it is considered weak and requires modification or replacement.

Table (2)

The discrimination power of the test items

Items No.	DP
Question One/ Types of the Modal Verbs	
1	0.63
2	0.48
3	0.37
4	0.37
5	0.44
6	0.52
7	0.33
8	0.37
9	0.33
10	0.37
Question Two/ Functions of the Modal Verbs	
1	0.41
2	0.48
3	0.56
4	0.44
5	0.59
6	0.41

7	0.37
8	0.33
9	0.37
10	0.44

3.5 Scoring Scheme of the Test

To evaluate responses, scoring entails using a numerical scale. According to Genesee and Upshur (1996), scoring offers teachers and students useful feedback on each other's attitudes and academic progress.

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSTION

4.1 Students' Performance in Analyzing the types of the Modal Verbs

Table 2 shows that the performance of the participants had a theoretical mean of **12.5**, a mean score of **14.24**, and a standard deviation of **3.22**. For a single sample, the t-test form is used. The computed t-vale is **5.37** and the tabular one is **1.98** at a level of significance of **0.05** and **97** degrees of freedom, according to the results. Since the computed t-value is greater than the tabulated t-value, there are no discernible disparities in the performance of EFL college students at the recognition level. This result suggests that EFL college students have difficulty in this area because they are unable to recognize the meaning of the modality. The initial idea posits that "**Iraqi EFL university students' face significant difficulties in identifying the types of the modal verbs**", is thus approved.

Table (2)

The Mean Scores, Standard Deviation and T. Values of Students' Performance (The Types of Modal Questions)

Sample	Obtained Mean Scores	Theoretical Mean scores	SD.	Degree of freedom	T- value		Levels of Significance
					computed	Tabulated	
100	14.24	12.6	3.22	97	5.37	1.98	0.05

4.2 Students' Performance in Analyzing the functions of the Modal Verbs

According to **Table 3**, the participants' performance had a theoretical mean of **12.49**, a mean score of **8.35**, and a standard deviation of **3.41**. It makes use of the t-test format for one sample. The findings show that for a significance level of **0.05** and a degree of freedom of **99**, the computed t-vale is **12.10** and the tabular one is **1.98**. There are no discernible differences in the performance

of EFL college students at the recognition level because the computed t-value is greater than the tabulated t-value. The results of this study indicate that EFL college students struggle in this area since they are unable to comprehend the meaning of modal verbs. " **Iraqi EFL university students' face significant difficulties in identifying and the functions of the modal verbs**", is accepted.

Table (3)

The Mean Scores, Standard Deviation and T. Values of Students' Analytical Performance (the Function Questions)

Sample	Obtained Mean Scores	Theoretical Mean scores	SD.	Degree of freedom	T- value		Levels of Significance
					computed	Tabulated	
100	8.35	12.49	3.41	99	12.10	1.98	0.05

To overcome these challenges, students can benefit from practice exercises that involve identifying and categorizing different modal expressions in various texts. They should also engage in discussions and debates where they can analyze how speakers use modality to convey their perspectives effectively. Additionally, studying examples from diverse cultural contexts can help students develop a more comprehensive understanding of discourse modality.

5. CONCLUSION

According to the results obtained, it is concluded that:

1. EFL college students are unable to identify the meanings of the modal verbs.
2. EFL college students are unable to identify the functions of the modal verbs.
3. EFL college students face difficulties in modal verbs.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

According to the obtained results and the conclusions the researcher has reached it is recommended that:

1. Encourage students to read and to listen to the English material that have modals
2. Provide extensive explanations of modal usage and their meanings
3. Provide plenty of exercises about modal showing their types and functions.

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Appendix (1) The Test

Q1: Identify the types of modality, whether it is epistemic, dynamic, or deontic

1. She **should** speak to the boss if she's unhappy (deontic)
2. They **might** be late (epistemic)
3. Aluminium **has to** be extracted by electrolysis (dynamic)
4. 18 plus 10 **must** be more than 20 (epistemic)
5. I **can't** see him (deontic)
6. She **can** stay as long as she likes (denotic)
7. He **can** speak French (ambiguous)
8. He **must** have been delayed (epistemic)
9. I **will** help you. (dynamic)
10. That **will** be the postman (epistemic)

Q1: Identify the functions of modality, whether they are prediction, possibility, ability, obligation, Volition or permission

1. Tom's teacher says that he **will be able to** play the violin pretty well in half a year. (ability)
2. I wanted to talk to Jim yesterday, but I **couldn't** find him (ability)
3. You **must** attend the meeting (obligation)
4. All the students **can** use the library (permission)
5. We **might** be a little late (possibility)
6. I **shall** do as she says (volition)
7. I **may** go to the concert tonight (prediction)
8. He **must** study hard to pass the test (obligation)
9. **Could I** open the window? (permission)
10. It's cloudy. It **will** rain today (prediction)