

An Analysis of Modality and it's Interpretation on Educational Article

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Abstract

The objectives of this study were to (1) investigate the kinds of modality, (2) to determine the interpretation of each modality related to intrinsic and extrinsic meaning, and (3) to determine the level of probability of each modality found in the educational article. From the results of the analysis it was found that from 47 clauses, 30 modalities or 63,83 % of the overall data have extrinsic interpretation as there are : 1) possibility : 19 data or 40,42%, 2) Prediction : 9 data or 19,16% and 3) necessity : 2 data or 4,25% of the overall data. On the other hands it was found 17 modalities or 36,17% of the overall data have intrinsic interpretation as there are : 1) obligation : 17 data or 25,53%, 2) Permission 4 data or 8,51%, and 3) Volition : 1 datum or 2,13 %. It means that the dominant modality found in the educational article based on intrinsic and extrinsic meaning is possibility which belong to extrinsic meaning then followed by obligation, prediction, permission, necessity and the last is volition. The dominant value of modality found is high probability which reaches 25 high probability or equal to 53,20% of the overall data, then followed by median and low which each reaches 11 data or equal to 23.40% each.

Keywords :modality, interpretation, probability,educational text

1.Introduction

A theory of modality is a theory of how the speaker negotiates meaning, expresses tentativeness, uncertainty, beliefs etc. Modality is “the speaker’s judgement of the probabilities, or the obligations involved in what he is saying” (Halliday 1994: 75). Halliday also describes modality as the collective term for the intermediate degrees that fall between positive or negative polarity. In other words, between the choice of positive is/ do and negative isn’t/ don’t there is a space where modality works.

According to Halliday (1994), we turn to different means in order to express what we want. If we are uncertain as to whether what we are saying is the case, we find ways to express this uncertainty, and if we want someone to do us a favour, we find ways to express this as well. Depending on factors such as context, occasion, and audience, but also personality, academic background (or lack of such) and mood, we choose our words and use them to present our views, wishes, demands, doubts, certainties and so on (. field, tenor, and mode in section Quirk et al. (1985) suggest that “at its most general, modality may be defined as the manner in which the meaning of a clause is qualified so as to reflect the speaker’s judgement of the likelihood of the proposition it expresses being true” (1985: 219).

Like Halliday, Martin and Rose (2003) suggest that the cline between positive and negative meaning “opens up a space for negotiation, in which different points of view can circulate around an issue” (ibid: 50), and in which modality operates. They

relate these degrees of polarity to how obliged you are to do something (do it, you must do it, you should do it, you could do it, don't do it), or how probable a statement is (it is, it must be, it should be, it might be, it isn't).

The former type, expressing obligation and inclination is referred to as modulation (Halliday 1994: 89), and the latter, expressing degrees of probability and usuality, is known as modalization within SFL (ibid.).

This study has adopted a broad interpretation of potential modality expressing elements in a clause. Halliday provides the functional framework and Quirk et al. (1985) provide the grammatical vocabulary and the framework for a grammatical categorization of the modal expressions, in particular a categorization of the verbs that have the potential for expressing modality.

This study also opens up for a broad consideration of the boundaries for the categories of modal meaning. , attempts are made, to the best of the researcher's ability, to explain and illustrate why some of the examples from the data are categorized as having more than one possible meaning, by pointing to objective, contextual facts. Some readers may disagree with the choices made in this paper, and argue that it is necessary, and possible, to make a clear distinction between the various modal meanings, also the ones occurring in this analysis.

Considering the fact that modality is a complex area (cf. e.g. Coates, 1983; Quirk, 1985; Palmer, 1990; Halliday, 1994, Davies 2001), it makes sense to attempt to clarify as precisely as possible the various modal meanings, so as not to contribute to an increased confusion and 'fuzziness'. Attempts at this have been made in this paper, and the analysis of modal expressions has been carried out in empirical fashion; based on what is actually there in the texts, and considered in their context. Analyzing modal meaning is necessarily based on some subjective understanding of what is going on in the text, so a note is hereby made about the risk of bias caused by limitations in the analyst.

Objectives and Research Questions.

These three kinds then elaborated in to more specific reseach questions as follows :

1. to find out modality found in the educational article ?
2. to find out the interpretation of each modality found in the educational article?
3. to find out the level of probability of each modality found in the educational article ?

Modal and Modality.

Modality is to be understood as a semantic category. Modal auxiliaries permission, necessity, and obligation. In the *Longman Grammar of Spoken and* three major categories according to their meaning:

Modal Verbs	“Intrinsic meaning”	“Extrinsic meaning”
Can, could, may	Permission	Possibility
Must, should	Obligation	Necessity
Will, would, shall	Volition	Prediction

By means of modal expressions the writer can evaluate a particular situation necessity. To put it differently, all the above mentioned notions cover the opinion and relation with reality. Modal verbs can basically express two “deontic” modality. The first

expresses the degree of probability, including predictability. The latter, deontic modality, presents a degree of desirability. This terminology agrees, in fact, with the more recent categorization in the type of modality concerns actions and events directly controlled by humans or “extrinsic”, which expresses a certain degree of likelihood in terms of events is observed by extrinsic modality. Downing and Locke (1992: 382-383) attitude or statement of the writer, who presents his/her personal opinion and relation with reality, areas of meaning, such as “permission”, “obligation”, and “volition” which involves some kinds of intrinsic control over human events are classified as intrinsic or deontic modality whereas there is another type of modality labeled extrinsic or epistemic which refers to the logical status of events or states. Usually relating to assessment of likelihood, possibility, necessity or prediction (Biber et al. 1999:485). This logical modality involves a human judgement of what is or is not likely to happen.

Furthermore, Quirk et al.’s reference grammar (1985) allows space for a fuller discussion of the verb categories than does Halliday (1994). This categorization is particularly relevant for this paper and the analyses of modality in the two Nobel lectures, and that is why this section provides a relatively lengthy presentation of these verb categories. Predominantly the terms are adopted from Quirk et al., along with their classification of modal meaning as intrinsic and extrinsic modality.

The modal meanings expressed by the modal auxiliaries (MAs) are divided into intrinsic and extrinsic meaning (Quirk et al. 1985 : 219 - 220):

Intrinsic meaning: expresses permission, obligation, and volition – this involves some kind of intrinsic human control over events.

Extrinsic meaning: expresses possibility, necessity, and prediction – this typically involves human judgement of what is or what is not likely to happen

Context of situation

It is necessary to; at least briefly, consider the context in which the texts occur. The context of situation can be understood and considered in terms of three different parts of a situation type (Halliday 2002). They are the field, tenor, and mode ‘of discourse’, which are realized in the ideational, interpersonal, and textual metafunction respectively

Values of modality

Modality involves degrees and scales, which indicates that in a proposition a speaker can signal a lower or higher degree of certainty about its validity (may/will) and, in giving a command, the speaker can signal a higher/lower degree of pressure on the other person to carry it out (must/should). Choice of modal degree reflects the speaker’s commitment; “the degree to which the speaker commits herself to the validity of what she is saying” (ibid.). In academic papers, the author must consider whether he should advance a claim as definite or as still open to doubt. Whereas when issuing advice, the speaker needs to decide to what degree s/he should be putting pressure on the recipient (ibid.). Halliday (1994) outlines three values of modality, which are high, median, and low.

Table 1 : Values of modality (Adaptation of table 10 (3) in Halliday 1994: 358)

	Probabillity	Usuality	Obligation	Inclination
High	Certain	Always	Required	Determined
Median	Probable	Usually	Supposed	Determined
Low	Possible	Sometimes	Allowed	Willing

Halliday (1994) states that even a high value modal is less determinate than a polar form, since “you only say you are certain when you are not” (89). Next follows the bipartite presentation of modality. The focus in this study is to find out and determine the modality found in text of women and leadership, what are the interpretations depending on the intrinsic and extrinsic meaning and how are the level of the probability.

2.Research Design

The design of method used in this research is descriptive qualitative research method. Kirk and Miller (1986) which include method and technique of collecting data randomly. Reducing the data, analysing the data, presenting the analysis and drawing a conclusion. Method and technique of analyzing data as well as method and technique of presenting the analyses.

Data Collection

The data of this study was taken from the article of Education which accessed from New York Times www.nytimes.com/pages/education/ on 17 February 2015. To limit the study the writer took 47 sentences/ clauses from the 28 paragraphs of all data randomly.

Data Analysis

In order to analyze the data to answer the research questions, the data were analyzed based on Halliday theory (1994). The data were tabulated in the form of sentence by sentence or clause by claused then analyzed based on the type of modality and its interpretation and determined the the level of its probability.

Table 2 Analysis of Modality, Level of Probability and It's Interpretation

No.	Clause/ Sentence	Probability			Intrinsic Meaning			Extrinsic Meaning		
		High	Med	Low	Permis sion	Obligat ion	Voliti on	Possibil ity	Necessi ty	Predicti on
1	The first is that they could be the nation's most powerful tools to improve the opportunities of less privileged Americans,			√				√		
2	giving them a shot at harnessing a fast-changing job market and building a more equitable, inclusive society for all of us.		√		√					
3	The second is that, at this job, they have largely failed.	√						√		
	There are two critical things to know about community colleges.	√							√	
4	When President Obama stood at Pellissippi Community College in Knoxville, Tenn., last month and offered every committed student two years' worth of community college at the government's expense,			√	√					
5	he focused on the first point	√				√				
6	With open enrollment and an average price tag of \$3,800 a year for full-time students, community colleges are pretty much the only shot at a higher education for those who don't have the cash or the high school record to go to a four-year university.									
7	And that's a lot of people: 45 percent of the undergraduate students in the country.									
8	They are " essential pathways to the middle class," Mr. Obama said.			√					√	
9	They work for parents and full-time workers, for veterans re-entering civilian life, and for those who "don't have the capacity to just suddenly go study for four years and not work."	√				√				

10	What the president chose not to emphasize is that precious few of the students at community colleges are likely to fulfill the promise and complete their education.	√				√				
11	Of all the students who enroll full time at Pellissippi, for example, only 22 percent graduate from a two-year program within three years. Just 8 percent transfer to a four-year college.	√					√			
12	And that's hardly the bottom of the barrel. There are many community colleges with much worse records.	√					√			
13	The president's offer of a free ride should increase enrollment:		√			√				
14	White House officials estimate that the program, if approved by Congress, would lift enrollment by 1.6 million by 2026, bringing the total to nine million students from about seven million today.	√								√
15	But that's the easy bit. Whether his plan ultimately delivers on its promise, however, will depend less on how many students enter than how many successfully navigate their way out.		√							√
16	Today, only 35 percent of a given entry cohort attain a degree within six years, according to government statistics .	√					√			
17	At public four-year colleges, 57 percent of the students graduate within six years.	√				√				
18	And it's getting worse. Community college graduation rates have been declining over the last decade.		√							√
19	It's past time we paid attention. Community colleges have been consistently ignored by policy makers who equate higher education with a bachelor's degree	√					√			
20	— mostly ignoring the fact that a very large group of young Americans are not prepared , either financially, cognitively or socially for that kind of		√				√			

	education.									
21	Meanwhile, American higher education has become a preserve of the elite .	√						√		
22	Only one in 20 Americans ages 25 to 34 whose parents didn't finish high school has a college degree.	√								√
23	The average across 20 advanced industrial nations assessed by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development is almost one in four.	√								√
24	“What choice do we have but to make these institutions work?” a White House official who has been working on the new proposal told me. “There is no real alternative out there for 40 percent of students.”	√				√				
25	But Mr. Obama's plan risks falling well short of its ambitions.			√						√
26	Community college students may not be the poorest of the poor, but they mostly come from stressed backgrounds in the bottom half of the income distribution,		√					√		
27	and they often lack the money or social support networks to help them through school.		√							
28	Most are not truly prepared for college, requiring remedial courses in math or English before they receive their first higher education credit.	√				√				
29	“Community colleges,” said Andrew Kelly, an expert on education at the American Enterprise Institute, “are not miracle workers.”		√							√
30	With little guidance to navigate a complex system not just of standard two-year associate degrees in dozens of subjects, but also a variety of one-year certificates, as well as transfer programs to four-year colleges, it is not surprising that students often spin their wheels.		√							√

31	The primary solution, if there is one, probably lies further up the pipeline, in high schools, where the Obama administration is running up against political flak and parental objections to its push to establish a common core of proficiency to ensure the vast majority of high school graduates are indeed equipped for college.		√			√				
32	Mr. Kelly doubts that the federal government can pull off a miracle. “We’ve seen school improvement grants to improve K-through-12 education; we’ve seen No Child Left Behind ,” he noted. “Those policies have generally been disappointments.”			√				√		
33	But giving up on community colleges would be even worse, because some promising experiments point the way to a more successful path.			√						√
34	Take New York. A few years ago, the City University of New York began Accelerated Study in Associate Programs, which covered any tuition not already provided by financial aid. It offered students free textbooks and MetroCards for the subway.			√				√		
35	Crucially, it offered intense tutoring: The program’s advisers had a caseload of 60 to 80 students, about one-tenth of that of a typical community college adviser.			√		√				
36	Students had to commit to a full-time program and sign up for early developmental courses needed to get up to speed.			√		√				
37	The college steered students into blocks of courses and pressed them to graduate with associates’ degrees within three years.	√				√				
38	The results were impressive. MDRC, a nonprofit organization that evaluates social policies, found that the accelerated study program roughly doubled the three-year graduation rate among the most disadvantaged students, those who initially needed remediation classes.			√				√		
39	The program is not cheap; it costs 30 to 35 percent more a student.	√						√		

40	But because of the higher graduation rate, the cost per graduate was actually lower. And that, said Gordon Berlin, president of MDRC, is the metric that matters.	√						√		
41	The White House knows about this accelerated program and plans to demand a similar commitment.	√			√					
42	It is structuring the federal aid in a way that, it hopes, will push states and colleges to invest in empirically tested strategies to improve retention and graduation rates.		√				√			
43	And it is encouraging them to create curriculums that prepare students either for a four-year college transfer or for an in-demand job.	√				√				
44	the federal government has limited leverage: While its incentives for innovation are laudable, \$60 billion over 10 years pales compared with what the government spends just on Pell grants for middle- and lower-income students attending college.	√						√		
45	“Community colleges have the students with the greatest problems — yet they get the least resources,” said Thomas Bailey, director of the Community College Research Center at Columbia University’s Teachers College.	√						√		
46	“It’s unrealistic to think we can have a better outcome without investing more money.”			√				√		
47	Better outcomes are sorely needed. That is, if education is to recover its role as a motor of opportunity for those who need it most.	√			√					
	Total	25	11	11	4	12	1	19	2	9

Findings

From the table of analysis above, from the 47 sentences/ clauses analyzed in the educational article, it was found that 30 modalities or 63,83% of the overall data have extrinsic interpretation as there are: 1) possibility: 19 data or 40,42%, 2) Prediction: 9 data or 19,16% and 3) necessity: 2 data or 4,25% of the overall data. On the other hand, it was found 17 modalities or 36,17% of the overall data have intrinsic interpretation as there are: 1) obligation: 17 data or 25,53%, 2) Permission 4 data or 8,51%, and 3) Volition: 1 datum or 2,13%. From the data findings above, it can be shown that the dominant modality found in the educational article based on intrinsic and extrinsic meaning is possibility which belongs to extrinsic meaning, then followed by obligation, prediction, permission, necessity, and the last is volition.

For the level of probability of each modality, it was found that the dominant value of modality is high probability, which reaches 25 high probability or equal to 53,20% of the overall data, then followed by median and low, which each reaches 11 data or equal to 23,40% each.

Discussion

The above description and data analysis have shown that there are some points which can be considered as the important ones to be discussed.

1. The types of modality interpretation found in the text of education are: 1) possibility, 2) Prediction, 3) necessity, 4) obligation, 5) Permission, and 6) Volition. The dominant interpretation of each modality is possibility, which belongs to extrinsic meaning, then followed by obligation, prediction, permission, necessity, and the last is volition. Based on this, it can be stated that the educational article has a high value of possibility.
2. As the value of probability of the text reaches the high level, it can be stated that the article of education has the high level of possibility.

4. Conclusions.

Based on the findings and discussion, some conclusions can be drawn:

1. Educational article has a high level of probability and obligation, it means that education is true, real, and a duty for everybody.
2. Modality in educational article has dominant extrinsic meaning, it means that educational text should be written scientifically and clearly to the points.

Suggestions

Based on the findings, some suggestions are proposed as follows:

1. It is suggested to the English teachers who teach reading comprehension to give the students the knowledge of systemic functional linguistics in order to increase students' competence in English, especially in grammar analysis. This can help the students to comprehend the text easier, especially scientific texts.
2. It is suggested to other researchers to use the theory of systemic functional linguistics to analyze other genres of texts related to the modality and probability in order to make a comparison with this study.

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