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**LARBI BEN M'HIDI UNIVERSITY– OUM EL BOUAGHI  
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***TRANSFER OF MODAL STRUCTURE  
FROM STANDARD ARABIC TO ENGLISH  
Case Study: Second Year Student, Department of English,  
University of Annaba***

***Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements  
For the Magister Degree in Linguistic Science and  
English Language Teaching***

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## **DEDICATION**

*First of all I dedicate this modest research to my dearest father and my affectionate mother who provided me with great moral and material support during my studies and mainly during the fulfilment of my success.*

*To the treasure and the sun of my existence: my sister Sihem.*

*To the rare pearls of my life: my brothers Adnène and Wassim.*

*To my darling friends: Naila, Amira, Amina, Nadia.*

*My thanks to all my relatives. To all the persons who stood by me in sorrows and joys.*

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this work is to examine the extent to which Algerian students rely on their first language modal verb knowledge on acquiring an understanding of modal verb usage in English. This work is also devoted to find out the most appropriate teaching method for this situation.

The stated hypothesis was evaluated through a test as well as a questionnaire administered to students, and the results show that transfer of the Standard Arabic language would affect the correct use of modal verbs like it may also be at origin of errors which are of the following types:

- Agreement between the verb and subject in the modal structure,
- Use of a particle after a modal verb,
- Co occurrence of a modal verb and a noun.

The results of the test also showed the tendency of students to use transfer from Arabic to English when facing difficulties using English modal verbs. Furthermore, other languages, namely Algerian Arabic, Berber, and French, may have the same effect as the Standard Arabic language on the use of modal verbs by these students. As the questionnaire distributed to grammar teachers; results showed that the most appropriate method of teaching modal verbs is the eclectic method.

Based on the findings suggested in the interpretation of the results, a model lesson and some modal verbs have been provided to teachers, hoping to be able to help them better understand, predict and anticipate the use of modal verbs students, and how the latter can overcome the problems they have with this grammatical category.

## *Lists of Abbreviations and Symbols*

<b>Alg. Ar.</b>	Algerian Arabic
<b>Ber.</b>	Berber
<b>C=</b>	Outspread $1 + 3.32 \text{ Log (N)}$
<b>CA</b>	Contrastive Analysis
<b>CAH</b>	Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis
<b>CLT</b>	Communicative Language Teaching
<b>EA</b>	Error Analysis
<b>E.g.</b>	Example
<b>ELL</b>	English Language Learning
<b>FL</b>	Foreign Language
<b>Fr.</b>	French
<b>ICA</b>	Immediate Constituent Analysis
<b>L1</b>	First Language
<b>L2</b>	Second Language
<b>MT</b>	Mother Tongue
<b>N</b>	Number of Teachers (Questionnaire)/ Number of Students (Test)
<b>N°</b>	Question Number (Questionnaire)/ Sentence Number (Chapter Four)
<b>NL</b>	Native Language
<b>SL</b>	Second Language
<b>SLA</b>	Second Language Acquisition
<b>St. Ar.</b>	Standard Arabic
<b>TL</b>	Target Language
<b>Vs.</b>	Versus

$$X = \frac{\sum fxi}{\sum fi} \quad xi = \frac{a + b}{2} \text{ for a class } [a, b[$$

$\Sigma$  Sum  
 $\%$  Percentage

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# *INTRODUCTION*

## *Outline*

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## **I. Statement of the Problem**

English and Arabic belong to two different language families. While Arabic is a member of Semitic language family, English belongs to the Indo-European language family. Arab students of English as a foreign language may encounter difficulties in learning English in general.

The learners' first language influences the acquisition of the foreign language, since they tend to use it as a source of knowledge or even a reference which often results of what is called transfer errors. This means that first language background may affect a learner choice, for instance, of the use of an appropriate modal structure in the foreign language.

English modals constitute a learning difficulty: we can find modals in English that have equivalents in Arabic and others that do not. There are structures that are equivalent in both languages and others that are not. Consequently, the choice of the appropriate modal to express the intended meaning remains problematic for Algerian learners.

## **II. Aims of the Study**

The study presents an illustration and classification of selected English and Arabic modals. It aims at identifying errors due to the influence of Standard Arabic as far as the usage of English modals is concerned. The purpose of the study, (that will be applied to the Second year students of the Department of English, Faculty of Letters and Languages at the University of Annaba), is to show the appropriate usage of the various English Modals. We believe that students should be aware of the differences which exist between Standard Arabic and English. In addition to that, modal usage is an area within the structure of English which is more subject to indeterminacy than other structures. One of the major difficulties about them is that they do not submit themselves to any consistent regularity. Hence, the learners are unable to handle adequately this part of speech.

Since modals are difficult to learn, we should highlight the importance of practice and frequency of exposure to the foreign language as significant factors in producing transfer.

### **III. Hypothesis**

The learners under investigation in this study have been using Standard Arabic during all their pre-university studies. Hence, we hypothesize that Standard Arabic affects Algerian learners' usage of the modal structure to English.

### **IV. Assumption**

Since the learners under investigation are Second year students, we assume that they have reached a certain proficiency level that enables them to master the grammatical structure of English.

### **V. Means of Research**

In order to confirm or infirm our hypothesis, a test will be given to second year students. The students will be provided with a number of modals and asked to think about the given situations and create sentences using modals. The sentences will be categorized into four parts: a category in which there is no co-occurrence of modals in the two languages, a category in which there is an agreement in modal structure between the subject and the verb in one language and not in the other one, instances where the verb in one language takes a particle and in the other does not, and cases in which modals co-occur with a given noun in one language as opposed to the other. We will also give a questionnaire to learners, in order to confirm the source of errors.

We will also administer a questionnaire to the teachers, the aim of which is to tap into the teachers' experiences about the appropriate teaching methods that could be used for promoting correct usage of English modals, as well as their point of view on what concerns the use of the first language in a language classroom. Another aim of the teacher's questionnaire is to check whether the

use of list can help learners understand the meaning of some English modals and thus illustrate their meanings.

## **VI. Structure of the Study**

Our dissertation is divided into five chapters. Chapter one is devoted to language transfer and error analysis. Different perspectives on the notion of transfer are investigated by highlighting certain point of interest to our present study such as the types of transfer, and the types of errors. We have also referred to the different factors influencing language transfer.

Chapter two is devoted to grammar teaching. We have started by defining grammar and distinguishing between scientific and pedagogical grammar. Then, we have discussed the different grammar schools and tried to shed some light on the controversy between explicit and implicit grammar instruction. Reference is also made to the use of the first language in a foreign language classroom.

Chapter three provides an overview of modal usage in both English and Standard Arabic, with special emphasis on the semantic properties of modals in both languages.

In chapter four, we have analyzed the students' test as well as the students' answers to the questionnaire and we have first given the total percentage of transfer errors. Then, we have set out to analyze the amount of transfer errors from Standard Arabic in the four categories that constitute the test.

Furthermore, this chapter is also devoted to the analysis of the teachers' questionnaire that aims to know the extent to which Standard Arabic would affect the learners' modal usage in English and hence find a teaching method that could be suitable for such a situation.

The dissertation concluded by offering some pedagogical implications and insights in teaching English modals to Algerian learners. A modal lesson built around three stages was provided in line with some recommendations supported by grammar teachers' response to questionnaire.

**Chapter One**  
**Language Transfer Theory**

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## **Introduction**

In this chapter, I will clarify the notion of language transfer by making a distinction between first, transfer and interference, second, transfer and interlanguage, and third, transfer and cross-linguistic influence. I will also distinguish between the different types of transfer, as well as the different types of errors, followed by a discussion of the variables that operate when two languages come into contact. The variables are categorized as learner-based or language-based, and each is discussed in the context of second language acquisition.

### **1. Language Transfer Research**

Many linguists stress the importance of language transfer in second language acquisition. However, the term transfer remains problematic since different interpretations and definitions are used to refer to this phenomenon. In this section different terms will be presented along with different critics and different types of transfer.

#### **1.1 Definition of Language Transfer**

Transfer is derived from the Latin word ‘Transfere’, meaning ‘to carry’, ‘to bear’ or ‘to print or to impress’ from one set to an other (Webster’s Third New World International Dictionary, 1986).

Transfer can also mean ‘to carry-over or generalization of learned responses from one type of situation to another’ (Webster’s Third New World International Dictionary, 1986), meaning that the learners carry-over or generalize in their knowledge about their native language to help them use a

target language. Here transfer does not indicate whether what is carried over is good or bad. It shows that transfer is a neutral word in origin and nature.

First, a distinction was made between transfer and interference. Weinreich (1953) used the term 'interference' for "instances of language deviation from the norms of either language which occur in the speech of bilinguals as a result of their familiarity with more than one language" (p.1). His definition considers native language influence an impediment to the acquisition and the production of correct target language forms since it focuses exclusively on negative transfer. However, the native language can also have a facilitative effect in language learning. Di Pietro (1971) draws a distinction between transfer and interference. He states that transfer is prior to interference, and that interference can only occur subsequent to transfer. He suggests that the process of interpreting the particular grammar of one language in terms of another is called transfer; and the mistakes that result from this process are said to be due to interference.

Also, a distinction was made between transfer and interlanguage. As defined in the Rondon House Dictionary of the English Language (1987), interlanguage is

*"the linguistic system characterizing the output of a non-native speaker at any stage prior to full acquisition of the target language, and language transfer is the application of native language rules in attempted performance in a second language, in some cases resulting in deviations from target language norms and in other cases facilitating second language acquisition"*.

According to the Interlanguage hypothesis (Selinker 1972), language transfer is the central element in the process of creating the interlanguage, because learners need to make use of available resources which often come from their native language.

Sharwood Smith and Kellerman (1986) tried to draw a distinction between transfer and cross-linguistic influence. They prefer to limit transfer to “those processes that lead to the incorporation of elements from one language to another” (p.1), whereas ‘cross-linguistic influence’ refers to language contact effects including interference, avoidance and L2 →L1 transfer.

Yet, Odlin’s (1989) definition is often cited because it is broad enough to encompass many different view points:

*“ transfer is the influence resulting from similarities and difference between the target language and any other language that has been previously (and perhaps) imperfectly acquired.”*  
(p.27)

Within this definition Odlin includes both positive and negative transfer.

## **1.2 Types of Language Transfer**

To present the different effects transfer can have, I will follow Ellis (1994) definition of language transfer:

*“ transfer is to be seen as a general cover term for a number of different kinds of influence from languages other than the L2. The study of transfer involves the study of errors (negative transfer), facilitation (positive transfer), and avoidance of target language forms and their over-use.”* (p.341)

### **1.2.1 Negative Transfer (Intrusion)**

In the field of second language acquisition, negative transfer is understood as the systematic influence of the native language on the learner’s attempts to use (receive or produce) the target language. This most frequently

takes the form of 'native language intrusions' (James, 1994) that can manifest themselves in the areas of syntax, grammar, lexis and phonology.

Dechert (1983) suggests that the further apart L1 structures, the higher the instances of errors made in L2 which bear traces of L1 structure. More learning difficulties can be expected at those points in the L2 which are more distant from L1, as the learner would find it difficult to learn and understand a completely new and different usage. As a consequence, learners would resort to L1 structure for help. So, negative transfer occurs where there is some sort of difference between L1 and L2. In this case, acquisition of the L2 will be difficult and hence take more time.

### **1.2.2 Positive Transfer**

Corder (1974) suggests that when the L1 is similar to the L2 this may facilitate the developmental process of learning the L2 by helping the learner to progress more rapidly along the universal route. In this case, facilitation is not seen "in the total absence of certain errors [but also] in a reduced number of errors in the rate of learning." (Ellis, 1994: 303)

Cross-linguistic similarities can produce transfer in several ways. This entails that not all effects of language transfer are negative. Indeed, when languages are related to each other, this may have positive effects.

According to Odlin (1989) not only "similarities in syntactic structures can facilitate the acquisition of grammar" and "similarities between native language and target language vocabulary can reduce the time needed to develop good reading comprehension", but also "similarities between writing systems can give learners head start in reading and writing in the target language" (p.36). As a result, similarities between L1 and L2 play a positive role in learning L2.

Hammerly (1991) emphasizes the fact that native language and target language closeness produce positive transfer. Thus:

*“The main effect of NL-SL closeness is to aid comprehension through the presence of many cognate words and similar structures. Even when a target language is taught inductively, this closeness facilitates learning and therefore production. The result is that a typologically close language can come to be understood much faster than a typologically distant language.”*  
(p.69)

### **1.2.3 Avoidance**

According to Faerch and Kasper (1986), avoidance is a cognitive strategy employing a choice (conscious or unconscious) on the part of the L2 learner to simply avoid certain structures, which are very different from his mother tongue. In other words, learners who had experiences of failure or difficulty over some L2 structures will not commit errors, but will avoid the structure in question.

As for the Japanese and Chinese students, Schachter (1974) attributes their limited use of relative structures to avoidance strategy. This occurs when a learner, confronted by a form of the L2 that is unfamiliar or difficult, will simply avoid using the structure. Sometimes, this is very difficult to identify since relatively proficient students will be able to bypass using, for instance, a certain difficult structure by using another similarly appropriate structure.

Kellerman distinguishes three types of avoidance:

- 1- The learner can anticipate that there is a problem, and has some idea of what the correct form is ;
- 2- The learner knows the target form well, but believes that it would be too difficult to use in the circumstances he finds himself ;
- 3- The learner knows how to use the target form, but will not do so because it breaks a personal rule of behaviour.

However, Kleinmann's (1977) study suggests that students are more likely to avoid structures that a contrastive analysis would predict to be difficult.

#### **1.2.4 Over-use**

Odlin (1989) states that: "in an effort to avoid relative clauses, Japanese students may violate norms of written prose in English by writing too many simple sentences." (p.37)

Over-use behaviour is a strategy used by L2 learners to overproduce certain L2 forms they know rather than trying the ones they are not sure of. Thus, over-use is sometimes simply a consequence of avoidance.

Olshtain (1983) found that the over-use of apologies appear to be more frequent in American English rather than Hebrew. As a result, English speakers learning Hebrew are more likely to use apologies than are native speakers.

## **2. Language Transfer Perspectives**

Many researchers questioned the importance of native language effect on second language acquisition. Language transfer is seen differently among researchers ; debates arouse as whether to see language transfer as a strategy that learners use when finding difficulties in L2 (Varadi, 1973; Corder, 1983 ; Krashen, 1983), or as a constraint on the nature of hypotheses language learners make about the L2 (Schachter, 1983), or as a second language acquisition process (Selinker, 1972; Gass, 1983).

### **2.1 Transfer as a strategy**

Earlier attempts on transfer as a strategy were documented in Varadi (1973) who showed that learners transferred native language strategies to adjust messages in the target language. Besides, Faerch and Kasper (1986) discussed how the Danish students relied on their native language for accomplishing an utterance. When encountering a new word in speech, the Danish learner of

English would use a Danish word in that sentence or use Danish to express the meaning of a new word. Corder (1967) argues that adequate exposure and motivation are sufficient for second language acquisition to take place, and any errors are merely the result of the learners' hypothesis in testing a common strategy of both first and second language learners. Krashen (1983) states that the "use of an L1 rule...is not 'real' progress. It may be merely a production strategy that cannot help acquisition" (p.148). He argues that the L2 learners draw on their L1 simply as a production strategy of a 'pseudo-acquisition nature' in order to fill a gap before L2 acquisition has taken place. However, Corder (1983) claims that native language influence would "actually inhibit, prevent or make more difficult the acquisition of some features of the target language" (p.87). Both Krashen and Corder limit their analysis to negative transfer. Correlates and Call (1989) further evidenced that learners would rely on the use of transfer as a strategy to convey lexical meaning when they were at loss of what they wanted to say.

## **2.2 Transfer as a constraint**

Schachter (1983) does not hold as strong a position as Corder and Krashen, claiming that second language acquisition is driven by interference and hypothesis testing which can be either facilitated or limited by native language parameters. In other words, she limits native language influence to a constraining role during second language acquisition. As a result, language transfer is seen as a constraint on the nature of hypotheses language learners are inclined to make about the L2. Schachter argues that L1→L2 transfer is not a process in and of itself.

### **2.3 Transfer as a process**

Although holding different views on the role of the native language during L2 acquisition, Corder, Krashen and Schachter share the belief that native language influence is not a process that drives SLA. However, many researchers view language transfer as a fundamental SLA process despite their different perspectives on how it occurs. Selinker (1972) considers language transfer to be one of the five processes central to learning, the other four processes being the transfer of training, strategies of second language learning, strategies of second language communication and overgeneralization. Gass (1983, 1984) also considers language transfer, which she defines as the superposition of native language pattern (both form and function) onto L2 patterns, to be a necessary second language learning process. Both Selinker and Gass offer empirical suggestions for identifying and measuring native language effect. Selinker (1983) cautions that the existence of transfer cannot be established unless frequency analysis reveals that a “statistically significant trend in the speaker’s native language appears...and is then paralleled by a significant trend toward the same alternative in the speaker’s interlanguage behaviour” (p.50). He adds another criterion to Selinker’s criterion of statistical significance : before attributing a given interlanguage feature to native language influence, the researcher must conduct a comparison study between native speakers of a language that employ such particular feature and native speakers of other languages that do not. As a result, evidence of significance and control of the L1 background are needed in order to strengthen the validity of any language transfer claim. These suggestions indicate that the presence of language transfer is an essential SLA process.

### **3. Variables Affecting Language Transfer**

The complexity of language transfer indicates that many factors are involved and interact when languages come into contact. In other words, many variables converge to cause language transfer. The variables are categorized as learner-based or language-based. Language-based variables are based on the structure of the languages in contact, whereas learner-based variables are subject to change and modification.

#### **3.1 Language-based variables**

##### **3.1.1 Frequency**

The frequency with which a particular linguistic item or feature appears in the L1 is more likely to be transferred to the L2 (Larsen-Freeman, 1976). From the perspective of learner perception, an infrequent item will be considered “psychologically marked” and therefore less transferable (Kellerman, 1983). From a language processing perspective, highly frequent L1 lexical items are likely candidates for unintentional lexical transfer due to their high activation levels during the early stages of L2 learning (Faerch and Kasper, 1986; Poulisse and Bongaert, 1994). In fact, Poulisse and Bongaert claim based on their empirical evidence from native Dutch speaker’s L2 English productions, that the frequency effect of L1 items can override language activation and is inversely proportional to proficiency and amount of L2 exposure.

##### **3.1.2 Word Class**

The process of lexical transfer distinguishes between content and function words. This variable appears to be closely related to the factor of control and attention. Faerch and Kasper (1986) distinguish between the transfer of content word as a conscious strategy to fill a gap, often preceded by pause, and the unintentional transfer of higher frequent L1 lexical item, usually a function word. Ringbom (1986, 2001) argues that lexical transfer during L2 acquisition tends to involve short, complete, non adapted L1 words and is often

unintentional and involves function words. Thus, Poulisse and Bongaert (1994) focus particularly on context versus function words. Their results show that the L1 function words are hardly even morphologically or phonologically adapted to the L2. They attribute this phenomenon to the frequency effect and to the relationship between proficiency and attention: when a learner has low L2 proficiency, he allocates most of his conscious attention to meaning and focuses on content words whose short length requires less effort to encode and articulate.

### **3.1.3 Language typology**

Language typology is seen as the amount of linguistic distance between two languages. It appears to be the most important variable in determining language transfer. The evolution of language transfer study can be seen as an evolution in the perspectives on the role of language typology. Thus, early studies of language contact emphasize the importance of typological closeness and congruent structures between L1 and L2 (Weinreich, 1953), and later approaches identifying a facilitative role for both typological classes (Anderson, 1983; Gass, 1983) and in the case of conceptual transfer and typological distance (Kellerman, 1995). Empirical studies on language transfer among learners of different L1 backgrounds have shown that language typology overrides other important variables such as proficiency (Debot, 1992; Poulisse, 1990) and the amount of L2 exposure (Jarvis, 2000).

## **3.2 Learner-based variables**

### **3.2.1 Context**

In second language acquisition research, the role of context is usually operationalized through the level of formality and task. The level of formality can also act as a constraint on the amount of language transfer, since the speaker will tend to apply a higher level of control and attention during language

production in a formal setting (Dewaele, 1998, 2001; Grosjean, 2001). As far as task-related production is concerned, Kellerman (1995) cites a study of Poullisse (1990) that shows a higher amount of language transfer in an interview task than in a story. Telling task, which Kellerman attributes to the higher attentional requirements of a free-form interview format, which leaves fewer attentional resources available for monitoring linguistic production. The structural and lexical constraints of the story-telling task, on the other hand, allow the speaker to focus more on linguistic production, particularly at a higher level of proficiency. In fact, there is evidence suggesting that the importance of transfer in any situation varies largely according to the social context.

### **3.2.2 Proficiency**

Proficiency is one of the most important factors determining language transfer. Many linguists consent about the fact that language transfer at lower levels of proficiency (Odlin, 1989; Poullisse and Bongaert, 1994). Learners often use their L1 to fill a lexical or syntactic gap when lacking the linguistic means of expression in L2 (Ringbom, 1986; Fuller, 1999). According to Jarvis (2000), the relationship between L2 proficiency and transfer is complex. He emphasizes that the L1 influences the L2 proficiency as the learner acquires more L2 tools that can express his L1 perspectives. However, Odlin (1989) points out that the correlation between low L2 proficiency and transfer applies primarily to negative transfer, whereas certain types of transfer, such as cognate vocabulary use, occur even at higher levels of proficiency. Regardless of the direction of the correlation, it is clear that proficiency has a strong effect on language transfer.

### **3.2.3 Age**

The relation between language transfer and the age of learners lead to conflicting views among researchers. A number of studies indicate that children are more likely to achieve native like pronunciation (e.g., Asher and Gracia, 1969). However, others indicate that adult learners are likely to have as good or better pronunciation than children (e.g., Olson and Samuels, 1973; Snow and Hoefnagel-Höhle, 1977; Neufeld, 1978). In a study of the acquisition of Thai by native speakers of English, Ioup and Tansomboon (1987) found that younger learners were better able to control pitch contrast in Thai. On the other hand, adults showed a greater ability to master some segmental contrast. Selinker and Lakshmanan (1993) argue that second acquisition by children is driven by universal Grammar and target language input, following a similar process to first language acquisition, and that native language influence cannot be considered a significant factor. As a result, the “younger is better” principle (Taylor, 1975; Odlin, 1989) must be approached carefully, taking into account other possible variables.

### **3.2.4 Amount of target language exposure and use**

It refers to the length of residence in an area in which the target language is spoken (Purcell and Suter, 1980), in the case of foreign language learners the amount of L2 instruction. This variable interacts significantly with age and proficiency. According to Odlin (1989), the amount of exposure has a strong effect on both positive and negative transfer, and is one of the reasons why “the younger is better principle” is not reliable. Jarvis (2000) stresses the importance of teasing out the variables of age and L2 exposure, although the results of his study of Finnish and Swedish L2 English learners indicate that the effect of age versus L2 exposure varies according to the task, and that both have less effect on

language transfer than L1 background. In other words, transfer is likely to occur mainly where L2 is learned in an L1 environment, although most studies show a limited role of language transfer on the L2 learning in a L2 environment, where L2 is varied and abundant.

#### **4. Approaches to Language Transfer Study**

##### **4.1 Language learning analysis**

###### **4.1.1 Contrastive versus Error Analysis**

There are at least two approaches to the analysis of learner's difficulty in acquiring a second language, i.e. contrastive analysis (CA) and error analysis (EA). CA is a comparative and contrastive description of the learner's mother tongue and the target language (James, 1980). In other words, it is a juxtaposition of the structures of the mother tongue against those of the target language. There was a strong belief that a more effective pedagogy would result when these were taken into consideration. Charle Fries (1945) states:

*“ The most efficient materials are those based upon a scientific description of the language to be learned, carefully compared with a parallel description of the native language of the learner ”*  
(p.8)

Lado (1957) also expressed the importance of CA in language teaching material design, i.e., teaching may become more effective through a consideration of differences between languages and between cultures:

*“Individuals tend to transfer the forms and the meanings and the distribution of forms and meanings of their native language and culture to the foreign language and culture – both productively when attempting to speak the language and to act in the culture and respectively when attempting to grasp and understand the language and the culture as practised by natives. ”* (p.2)

Furthermore, Lado went on to adopt a more controversial position when he claimed that “those elements that are similar to his native language will be simple for him, and those elements that are different will be difficult” (Ibid.: 2). This conviction that linguistic differences could be used to predict learning difficulty produced the notion of contrastive analysis hypothesis:

*“where two languages were similar, positive transfer would occur; where they were different, negative transfer, or interference, would result.”* (Larsen-Freeman and Long, 1991:53)

Wardhaugh (1970) further proposed a distinction between the strong and the weak version of CA. The strong version predicts a priori whereas the weak version deals with learner errors and uses CA, when applicable, to explain them, a posteriori; that is, after the fact.

Further questioning the worth of CA came from the classification of learner’s errors in studies that became known as error analysis (Du\*ková, 1969; Richards, 1971). EA is a type of linguistic analysis that refers to the identification, classification and interpretation of errors made by L2 learners. Corder (1974) states:

*“The study of error is part of the investigation of the process of language learning. In this respect it resembles methodologically the study of the acquisition of the mother tongue. It provides us with a picture of the linguistic development of a learner and may give us indications as to the learning process”* (p.125)

Therefore the investigation of errors can be at the same time diagnostic and prognostic. It is diagnostic because it can provide information about the learner’s state of language (Corder, 1967) at a given point during the learning process, and it is prognostic because it can tell course organizers to reorient language materials on the basis of the learners’ current problems.

Candlin, in the preface of Richards (1974), confirms the existence of both CA and EA as complementary disciplines saying that EA as complementary

disciplines saying that EA “serves as an important source of corroboration to contrastive linguistic analyses in their claims for predictability of error”. This means that CA should be used as a part of the explanatory stage in EA, i.e. CA should be used to explain difficulties which have already been observed rather than to predict such difficulties as Norrish (1983) puts it:

*“although this strong predictive claim for CA can hardly be sustained any longer, it is certainly true to say that this analysis has a useful explanatory role. That is, it can still be said to explain certain errors and mistakes.”* (p.53)

In fact each approach (CA and EA) has its vital role to play in accounting for L2 learning problems. They should be viewed as complementing each other rather than competitors.

#### **4.1.2 The role of language transfer**

The psychological basis of CA is transfer theory, elaborated within the behaviourist theory of psychology which described the acquisition of language in terms of habit formation. According to Skinner (1957), people learn by responding to external stimuli and receiving proper reinforcement. Therefore, errors were seen as an unwanted deviation from the norm and an imperfect product of perfect input. Challenging Skinner’s model of behaviourist learning, Chomsky (1959) proposed a more cognitive approach to language learning which involved the use of a LAD (Language Acquisition Device) in the brain. He refuted the idea of language as a habit, discarded this behaviourist view on language acquisition, in which the central role of transfer in L2 acquisition theories was replaced by the view that L2 learners followed similar developmental paths, placing little, if any, importance on the influence of the L1. This led to two ways of accounting for the role of the first language in second language acquisition.

The first way of dealing with transfer is what Ellis (1994 :309) calls the “minimalist approach” which sought to minimize the importance of the L1 and to emphasize the contribution of universal process of language learning, such as hypothesis testing, stressing, in this way, the similarity between L2 and L1 acquisition. Advocates of this approach are Dulay and Burt (1974) in their study on morpheme order. They found similar accuracy order of English grammatical morphemes for both Spanish and Chinese child L2 learners of English. Many of the errors previously attributed to L1, for instance, are now accounted differently, by ‘developmental’ factors giving rise to what Richards (1974) calls ‘intralingual’ and ‘developmental errors’. In other words, these errors do not reflect features of the mother tongue but result from the learning process itself. Richards states:

*“rather than reflecting the learner’s inability to separate two languages, Intralingual and developmental errors reflect the learner’s competence at a particular stage, and illustrate some of the general characteristics of language acquisition. Their origins are found within the structure of English itself.” (Ibid. :181)*

Richards identified common errors and categorized them into four types, as caused by “overgeneralization, ignorance of rule restrictions, incomplete application of rules, and the building of false systems or concepts.” (Ibid. :181)

In the second way, researchers treated transfer as one of the several processes involved in SLA, moving from a product-oriented to a process-oriented approach to account for L1 influence. They, further, emphasized the frequency of occurrence of language transfer errors in their research and argue that the learner’s L1 is one of the major determinants of their ‘interlanguage’ (Selinker, 1972). Within this view, language transfer has gained momentum as an area of research. Compared to Dulay and Burt’s (1974) low proportion of 3% of errors ascribed to transfer from the L1, Grauberg (1971) and many others found that a

large percentage of deviant sentences of learners are attributable to this cause, as shown in the following table :

<i>Study</i>	<i>Percentage of Interference Errors</i>	<i>Type of The Learner</i>
<i>Grauberg (1971)</i>	36%	<i>First language : German - adult, advanced</i>
<i>George (1972)</i>	33% (approx.)	<i>Mixed first languages - adult, graduate</i>
<i>Than-Chi-Chan (1974)</i>	51%	<i>First language : Chinese - adult, mixed level</i>
<i>Mukattash (1977)</i>	23%	<i>First language : Arabic - adult</i>
<i>Flick (1980)</i>	31%	<i>First language : Spanish - adult, mixed level</i>
<i>Lott (1983)</i>	50% (approx.)	<i>First language : Italian - adult, university</i>

***Table 01: Percentage of Interference Errors Reported by various Studies of L2 English Grammar (in Ellis, 1985: 29)***

On the other hand, Zobl (1980) views transfer and developmental influences not as opposing processes, but rather as interacting ones. He argues in favour of the effect of an interlanguage rule (cited by Gass, 1984:118); in other terms if there is a natural developmental stage which corresponds to a pattern in a learner's native language, the learner will use that pattern longer than if it were not in the native language.

#### **4.2 Types of errors**

The behaviourist viewpoint of language learning views the notion of interlanguage errors as a purely negative phenomenon. Therefore, errors were considered to be a wrong response to the stimulus, i.e. something undesirable to be avoided. On the other hand, some hypotheses argue that errors should not be viewed as problems to be overcome, but rather as normal and inevitable features indicating the strategies that learners use. They conjectured that if a regular pattern of errors could be observed in performance of all learners in a given

situation and if a learner were seen to progress through this pattern, his errors could be taken as evidence not of failure but of success and achievement in learning.

Hence, language researchers distinguish between three types of errors: systematic, non-systematic and asystematic errors. The difference between systematic and non-systematic errors was first suggested by Corder (1971), whereas asystematic errors were introduced by Jain (1974).

#### 4.2.1 Systematic errors

Systematic errors, produced by the learner, provide for his active interaction with the new language and his developing new hypotheses about the structure of the language he is learning. Selinker (1992) pointed out the two highly significant contributions that Corder (1971) made :

*“ that the errors of a learner, whether adult or child, are not random, but are in fact systematic, and are not ‘negative’ or ‘interfering’ in any way with learning a TL but are on the contrary, a necessary positive factor, indicative of testing hypotheses” (p.151)*

In this respect, Jain (1974) makes the following analogy:

*“[they] fall into definable patterns : they show a consistent system, are internally principled and free from arbitrariness (...). These systematic errors may be looked upon as rule-governed for they follow the rules of whatever grammar the learner has” (p.202 -203)*

Therefore, there is a system in learner’s error in spite of their apparent arbitrariness (Richards, 1974). Hence, systematic errors reveal the learner’s transitional competence “which emphasizes that the learner possesses a certain body of knowledge which, we hope, is constantly developing”. (Corder, 1981 : 67)

#### 4.2.2 Non-systematic errors

Corder (1981) defines those errors as follows:

*“ we are all aware that in our native language we are continually committing errors of one sort or another. These (...) are due to memory lapses, physical state such as tiredness and psychological conditions such as strong emotions. These are adventitious artefacts of linguistic performance and do not reflect a defect in our knowledge of our language. We are immediately aware of them when they occur. It would be quite unreasonable to expect the learner of a second language not to exhibit such slips of the tongue (or pen), since he is subject to similar external and internal conditions when performing in his first or second language ” (Ibid.: 10)*

Non-systematic errors are seen as frequently occurring in the speech of both native speakers and L2 learners. Corder makes a distinction between systematic errors, i.e. errors of competence, and non-systematic errors, i.e. errors of performance. He refers to the former as ‘error’ and the latter ‘mistake’. Errors are typically produced by people who do not yet fully command some institutionalised language system, whereas mistakes are failures to utilise a known system correctly.

#### 5.2.3 Asystematic errors

Asystematic errors are errors of indeterminacy in the learner’s interlanguage. This is the terms used by Jain (1974) to refer to an inconsistency or uncertainty from the part of the learner in handling a linguistic item. Jain (Ibid.: 205) states that :

*“Certain areas within the structure of English are more facilitative of indeterminacy than others; three such typical areas are articles, prepositions and the tense system ”.*

Therefore, asystematic errors occur when a learner has arrived at no firm generalisation with a status of rule about a given category of the second

language. Below is an example given by him to show asystematic errors with respect to article use :

I started from hostel to go to see amovie. When we were still waiting at bus stop ...I could only get some space to keep my one leg on foot-board... I had to request conductor... At last bus moved. Thus bus stopped at a bus stop with a jerk. All the time I was trying to balance myself the foot-board. I was more worried about movie. (Ibid. : 213)

The underlined words show that the articles have been used asystematically.

### **Conclusion**

This chapter shows that there is a considerable evidence to support the role of language transfer in the process of second language acquisition, even if many researchers downplayed the role of NL influence. Studies indicate that, in certain situations and under certain conditions, the influence of L1 can be clearly demonstrated. In this respect, different variables interact in complex ways, sometimes overriding each other, sometimes converging to cause the incorporation of a non-target item during L2 production. Therefore, there would seem to be a need for further investigation to determine precisely the role of transfer in the acquisition of L2.

## Chapter Two

### Grammar Teaching

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## **Introduction**

The study of grammar goes back to the time of ancient Greeks, Romans and Indians, and, from its earliest days, has caught the interest of the learned and the wise. As a result the subject has developed around itself a hallowed, scholarly, and somewhat mysterious atmosphere. In the popular mind, grammar has become difficult and distant, removed from real life, and practiced chiefly by a race of shadowy people ('grammarians'). It is problematic, because the fundamental point about grammar is so very important and so very simple.

This chapter shed lights the issue of grammar instruction by exposing some researcher's point of view on this controversial question.

### **1. Definition of grammar**

Grammar is a field that has aroused a great deal of controversy in recent years, i.e. it can be understood in a number of ways. It is a wide ranging concept which has been used for a whole series of specific descriptions. The Collins Concise Dictionary (1982) describes it as :

- *The Branch of linguistics that deals with syntax and morphology, as well as semantics and phonology*
- *The abstract system of rules in terms of which a person's mastery of his mother language can be explained*
- *The systematic description of the grammatical facts of a language.*

This definition identifies three uses of the word in three different contexts. The first describes the function of grammar in the discipline of linguistics, defining it as a set of tools for analysing certain identified structures within the discipline, and sees it as a combination of morphology (which deals with the external grammatical structure of words) and syntax (which deals with the distribution of words), which together "make up the system of language" (Alexander, 1990:

379). The second is also a linguistic definition, describing grammar as a structure itself capable of being analysed by other tools. The third definition is everyday description: grammar describes language and is integrated to it.

On the other hand, grammar can be seen as a science of describing how language is used. As Lieth (1997) puts it : “grammar for linguists is the level of their analysis of linguistic structure which concerns the organization of words into sentences” (p.91).

Patrick Hartwell (1987) categorizes grammar into five definitions summarized as follows:

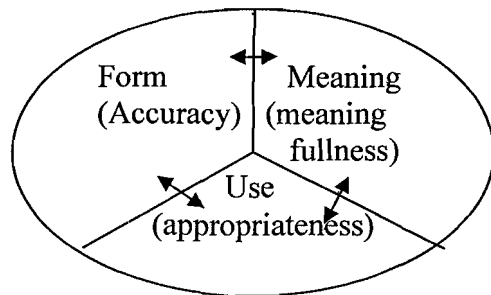
- *The set of formal patterns in which the words of a language are arranged in order to convey a larger meaning*
- *The branch of linguistic science which is concerned with the description, analysis and formulation of formal language patterns*
- *Linguistic etiquette*
- *School grammar*
- *Grammatical terms in the interest of teaching prose (p.352-353)*

Even these definitions appear too constraining. Although they reveal a range of meanings in grammar, they presuppose that grammar does not have a more global meaning. Janice Neuleib (1995) defines grammar as : “The internalized system that native speakers of a language share” (p.349). This definition allows grammar to take on several forms beyond the linguistic and formal writing process.

Larsen-Freeman (1993), however, emphasizes the interdependence of grammar with other language levels as shown in figure 01, and holds:

*“Grammar embodies the three dimensions of morphosyntax (form), semantics (meaning), and pragmatics (use). These dimensions are interdependent, a change in one results in change in another. Despite their interdependence, however, they each offer a unique perspective on grammar. For instance, to use the English passive voice accurately, meaningfully and*

*appropriately, English as second language students must master all three dimensions. This is true of any grammatical structure” (p.55)*



***Figure 01: The Interdependence of Grammar with Other Language Levels (Larsen-Freeman, 1993:56)***

In addition to that, grammar is important for language teaching as an account of a part of the knowledge the students want to attain. In this respect, Al-Muttawa and Kailani (1989) put in advance the role of grammar in any language teaching and learning situations claiming that “a language cannot be learned without learning its grammar, because it is the element that makes meaning in language use” (p.69)

## **2. Pedagogical versus Scientific Grammar**

Within the field of linguistics and language teaching, a distinction is made between two types of grammar, namely, pedagogical and scientific grammar. According to Saporta (1966) :

*“A scientific grammar enumerates the grammatical sentences of a language and provides each with a structural description and a semantic representation. The pedagogical grammar ideally attempts to develop the speaker’s ability to recognize and produce sentences” (p.82)*

In other words, a scientific grammar is the product of theoretical linguistics which aims at describing and explaining the phenomenon of language. Scientific grammars cover what Chomsky (1987) refers to as ‘Internal-Language approach to grammar’ and an ‘External-Language approach to grammar’. Saporta further adds:

*“A central question in the application of linguistics to the teaching of foreign languages involves the conversion of a scientific grammar into a pedagogical grammar. What form the pedagogical grammar takes (...) is presumably determined by some assumptions about the nature of learning in general”*  
(Ibid. : 81)

So the role of a scientific grammar is to improve the content of a pedagogical grammar by converting its linguistic rules into the most adequate and teachable pedagogical rules. This means that even if a pedagogical grammar derives from a scientific grammar, it is not an exact copy of it. Pedagogical rules are simplified versions of the scientific rules. Zimmerman (1979), quoted by Van Els *et al.*, 1984: 137) “refers to this kind of pedagogical grammar as ‘course dependent’ pedagogical grammar”. He uses this term to refer to a pedagogical grammar which contents are not only determined by scientific grammar, but also by other non-linguistic aspects such as the psychological, pedagogical, didactic and educational ones. This kind of pedagogical grammar contains a reduced set of rules taken from scientific grammar, but it also contains “all material that aims at developing the learner’s production of grammatically accepted sentences” (Matter, 1976: 25, *French Original*<sup>1</sup>)

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<sup>1</sup> : “tout matériel qui vise à développer dans l’élève la production de phrases grammaticalement acceptables”  
(Matter, 1976: 25)

### 3. Grammar School

Lyons (1971) states that:

*“ the history of western linguistics theory (...) is very largely the history of what scholars at different times held to fall within the scope of ‘grammar’ ”* (p.133)

#### 3.1 Traditional Grammar

*“The so-called facts of traditional grammar books were first codified in the eighteenth Century and have been copied from one grammar book to another over a period of about two hundred years”* (Cattell, 1969 : 4)

Traditional grammar was a very difficult and strict theory. Many simplify traditional grammar theories to approaches to sentence structure as well as method in which to discover a better sentence (Sherwin, 1969: 116)

Traditional grammar is a term used to summarize the range of attitudes and methods found in the grammatical study before the advent of linguistic science. The ‘tradition’ in question includes the work of classical Greek and Roman grammarians. Traditional grammar insisted that only certain styles of English were worth studying, i.e. the more formal language used by the best orators and writers. Textual samples selected for analysis or commentary were typically erudite and sophisticated, commonly taken from literary, religious, or scholarly sources. Informal styles of speech were ignored, or condemned as incorrect.

Traditional English grammars also treated their subject in a highly abstruse way, describing grammatical patterns through the use of an analytical apparatus derived from Latin grammars. The technique went under various names (such as parsing, clause analysis, and diagramming) but the end result was the same : students had to master a classification system and terminology which was alien to English, to apply it correctly to a group of sentences which, very often, were

chosen for their difficulty. But there were many grammatical functions which occurred in Latin and not in English which linguists had to make up English equivalents for.

However, traditional grammar tended to give prominence to the written language upon the spoken one resulting in a kind of grammar dealing with inculcating the correct forms of language throughout society. Grammar became, then, a collection of rules and prescriptions upon how people ought to speak.

Despite this negative side attached to traditional grammar, it “provides the teacher with simple rules to teach the language” (Al-Muttawa and Kailani, 1989 : 70) supplying modern linguistics with useful definitions and classifications, and as put by Lyons (1981) :

*“it is easy enough to pick holes in traditional definitions : ‘A noun is the name of any person, place or thing’, ‘A verb is a word which denotes an action’, (...). Nevertheless, most linguists still operate with the terms ‘noun’, ‘verb’, ‘adjective’, etc., and interpret them, explicitly or implicitly, in a fairly traditional way”*  
(p.109)

### **3.2 Structural Grammar**

A structural grammar describes what De Saussure (1913) referred to as ‘langue’ – denoting the system underlying a particular language, and asserts that the one and the only true subject is the language system. Actual speech forms (referred to as ‘parole’) represent instances of language. Yet scholars from Prague School (1926) such as Jakobson and Trubetzkoy who followed a movement known as ‘functionalism’, rejected De Saussure’s distinction between synchronic and diachronic linguistics as well as his reference to the homogeneity of the language system.

During the second quarter of the 20th Century, there emerged a new school of linguistics known as structuralism. Leonard Bloomfield is said to be

the responsible for beginning this movement. He defined this movement in the hopes of designating his field of study as scientific (Liles, 1972:10). Liles continues to explain the reason for the formation of structural grammar.

*“There were a number of reasons which caused the structuralists to become disenchanted with traditional grammar and try to develop a more satisfactory approach. One of the greatest problems they found within the traditional approach was that it was inadequate for describing many languages...The structure of these languages were incompatible with traditional classifications” (p.11)*

Structural grammar is defined broadly as “any grammar in which there is an attempt to describe the structure of the grammatical sentence...” (Cattell, 1969: 154). Structural grammar is often characterized as a procedure known as substitution. In this process word class and also word sentences are expanded in the larger structures (Cattell, 1969: 154-155).

Another linguist responsible for structural grammar is Harris who helped to bring structural grammar to the forefront in the 1940's (Nevin, 2002). He was very interested in the relationship of similar words together.

Structural grammar focused on the function of words and sentences. Not only do they concentrate on the function of words but also on their characteristics. Vitale (1988) states:

*“rather than learning isolated terms in the context of separate rules, structural grammar made learning more fun through various activities such as labelling, categorizing, structured overviews, and classifying. These new activities emphasized how the terms relate to one another” (p.1)*

Structural grammarians are most famous for their descriptive approach to grammar. Descriptive tendencies in grammar can be recognized as a convention correlating the same words in the language with types of situations (Olszewsky, 1969:624). According to them, language is divided into subsystems by means of what Bloomfield (1933) calls Phrase Structure Grammar (PSG) and the

corresponding Immediate Constituent Analysis (ICA). PSG puts structures within structures; and it describes every sentence of the language “as a string (a consequence) of constituents (words)” (Lyons, 1971:209).

As for the application of the structural approach to language teaching, Miliani (2003) holds that:

*“The structuralist approach advocates the oral practice of the illustrative sentences so that the learners become so familiar with the pattern that they can use it automatically (habit-formation practices). Hence the emphasis on accuracy through the use of error-free structures. (...)The learner does as directed. The teacher provides the stimulus, the learner the response. If the latter is correct and rewarded, the learner will learn the taught item” (p.40)*

### **3.3 Transformational (Generative) Grammar**

Since the late 1950's structural grammar has been challenged by transformational grammar (Liles, 1972). Generative grammar had its beginning particularly in the work of Zellig Harris and his student Noam Chomsky. Chomsky (1980) states:

*“Much of the early work in generative grammar was concerned with overcoming the inadequacies of certain theories of phrase structure modelled in part on procedures of constituents' analysis in structural linguistics and in part on formal systems devised for the study of formal languages” (p.144)*

The procedures and results of structural grammar have been absorbed into transformational grammar where they appear in the base component (especially the branching rules) (Cattell, 1969).

Transformational generative grammar is a theoretical grammar designed to explain the process and the rules that generate an infinite number of grammatical sentences. Chomsky (1959) rejected the structural view that a language was a classification of that corpus. Chomsky (1966) says that it seems to him

“...impossible to accept the view that linguistic behaviour is a matter of habit, that is slowly acquired by reinforcement, association and generalisation” (p.43). Describing a language, according to him, is describing what the user possesses, enabling him to produce and understand an infinite number of sentences. Diller (1978) who supports Chomsky’s approach points out:

*“...to know a language is to be able to create new sentences in the language (...). A speaker does not have to store a large number of ready-made sentences in his head; he just needs the rules for creating and understanding these sentences” (p.24-25)*

Chomsky’s ideas on grammar were quite profound, creating a sub-theory within transformational grammar. Cattell (1969) states that Chomsky’s grammar was not only transformational but also generative. That means it consists of a set of rules for generating the sentences of the language” (p.28)

This knowledge or generative capacity of the user of a language is referred to by Chomsky as linguistic competence and is distinguished from linguistic performance. Greene (1972) defines linguistic competence and performance as follows:

*“Competence is taken as referring to language in the sense of what constitutes to speak a language. Performance, on the other hand, refers to the actual utterances made by language users” (p.94)*

Chomsky’s idea of grammar is that it is a device for producing the structure of competence; hence his definition of generative grammar as “a device (or procedure) which assigns structural description to sentences in a perfectly explicit manner” (Chomsky, 1964:995). Chomsky’s transformational grammar is based on the systematic analysis of both the surface structure and the deep structure of sentences by means of transformational rules as well as phrase structure rules. Chomsky (1980) writes that:

*“the fundamental idea is that surface structures are formed through the interaction of at least two distinct types of rules: base rules, which generate abstract phrase structure*

*representations; and transformational rules, which move elements and otherwise rearrange structures to give the surface structures” (p.144)*

An important part of Chomsky’s contribution to transformational grammar is the construction of kernel sentences. “Kernel sentences are basic simple statements or declarative sentences. They contain two essential parts; a noun phrase and a verb phrase, in that order” (Allen, Newsome & Borgh, 1968: 5).

As for the application of the transformational description to any teaching/learning situation, Rosenbaum (1965) argues that:

*“Neither the transformational theory nor the transformational description of the syntax of English contains any implicit pedagogical recommendation. From neither does it follow that a transformational description of English should be taught in the classroom. Neither does it follow that instruction in transformational grammar will improve performance in the literate skills” (p.476)*

### **3.4 Communicative grammar**

The communicative approach appeared in the 1970’s as the product of education and linguists who had grown dissatisfied with the structural method of foreign language instruction which “left the learner short of adequate capacity to communicate” (Miliani, 2003: 36).

Interest in the development of the communicative language teaching was based on the theories of British functional linguists such as Firth and Halliday, as well as American sociolinguists, such as Hymes, Gumperz, and Labov. Bens (1984) writes, in explaining Firth’s view, that:

*“Language is interaction: it is an interpersonal activity and it has a clear relationship with society. In this light, language study has to look at the use (function) of language in context: both its linguistic context (what is uttered before and after a given piece of discourse) and its social or situational context (who is*

*speaking, what their social roles are, why they have come together to speak)” (p.5)*

Firth’s theory of language is similar, in some regards, to Hymes’ theory of communicative competence which, by contrast to Chomsky’s linguistic competence, is seen as a definition of what a speaker needs to know in order to be communicatively competent in a speech community. Canale and Swain (1980, cited by Richards & Rogers, 1986: 71) identify four dimensions of communicative competence:

- Grammatical competence: refers to what Chomsky calls linguistic and what Hymes intends by what is ‘formally possible’.
- Sociolinguistic competence: refers to an understanding of the social context in which communication takes place, including role relationships, the shared information of the participants, and the communicative system of their interaction.
- Discourse competence: refers to the interpretation of individual message elements in terms of their interconnectedness and how meaning is represented in relationship to the entire discourse or text.
- Strategic competence: refers to the strategies that communicators employ to initiate, terminate, maintain, and redirect communication.

Several varieties of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), emphasising the practice of natural language situations, developed. An example of communicative syllabus is Willkin’s (1976) notional-functional syllabus which, according to him,

*“... takes the communication facts of language into account from the beginning without losing sight of grammatical and situational factors. It is potentially superior to the grammatical syllabus*

*because it will produce a communicative competence and because its evident concern with the use of language will sustain the motivation of the learner” (p.19)*

With this approach to language teaching, the role of the learner and teacher were redefined, as put by Miliani (2003):

*“ the learner should be made free from any linguistic, pedagogical or methodological constraint in order to express himself (...). The teacher should not penalise the efforts of the student by spending too much time correcting the errors made by the learner. The emphasis should be on fluency rather than accuracy” (p.37)*

Even if “grammar has not become any easier to learn since the communicative revolution” (Swan, 1990: 87), the merits of the communicative approach cannot be neglected.

#### **4. Approaches to Grammar Instruction**

Debate in SLA is centred on whether or not grammatical instruction is effective for L2 acquisition, i.e. should it be taught explicitly or implicitly? There follows two positions concerning the question: how fluent can a speaker become without explicit knowledge of grammatical rules? There is the non-interface position which argues that implicit knowledge is not influenced by explicit knowledge, and the interface position which argues that the acquisition of implicit knowledge may be influenced by explicit knowledge.

##### **4.1 Implicit Grammar Instruction**

In an implicit grammar instruction, the learner internalises an implicit knowledge which Ellis (1997) defines as “the L2 knowledge of which a learner is unaware and therefore cannot verbalize” (p.139). Implicit grammar instruction, or implicit acquisition of grammatical rules, involves the inductive assimilation by the learner of the rule system. The inductive procedure

encompasses the use of many language samples that are representative of the rules to be learned, and practice with such samples has an important place in this procedure because it allows an automatization and internalization of the language system. In Krashen's Monitor Model of SLA (1978), the internalization of target language rules by adult second language learners is possible in two ways: acquisition and learning<sup>2</sup>.

Reporting Krashen's view on the learning versus acquisition distinction, Sajavaara (1982) observes that:

*“Language acquisition, which involves ‘creative construction’, refers to an unconscious process, unaffected by overt teaching (...), whereas language learning results from explicit presentation and memorization of rules (whether it is deductive or inductive makes no difference). (...) speech performance is always initiated by means of the acquired system, and what has been learned is available as a monitor only which is used to alter, to ‘edit’, the output of the acquired system” (p.146-147)*

Therefore, Krashen seems to argue that the kind of knowledge which learners get when they learn grammatical rules “will be of little use to them in natural communication unless they have time to ‘monitor’ their performance” (Lightbown, 2000: 445-45), that is, the metalinguistic information does not have any direct effect on the learner acquired knowledge. Put differently, in Krashen's view, acquisition and learning are distinct processes involved in L2 development: “acquisition is possible without learning and learning does not necessary lead to acquisition” (Sajaavara, ibid. 147). To affirm this, according to Rivers, “is to ignore the developments in cognitive psychology during the past thirty years which point out the dynamic interactive processes of the brain” (reported by Arnold, 1994: 121). Besides, Krashen considers conscious learning

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<sup>2</sup> Krashen's learning/acquisition dichotomy is similar to the dichotomy proposed by Ausubel (1968) of the rote/meaningful learning, as well as the one proposed by Mellow (2000) between formal-construction activities and functional-growth activities.

“to be limited to learning to control production of easy L2 rules, which still will not guarantee subsequent acquisition of such rules” (Chaudron, 1988: 06).

Furthermore, and according to Rutherford (1987), the implicit approach to grammar teaching stipulates that:

*“the learner be exposed to genuine language that is slightly beyond his present comprehension, that he or she be psychologically and emotionally receptive to his language input, and that a large proportion of learner activity be comprised of classroom exchange identifiable as ‘comprehensive’ and in which the learner has a personal investment”* (p.21)

Here Rutherford refers to Krashen’s ‘input theory’ that distinguishes between L2 input to learners and their actual linguistic intake. This theory stresses the fact that the acquired system can only take place through the learner’s exposure to comprehensible input which, in turn, stresses the fact that “not all target language which second language learners are exposed is understandable: only some of the language they hear makes sense to them” (Allwright & Bailey, 1999: 120). Krashen calls this type of input ‘I+1’, where the ‘I’ represents the learner’s current stage of interlanguage development, and the ‘+1’ designates the massive amount of passive language that is just a little beyond comprehension.

With implicit grammar instruction, learners are simply exposed to multiple examples of the targeted linguistic item but nothing else draws learners’ attention to it. The assumption here is that the sheer frequency of the term may serve to influence intake (Ellis, 1997). Lamendella (1979), for instance, sees that formal instruction may develop an ability in learners to use overtly formulated rules for various classroom practices, but which are not, according to him, easily transferred outside the classroom. He thus emphasises the use of communicative activities that focus on production highlighting fluency with accuracy to follow.

## 4.2 Explicit Grammar Teaching

There are several researchers who reacted against those who deemphasise accuracy holding that comprehensible input alone is not enough for optimal acquisition of the different aspects of grammar and the explicit grammatical instruction is necessary if learners are to have the data they need to acquire grammar. In this respect, Canale and Swain (1980) point out the danger of fossilization of certain grammatical inaccuracies, if grammatical accuracy is not emphasised. Pieneman (1984) holds the same point of view when he says that “giving up the instruction of syntax is to allow for fossilization of interlanguage in simplified form” (p.209). Proponents of this method to foreign language teaching prone mastery of the rule system as an essential component of language proficiency.

Explicit grammatical instruction involves giving learners some kind of explanation about how language works, such as providing learners with pedagogical grammatical rules (Long, 1998), hoping that they will then be able to achieve the internalization which is necessary for efficient and fluent language use. This means that it allows learners to internalize an explicit knowledge which is “the L2 knowledge of which a learner is aware and can verbalize on request” (Ellis, 1997: 139). Learners thus can report explicit knowledge. Yet, there is controversy among researchers on whether explicit teaching should cover complex or simple grammatical rules. For Krashen (1978), explicit learning is limited to a small set of simple rules, and he hedges by saying that we should present rules one at a time in some order when the goal is conscious learning. Dekeyzer (1995) holds the same point of view by pointing out that “explicit deductive learning would be better than implicit inductive learning for straight forward categorical rules” (p.379). However, Hulstijn and Graff (1994) claim that the rules that should be taught explicitly are the complex rules, those with a large scope and high reliability. Grammatical rules can be

taught inductively or deductively. This, according to Mellow (2002), depends on the learner's cognitive level. He states that:

*“some learners may be most comfortable and effective with lessons that start with deductive statement. These learners might especially be adults (or learners who are cognitively mature) who are accustomed to a grammar and drill approach to pedagogy. In contrast, other learners may be comfortable and effective with lessons that start with an inductive statement. These learners might be young children or might be adults of relatively higher proficiency levels who prefer to not focus on grammar” (p.9)*

Nevertheless, learning explicitly formulated rules, as advocated by proponents of the non-interface position, is not sufficient to achieve a command of these rules (Newmark, 1970). For many researchers, classroom experience and research showed that an exclusively explicit/implicit approach to language teaching is not the right one, as expressed by Lazarus and Beutler (1993):

*“reliance upon a single method of teaching that is informed by one relatively narrow set of theoretical principles has been criticized because adherence to the use of a limited number of procedures can become mechanistic and inflexible” (p.383)*

This observation is also made by psychologists such as Rober *et al.* who write that:

*“a blending of the two modes of learning[explicit and implicit]; (...) is still preferable to the use of only one or the other. In fact, this should not be too surprising for this is the way in which knowledge of most complex environments is acquired” (p.501)*

Consequently, researchers such as Ellis and Bialystock developed models of SLA to determine the extent to which SLA and acquisition of implicit knowledge can be assisted by explicit learning (instruction). Ellis (1993) adopted what he calls a ‘weak interface position’, suggesting that instruction draws learners’ attention to language features and permits them to develop

knowledge of those features if they are developmentally ready to do so, i.e. if the learner is ready for the new knowledge, his conscious knowledge will become implicit. On the other hand, Bialystock (1979) highlights the importance of giving students a chance to practice regularly as a factor leading to the automatization and hence the internalization of explicit knowledge. There follows a debate in SLA centred on the role of consciousness in L2 development (whether learners need to be conscious of grammar rules).

Schmidt (1994) argues that consciousness of input at the level of noticing is a necessary condition for L2 development. He points out that there are three different senses of the term 'consciousness' as it is used in SLA theory: levels of perception, noticing, and understanding. Levels of perception could be defined as levels of process of obtaining and perhaps processing information. He defines 'noticing' as rehearsal in short-term – memory, while by 'understanding' he refers to rule understanding, i.e. grasping the meanings of rules and becoming thoroughly familiar with them. Many other researchers support this view. They use terms such as focus on form (Long, 1991) which Lightbown (2000) defines as "concrete feedback which is fully integrated within ongoing communication" (p.445); consciousness-raising activities (Fotos & Ellis, 1991), and input-enhancement (Sharwood-Smith, 1993). In one way or the other, all these terms are about directing learners' attention to grammatical form in order to help them internalize the L2 system, by emphasizing on teaching that should include opportunities for learners to focus on form and consciously notice features of the L2. Besides, a number of studies confirmed the effectiveness of explicit grammar instruction with 'focus on form' to the one without focus. For instance, White (1999) found that learners, who were given explicit information on the way English assigned possessive determiners, performed better than those who had not been taught the rule.

Therefore, to many applied linguists, teaching grammar is not necessarily non-communicative potential, as expressed by Lightbown:

*“(...) second language classrooms should be characterized by a variety of activities, with an emphasis on those which engage students in meaningful interaction, but with an awareness on the part of the teacher that some attention to language form is also necessary” (ibid.:454)*

## **5. The use of the First Language in a Foreign Language Classroom**

Arguments were raised for and against the use of the L1 in foreign language teaching. Advocates of the direct method, which “avoids establishing in the students’ mind a network of equivalents between L1 and L2 advocated by the indirect method” (Miliani, 2003: 55), reacted against the use of the L1 because of the likely interference between the first language and the target language. They, further, emphasised the role that unilingualism would play in the teaching/learning process. Learning, according to them, has to take place with the exclusive use of the foreign language.

On the other hand, for many other researchers, the elimination of the learners’ L1 from the second/foreign language classroom and the exclusive use of the L2 without reference to the L1 can be time consuming, because “translation as a saving – time technique is never used” (Miliani, *ibid.*: 56). In addition to that, sometimes and because of the abstractness of some language features, such as idiomatic expressions and collocations, non-reliance on L1 use can result “in the use of teaching procedures which will be circuitous and ineffective” (Van Els *et al.*, 1984: 249). Because most students are rarely exposed to the new language in a natural environment, and the input they receive in second/foreign language learning comes briefly from a second language classroom setting, the influence of the L1 on second language learning cannot be easily avoided. As put by Mallikamas (1997):

*“because of the great imbalance of input between the first and second languages, no matter how hard we try to avoid using the learners’ L1 in class, we can rarely override its influence on second language learning” (p.56)*

In his approach to teaching vocabulary, Butzkamm (1976, cited by Van Els *et al.*, 1984: 254) – aware of the learners’ readiness to assume a one-to-one correspondence between the L1 and L2 words – advocates the use of the L1, they will look for such correspondence whether L1 is used or not. Chellapan (1982) capitalizes on the students’ knowledge of the native language as a means whereby convergent and divergent phenomena could be handled. He states that:

*“a simultaneous awareness of two media could actually make the students see the points of convergence and divergence more clearly and so refines the tools of perception and analysis resulting in divergent thinking” (p.60)*

Even if learners tend to treat L1 as the obvious starting point when learning a new language, and as a communicative strategy (Ellis, 1985), agreement among researchers is that L1 needs to be handled with care. For teachers, to venture into the use of L1, need to be acknowledgeable in the similarities and differences between the learner’s native language and the target language at the semantic, morphosyntactic, and pragmatic level. Gabrietos (2001) illustrates this point of view when he observes that:

*“teachers should not treat the use of L1 by themselves or by learners as a sin, and that L1 does not have a place in FLT methodology. Still, learners and teachers alike need to be made aware of the limitations and pitfalls of L1 use in the classroom, as an unprincipled use of L1 can have long-lasting negative effects on the learners’ awareness and production of the target language” (p.13)*

## **Conclusion**

The constant changing and evolving within the ideas of correct grammar usage has caused quite a problem within the educational system.

Grammar and its ever-changing theory of correctness have had quite an impact not only on the educational system, i.e. there is no sense of community in terms of what is truly believed to be correct grammar. There have also been great theories that emerged from this fast paced grammarian society. Though it cannot be decided which theory is the best, one can be certain that all of them have added something to the world of grammar.

## Chapter Three

### Modal Usage in English and Standard Arabic

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## **Introduction**

Modals have a claim to be considered linguistic universals. Yet, the concept of modality varies from one language to another. Even within a given language, there may exist uncertainties according to the approach: syntactic, semantic, pragmatic ...etc; or the formal definition versus other definitions (in English: modal auxiliaries; but in Arabic: verbs, prepositions and particles). The notion of modality is “notoriously vague” (Palmer 1986). It is further said that the meaning of modality is very difficult to determine relying on a single perspective.

### **1. Modal Usage in English**

#### **1.1 Definition of modals**

What exactly are modals/modal verbs? Many readings render different definition of modals. The verbs that are referred to as modals are: may, will, shall, can, must, could, would, should and might. They have been described as auxiliary or helping verbs because “they ‘help’ another verb” (Soars & Soars, 1996: 146). They are known as “the defective verb” (Jackobs, 217) because they follow none of the regular verb rules. However, Celce-Murcia (1983), defines modals as, “tenseless auxiliaries that take no subject-verb agreement and no infinitive to before the following verb”.

According to Palmer (1990):

*“there can be no doubt that there are formal criteria that clearly distinguish WILL, SHALL, CAN, MAY, MUST and OUGHT TO, and to a lesser extent USED TO, DARE, NEED and IS TO, as modal verbs” (p.8).*

Modal verbs in English seem to have particular characteristics as far as form is concerned. Unlike other languages such as German, French, and Spanish, which carry tense-marking (no non-finite forms) and/or subject-verb agreement

operations on their modal verbs, English no longer does<sup>3</sup>. Also, modals directly precede a verb without the addition of infinitive *to*<sup>4</sup> as happens when two verbs follow each other:

<b>Modal+Verb</b>	<b>Verb+Verb</b>
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<i>I can go.</i>	<i>I want to go.</i>
------------------	----------------------

<i>*I can to go.</i>	<i>*I want go.</i>
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Modal auxiliaries are morpho-syntactically marked according to the NICE characteristics (Coates, 1983: 4). Modals are placed among the auxiliary verbs, just as the primary auxiliaries *be* and *have*:

N- Direct Negation (Should > shouldn't)

I- Inversion in questions (I will > will I)

C- Code or reduced forms (I may go > so may you)

E- Emphatic affirmation (Must we run > Yes, we **must**)

To these characteristics Palmer (1990) adds the following:

- *No -s form for 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular.*
- *Absence of non-finite forms (no infinitive, past or present participle)*
- *No cooccurrence. (No \*He may will come) (p.9)*

It is important to emphasize that most languages, unlike English, do not have modal auxiliaries as a separate verbal class that has very different syntactic properties from those of normal verbs (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1999).

### 1.1.1 Negation of modals

Negation of modals can be complex for students and there are two main reasons for this. Adding *not* after the modal does not always give the opposite meaning. For example, “the negative of *must* is sometimes *cannot*; and that of

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<sup>3</sup> According to Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, English modals are derived from verbs that carried tense and took agreement markers during a much earlier stage on the language (1999). Thus, the authors acknowledge that the historically derivation from ordinary verbs still has some semantic implications like *can-could*, *will-would*, *may-might*, *shall-should*, as present and past tenses respectively.

<sup>4</sup>Ought is idiosyncratic as it is the only modal followed by the *to*-infinitive (Palmer, 1974).

should is sometimes need not, etc.”(Jarvis, 2000, p.244) The second problem with negation is that either the modal or the full verb can be negated, thus confusing the meaning of the sentence to an ESL learner. With modals that are most like the main verb, such as can, the modal is negated.

### 1.1.2 Modal verb phrase structure

According to Kennedy (2002), apparently, modal verbs are used in a simple canonical paradigm followed by the bare infinitive of a lexical verb, e.g, *Mary can/ will /could /would play the piano*. The author points out that, modal verbs can occur in nine different verb phrase structures and presents a table showing the structures (Table 02). The copula *be* is present in many of the structures, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8 and 9 and is possibly responsible for learners’ difficulties with modal verb forms. It is important to present learners with a distributional analysis, so that they can learn the most frequent forms first.

1	Modal alone	(Who will go?) I will.
2	Modal + infinitive	Sam <i>can</i> swim./ She <i>must</i> be hungry./ You <i>should</i> have a rest.
3	Modal + be + past participle (Modal with Passive)	It <i>should</i> be replaced.
4	Modal+be+present participle (Modal with Progressive Aspect)	They <i>will</i> be arriving soon.
5	Modal+have+past participle (or adjective)	He <i>might</i> have done it. He <i>must</i> have been hungry.
6	Modal+be+being+past participle (or adjective)	It <i>might</i> be being done tomorrow. He <i>could</i> be being awkward.
7	Modal+have+been+past participle (Modal with Passive and Perfect Aspect)	It <i>should</i> have been fixed.
8	Modal+have+been+present participle (Modal with Perfect and Progressive Aspect)	He <i>must</i> have been lying.
9	Modal+have+been+being+past participle (or adjective) (Modal with Passive and Perfect and Progressive Aspect)	He <i>might</i> have been being blackmailed. They <i>must</i> have been being careless.

**Table 02: Modal verb phrase structure (Kennedy, 2002:82)**

According to Kennedy (2002: 82), ‘there are huge differences in the relative distributions of use of the nine structures’. Biber et al (1999) argue that some modals have a higher occurrence with marked voice or aspect. In their findings, *may, might, should* and *must* have a higher frequency with perfect aspect.

All modal verbs select bare VP complements, for which a small-clause raising analysis is often assumed (Stowell, 1983). The modals also differ from other English verbs with respect to the distinction between present and past tense. In a limited set of syntactic contexts, some modals exhibit a present/past alternation that is similar to what obtains with normal verbs; these include the pairs *can/could, shall/should, will/would, and may/might* (Stowell, 1995).

### 1.1.3 Semi – Modals

A further concept is what is variously termed the semi-modals (Palmer, 1988), quasi-modals (Coates, 1983) or quasi-auxiliaries (Joos, 1968) and periphrastic modals (Jacobs, 221). Jacobs states that “Periphrastic modals are multiword verb idioms used to express modal notions like probability, possibility and necessity”. The verbs which fall into this group carry modal meaning in much the same general sense as the modals proper, but they are problematic from the point of view of morpho-syntax. Membership in this group varies, some authors recognizing items which others ignore; some putting here what others include among the traditional or inner circle modals. For Strang (1962: 147) this group includes *use(d) to, be going to, be (about) to, have to, want to, ought to*. For Joos (1968: 22-30) *be to*<sup>5</sup>, *be going to, be about to, have to, be able to, be supposed to, and used to*; for him *ought to* is a modal. Palmer’s list, as a final example, comprises *be bound to, be able to, have (got) to, be willing to* (1988: 94).

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<sup>5</sup> Despite the fact that *be to* has no non-finite forms and hence no infinitive, and only the forms *am / is / are* and *was / were* are used. I will for convenience refer to this modal as *be to*.

The question of which syntactic role these semi-modals have in a sentence is problematic. Are the semi-modals auxiliaries or main verbs? Palmer does not directly address the question, but in a discussion on *be bound to*, he does make reference to the main verb being a verb of action, suggesting that he sees *be bound to* as an auxiliary (Palmer, 1990). Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman (1983: 83) note that periphrastic modals (the semi-modals ending with *to*) “behave syntactically more like main verb than do modals”, but a footnote at the bottom of the same page seems to suggest that they still consider periphrastic modals to be auxiliaries. They also note that:

“Structurally, *have to* is not truly a periphrastic modal since it requires *do* support... In other words, *have to* looks like a verb and behaves very much like a periphrastic form in many contexts. Thus we have treated it like one” (1983: 81).

It appears that the semi-modals are hybrid forms, combining characteristics of both main verb and auxiliary verb. It also appears that the category is defined by the semantic function of its members, not their formal qualities. This is important because it suggests that there is no necessary main verb or auxiliary verb characteristic that all semi-modals must share. In other words, students need to calibrate the individual structural characteristics of the semi-modals since each semi-modal has its own combination of main verb and auxiliary verb characteristics. They also need to learn when and how to substitute semi-modals for modal auxiliaries, and to be aware for the subtle changes of meaning these substitutions sometimes indicate.

## **1.2 Modality**

### **1.2.1 Definition of modality**

Modality is the meaning associated with the modals used at any given time. There are three primary types: epistemic (belief/logical probability

modality), deontic (action modality) (Celce-Murcia, M. & Larsen- Freeman, 1983) and dynamic. Epistemic modality is concerned with the “speaker’s commitment to the truth of the proposition and may also refer to a process of inference made by the speaker” (Karkkainen, 198) ELL (English Language Learning) develop meaning on the epistemic level by employing modals in possibility, necessity, and prediction to confirm or deny a proposition (Quirk, 1985). For instance in the sentence: it may snow today. ‘May’ expresses a degree of logical probability that is weak rather than strong. The speaker is trying to convey that there is a probability of snow today.

Deontic modality is concerned with, “influencing actions, states, or events” (Karkkainen, 198). In the sentence below we see how ‘may’ expresses granting permission and thus accomplishes a social interaction (Celce-Murcia, 1983). In the sentence: you may open the window. This modality suggests that the speaker has sufficient status and authority to grant permission. It also suggests that this context is “formal, rather than informal, or the speaker would have used ‘can’ instead of ‘may’ for granting permission” (Celce-Muecia, 141).

Unlike deontic and epistemic, dynamic modality does not refer to the speaker. For example in the sentence: Ali can play the guitar. ‘Can’ refers to Ali’s ability to play the guitar. ‘Can’ does not seem to refer to the speaker. That differentiates the dynamic modality from the deontic and epistemic one.

### **1.2.2 Approaches to modality**

A number of semantic criteria have been proposed for the definition of ‘modality’. The criterion, now widely accepted, is given by Lyons (1977:452), who refers to modality as the speaker’s ‘opinion or attitude towards the proposition that the sentence expresses or the situation that the proposition describes’. Accounts of modality can be divided into two groups, depending on whether the linguist opts for a tripartite or bipartite approach.

The tripartite approach can be represented by the analyses done by Palmer (1979; 1990) and Perkins (1983), both advocating a three-fold division of modality into epistemic, deontic, and dynamic modalities. Palmer (1990) points out the discrepancy between the semantically defined category (i.e. modality) and the category established by structural criteria (i.e. auxiliaries). For instance, *can* and *will* conform to the formal features of English auxiliaries. However, they do not seem to be strictly matters of modality when used in the sense of ability and volition, which inherently relate more to the characteristics of the subject than to the opinion or attitude of the speaker. With the traditional dichotomous analysis of epistemic and deontic modalities, the subject-oriented meanings of *can* and *will* are left no place. Accordingly, Palmer (1990) advances the supplement of dynamic modality to English modal auxiliaries to embrace those conveying the ability or volition of the subject. A similar approach is taken by Perkins (1983) to deal with English modal expressions. He relates modality to the concept of 'possible worlds' (1983:6) and distinguishes epistemic, deontic, and dynamic modalities. The truth of propositions in each subdomain is interpreted through different sets of principles (1983). Perkins (1983) goes further to make explicit that evaluative modality, presupposing the actuality of a proposition, is tied with the real world, so he does not subsume it within the scope of English modality.

The bipartite approach, on the other hand, treats dynamic modality as a subclass of epistemic or deontic modality. The central argument is that there are areas of overlap and indeterminacy between these meanings conveyed by English modal auxiliaries. For instance, Coates (1983) recognizes epistemic and non-epistemic modalities. The latter type, also named 'root modality' (1983:20), incorporates Palmer's (1990) deontic and dynamic modalities. Another two-fold distinction is made by Quirk et al. (1985). They group notions of permission, obligation, and volition as 'intrinsic' in the sense that certain human control is imposed upon the qualified events, whereas ideas such as possibility, necessity,

and prediction are 'extrinsic' since they chiefly concern human judgment on the likelihood of the situations taking place (1985:219).

As can be seen from the above studies, the tripartite and bipartite divisions are different ways to classify members of an identical semantic category, viz. meanings encoded by English modal auxiliaries. However, what is of significance here is not the question of how English modality can be divided, but the issue regarding what sort of meaning should be included within this family. One important observation is that, in contrast to the typological analyses which focus on epistemic, deontic, and evaluative modalities (see 2.1), studies on English modal auxiliaries generally ignore evaluative modality and incorporate another type: subject-oriented meanings expressed by such words as *can* and *will*.

### **1.3 Semantic Properties of Modals**

The biggest problem ESL students' face with modals is their meaning. Each modal can have more than one meaning and each meaning is a member of an inter-related system. When a speaker chooses to use one modal he/she is deciding to use any of the other modals, thereby indicating the degree of emphasis. The problem does not lie in the surface positioning the modals or in their wide range of meaning, but in associating the right modal with the right meaning. Modals may express ability, resolve, promise, condition, obligation, probability, futurity, polite request, preference, doubt, permission, or possibility.

<i>Modal verb</i>	<i>Meaning</i>	<i>Examples</i>
Can	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. describing ability</li> <li>b. making requests</li>   <li>c. making deductions (about the present)</li> <li>d. giving permission</li>   <li>e. making offers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>a. John can play the guitar.</i></li> <li><i>b. Can you give me a hand with my homework?</i></li>   <li><i>c. John can't be so silly.</i></li>   <li><i>d. You can leave earlier today.</i></li> <li><i>e. Can I get you a nice cup of coffee?</i></li> </ul>
Could	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. expressing ability (in the past)</li>   <li>b. making polite requests</li>   <li>c. asking for permission politely</li>   <li>d. describing possibility</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>a. Roger could read when he was only four.</i></li> <li><i>b. Could you explain this maths exercise more clearly?</i></li>   <li><i>c. Could I start work earlier tomorrow?</i></li> <li><i>d. We could have a chemistry surprise test on Monday.</i></li> </ul>
May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. describing possibility</li>   <li>b. asking for permission</li>   <li>c. giving permission</li>   <li>d. making polite offers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>a. He may be right.</i></li>   <li><i>b. May I have an extra handout?</i></li> <li><i>c. You may have your mobile phones on during this short meeting.</i></li> <li><i>d. May I carry your bag, Miss Johnson?</i></li> </ul>

Might	<p>a. describing possibility</p> <p>b. making suggestions</p> <p>c. polite alternative</p>	<p>a. He might take her out this evening.</p> <p><i>b. You might try learning harder.</i></p> <p><i>c. Might I ask who made those remarks?</i></p>
Shall	<p>a. making offers</p> <p>b. making suggestions</p> <p>c. doing resolve</p>	<p>a. Shall I get you a nice cup of tea?</p> <p><i>b. Shall we go to the cinema this evening?</i></p> <p><i>c. We shall reach the finish line first!</i></p>
Should	<p>a. giving advice</p> <p>b. giving polite instructions</p> <p>c. showing expectation</p> <p>d. polite request</p>	<p>a. You should give up smoking.</p> <p><i>b. You should fill in this form using capital letters.</i></p> <p><i>c. Sarah should be home by now.</i></p> <p><i>d. I should like some help.</i></p>
Must	<p>a. making deductions</p> <p>b. expressing obligation</p>	<p><i>a. He must be worn out after such a long journey.</i></p> <p>b. He must be at school at nine o' clock.</p>
Will	<p>a. expressing willingness or intention</p> <p>b. giving orders</p>	<p><i>a. I really will study harder next year.</i></p> <p><i>b. Will you close the door, please?</i></p>

Would	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. expressing a common characteristic in past behaviour.</li> <li>b. making offers</li>   <li>c. making polite requests</li>   <li>d. expressing wishes</li>   <li>e. intention</li>   <li>f. doubt</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>a. I would sit on my bed and read until dawn.</i></li>   <li><i>b. Would you like a slice of homemade cake?</i></li>   <li><i>c. Would you give me a call as soon as you get there?</i></li>   <li><i>d. I would like some freshly squeezed orange juice, please.</i></li> <li><i>e. He promised that he would come.</i></li> <li><i>f. I don't believe she would come.</i></li> </ul>
-------	---	--

**Table 03: Semantic properties of English modals (Base on Palmer, 1990)**

One of the factors that contribute to modal complexity is ambiguity. Suzuki argues that:

*“the root senses of modals have much to do with their related backgrounds. It is because there is much confusion as to whether the speaker is referring to permission or some other ...type of situation in the background that ambiguous sentences ...come about”. (1986: 16-17)*

It is therefore, difficult to draw a borderline between the notions expressed by modals and clearly determine the correct usage. Leech and Coates (1980) refer to this issue as “semantic indeterminacy” where one cannot easily decide on the type of meaning the modal expresses.

If the backgrounds of utterances are known, modal meaning ambiguity should decrease. This can be realized by contextualization.

#### **1.4. Temporal properties of modals**

Modals differ from other verbs with respect to the distinction between past, present and future tense. In a limited set of syntactic contexts, some modals demonstrate a present/ past alternation that is similar to what obtains with

normal verbs. These include the pairs: can/ could, shall/ should, will/ would as well as may/ might. But the present/ past alternation is semantically neutralized for these verbs in many syntactic and semantic contexts, in a way that has no parallel with normal verbs. One well known fact is that the choice between the use of ‘may’ and ‘might’ in the following sentences where they do not involve any tense distinction; rather, they represent the difference between what is ‘probable’ and what is ‘less probable’ respectively.

a. It ‘may’ rain tonight.

b. it ‘might’ rain tonight.

Abush (1997) suggests that modals may have a tenseless form which can receive a simultaneous reading relative to the evaluation time obtaining in their surrounding syntactic environment, differing both from morphologically past tense modals and present tense modals

### 1.5 Other meanings (the case of *need* and *dare*)

Depending upon the sense, some modals can act as main verbs or as modal auxiliaries. This is the case of the modals *need* and *dare*. As a main verb *dare* changes form to agree with its subject; and may be followed by an infinitive phrase, with or without the introductory word *to*. Examples of the verb *dare* used as a main verb are as follows:

John *dared* Peter to win the match..... (1)

Lynda *dares talk* / *dares to talk* behind her father’s back ..... (2)

In the first sentence *dare* acts as a main verb because there is an agreement between the verb and the subject that is John. In the second example *dare* acts also as a main verb that can be followed by an infinitive phrase, or with the introductory *to* as an option. The infinitive phrase, *to talk behind her father's back*, functions as the direct object of the verb *dare*.

On the other hand, as a modal *dare* does not change form to agree with its subject; and it never takes the word *to* before an infinitive following it. Examples of the verb *dare* used as a modal are as follows:

Zidane *dare* not do that again! ..... (3)

In (3), *dare* acts as a modal because there is no agreement between the subject and the verb i.e., no *-s* of the third person singular and no *to* of the infinitive.

## 2. Modal Usage in Standard Arabic (Al Af3al Alnamatia)

### 3.1 Definition and Syntactic Properties

Common English Modals include *must*, *may*, *can*, *could*, *might*, *will*, *would*, *shall*, *should*. Arabic, on the other hand, uses many expressions such as verbs like: ، /wasaca/وسع ، /qadara/قدر ، /ja:za/جاز ، /lazama/لزم ، /wajaba/وجب ، /samaha/سمح; derived verb stems like /tamakana/تمكن ، /amkana/أمكن ، /isttaaca/استطاع ، /tahatama/احتتم ، /ialamath/احتمل ، /inbaga/انبعى ، /tacayana/تعين ، /iftarada/افترض; particles /cala/على; and modal phrases /min/من ، /imnalwajib/من الواجب ، /minalazim/من اللازم ، /ddlmafroumina/من المفروض ، /almoutacinainm/المتعين ، /minalja:zi/من الجائز ، /bimaqdurika/بماقدورك ، /biwuscika/بوسعك ، /bi?mkanika/بإمكانك ، /ib?aistitacatik/باستطاعتك.

The syntax of Arabic Modals is relatively simpler than their semantics. Modals are similar to other functional categories in their grammatical function which is the most prominent feature about them. These elements have lexical meaning in addition to their functional properties in grammar. They encode features like probability, possibility, etc.

The notion of ‘modality’ is expressed grammatically primarily by choice from the set of modal auxiliary verbs. It is also construed via lexical categories, including semi-auxiliary verbs, modal adverbs like {certainly, maybe, perhaps, possibly, probably, surely}, modal adjectives like {certain, likely, necessary, possible, probable, sure, able, allowed, obliged, willing} and nouns like

(likelihood, necessity, possibility, obligation, permission, willingness) (Jackson, H. (1990): 218-9).

### **Arabic modal elements:**

- a- (yuri:d/ ara:d) “want/ wanted/ would like”.
- b- (yastaTiiC/ istaTaC) and (yaqdir/ qadir) “can/ could/ be able to”.
- c- (yimkin/ mumkin/ yuhtamal/ muHtamal/ qad) “may/ might/ could/ be probable”
- d- (ja:yiz/ yaju:z/ yastahi:l/ mustahi:l) “can/ could be/ possible/ impossible”.
- e- (sawfa) and (sa-) “ will/ shall/ be going to”.
- f- (yanbaghi and yajib) (labud) “should/ must/ ought to/ be obliged to/ have to”.
- g- (yalzam/ la:zim) “be obliged to/ should/ have to”

These modal elements have common properties: firstly, they encode modal notions such as: Possibility, Probability, Ability, Intention, Obligation, etc. Secondly, they take verbal expressions as complements. Although these words express modal meanings in unambiguous ways as shown by the English glosses in (1) above they vary from their English counterparts in a number of ways. For example, English modal verbs such as (**can, could, may, might, will, would, shall, should, must, ought to**) have the following properties (c.f. Ouhalla: 1991 and Radford: 1992)

### **2.2 Semantic Properties of Arabic modal verbal elements:**

- a- Some modals display subject-verb agreements, like ordinary verbs, others do not display any agreements morphology.
- b- Some modals display present and past tense verbal forms, others have frozen verbal forms with no tense reference.

- c- Their verbal complements range from finite to non-finite verbal forms.
- d- Modals do not occur in non-finite clauses as complements to the verb (want).
- e- All modals can be negated by at least one negative particle except (**labud**).
- f- The subject precedes the modal in SVO word order
- g- In VSO word order, the subject follows the main verb.
- h- These verbal elements when used as modals do not permit argument.

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter, I attempt to rationalize the differences and similarities of modal Verb constructions in various languages by the use of some descriptions and analyses. Within the mainstream of current syntactic research, there are two viewpoints towards modal verbs. Both viewpoints consider the set of modal verbs as belonging to the functional class. They disagree, however, on how these elements project from the lexicon. The vast majority of researchers assume that a modal verb is inserted in the TNS-node (e.g., Pollock: 1989, and many others). Radford (1997), for example, considers English modal verbs as belonging to the functional category (Aux), which occupies INFL-node. A number of researchers, e.g. Ouhalla (1991), argue that modal verbs constitute an autonomous functional category, (Mod) head of Modal Phrase, and therefore a modal verb projects from the lexicon as a head of the functional phrase Modal Phrase that occurs outside VP.

Throughout the dissertation, the reading convention used in the transliteration of sentences in Arabic is the one used by Saad (1982):

<i>Arabic Letter</i>	<i>Transliteration</i>	<i>Phonetic Value</i>	<i>Arabic Letter</i>	<i>Transliteration</i>	<i>Phonetic Value</i>
<b>Consonants</b>					
ء	ʔ	ʔ	ض	d	d
ب	b	b	ط	t	t
ت	t	t	ظ	z	ð
ث	t	th	ع	c	c
ج	j	j	غ	g	i'gh
ح	h	h	ف	f	f
خ	x	th	ق	q	q
د	d	d	ك	k	k
ذ	d	dh	ل	l	l
ر	r	r	م	m	m
ز	z	z	ن	n	n
س	s	s	هـ	h	h
ش	š	sh	و	w	w
ص	s	s	ي	y	y
<b>Vowels</b>					
ا	a	a	آ	a	a:
و	u	u	ؤ	u	u:
ي	I	I	ئ	i	i:

**Table 04: Transliteration of the Arabic Writing System (Saad, 1982: 05)**

## ***Chapter Four***

### ***Field Work***

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## **Introduction**

This chapter aims at testing our hypothesis: whether and to what extent does Standard Arabic affect English modal usage by Algerian learners? It is also intended to find out the teaching devices that would better cure this problematic situation. For this purpose, a test was used as an instrument to collect the data. The analysis of the test was undertaken in the form of frequencies of errors. Explanation was also provided as to why some errors occurred.

### **1. The Students' Test:**

#### **1.1 The Sample**

The sample of this study is Second year students of English. Choice has fallen on these subjects because they were supposed to have reached a certain level of proficiency in English, and are thus capable of manipulating the language's grammatical structure.

The sample represents three groups out of four of Second year students of the Department of Foreign Languages at the University of Annaba. The number of the subject population amounts to 80 students from a total amount of 100 students.

#### **1.2 Description of the test**

The research employed the qualitative method, that is, the collection of empirical data in the form of respondents' answers for an analysis of grammatical errors committed. Respondents were urged to do the test on their own without referring to their friends or consulting the teacher. This was to ensure the authenticity of the data collection for analysis. Students were not subject to any time constraints (this is not a variable whose effects we intend to measure); yet, most of the students completed the test in around one hour.

The collected data was divided into four categories. The description of the categories investigated as follows:

**Category (i):** There is no cooccurrence of modals in the two languages:

- I will go for vacation.
- My friend may come with me.
- We would go for a party.
- My sister might go for shopping.
- My family will spend great time in Algiers.

**Category (ii):** Cases in which standard Arabic uses a particle and English does not:

- I must to go out of the country.
- I might to encounter new persons.
- I should to study hard to get great time in summer.
- I can to go wherever I want
- I should to give up smoking

**Category (iii):** Cases in which there is no agreement between the subject and the modal in English and not in Arabic.

- It might rains.
- My best friend may comes from Egypt.
- My father should gives me his car.
- His mother will enjoys the surprise.
- Father must takes rest.

**Category (iv):** Cases in which modals co-occur with a given noun in Arabic and not in English

- I should travelling to Europe.
- I will going to the beach.
- I may having a summer job.
- My uncle won't stopping inviting me.

The purpose of such a division is to see if similarities and differences between the two languages will result in learners transferring positively, negatively or not transferring from Standard Arabic.

### 1.3 Analysis of the results

In the analysis of our data, three steps were followed. In the first step, we started by considering the global correct and wrong modal verb usage in the 30 sentences; and the correct and wrong modal verb usage in each category. In the second step, we have concentrated on transfer from Standard Arabic. We first concentrated on the frequencies of positive transfer, as far as our first category is concerned, and then the frequencies of errors in each of the remaining categories in the organizing scheme as analysed.

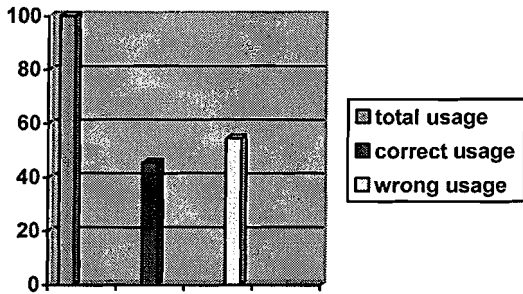
#### 1.3.1 Step 1: Correct versus wrong modal verb usage

In this step, we identified the total amount of errors in modal usage made by the testees in the four categories as opposed to the total amount of correct usage.

<i>Total</i>	<i>Correct Usage</i>		<i>Wrong Usage</i>	
	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
2400	1093	45.54	1307	54.46

***Table 05: Correct versus Wrong Modals Usage in All Categories***

We have found that the percentage of wrong usage exceeds the percentage of correct modal verbs usage.



**Figure 2: Correct versus Wrong Modals Usage in All Categories**

Hence, the table shows that Algerian learners do have difficulties and problems with modal verbs.

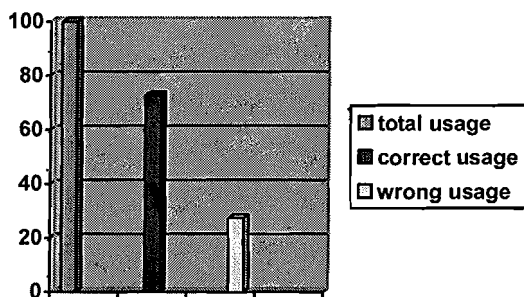
In relation to each category, we found the following results:

**a) Category (i):**

<i>Total</i>	<i>Correct Usage</i>		<i>Wrong Usage</i>	
	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
480	349	72.70	131	27.30

**Table 06: Correct versus Wrong Modals Usage in the First Category**

The table demonstrates that when Standards Arabic and English use the same structure the majority of testees (72.70%) used the correct form of modal verbs.



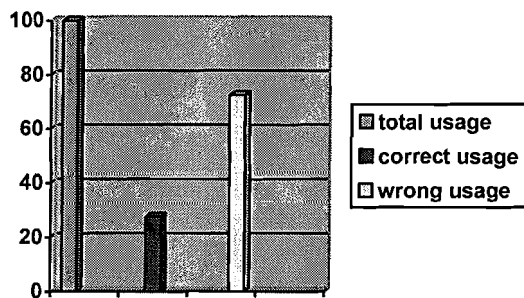
**Figure 3: Correct versus Wrong Modal Verb Usage in the First Category**

**b) Category (ii):**

<i>Total</i>	<i>Correct Usage</i>		<i>Wrong Usage</i>	
	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
480	138	27.50	342	72.50

**Table 7: Correct versus Wrong Modal Verb Usage in the Second Category**

In this category, the results show that when Standard Arabic and English use different structures, i.e. Standard Arabic uses a particle before the modal verb and English does not, learners failed to use the correct modal structure since only (72.50%) of the answers were correct.



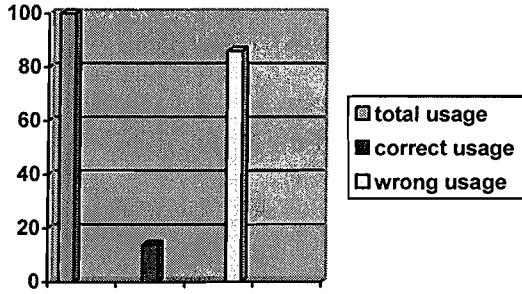
**Figure 4: Correct versus Wrong Modal Verb Usage in the Second Category**

**c) Category (iii):**

<i>Total</i>	<i>Correct Usage</i>		<i>Wrong Usage</i>	
	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
480	67	13.96	413	86.04

**Table 8: Correct versus Wrong Modal Verb Usage in the Third Category**

The results prove that (84.04%) of learners failed to give the correct modal structure. There is a high frequency errors corresponding to the difference between the modal structure of English and Standard Arabic, given that there is no agreement between the subject and the modal in English as opposed to Standard Arabic.



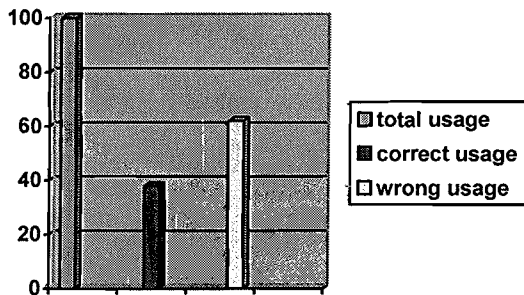
**Figure 5: Correct versus Wrong Modal Verb Usage in the Third Category**

**d) Category (iv):**

<i>Total</i>	<i>Correct Usage</i>		<i>Wrong Usage</i>	
	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
480	182	37.92	298	62.08

**Table 9: Correct versus Wrong Modal Verb Usage in the Fourth Category**

In this category, the modal verb occurs with a given noun in Standard Arabic rather than English. The results are evidence for wrong usage of modal verbs structure since only (37.92%) of learners gave correct answers.



**Figure 6: Correct versus Wrong Modal Verb Usage in the Fourth Category**

These results show that when both English and Standard Arabic make use of the same modal rule and where there is no co-occurrence of modals in both languages (see Table 6, p.63), learners seem to master quite adequately English modal usage. However, there seems to be a problematic area when the two languages use different modal structure, and when English does not use particles

and Standard Arabic does, and where there is an agreement between subject and modal in Standard Arabic and not in English. This is shown by the relatively high frequency errors made in the corresponding categories: category (ii) (72.50%, see Table 7, p.64), category (iii) (86.04%, see Table 8, p.64), and category (iv) (62.08%, see Table 9, p.65).

### 1.3.2 Step 2: Transfer from Standard Arabic

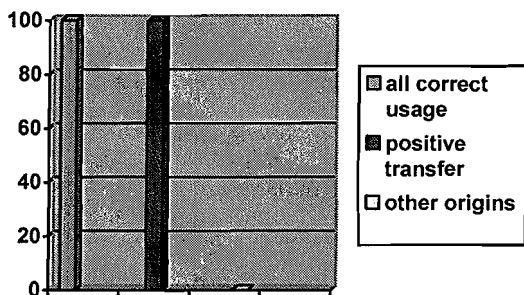
We devote this step to the explanation of learners' production in our different categories, with focus on their tendencies to rely on transfer from Standard Arabic, to judge the appropriate usage of modals. Two forms, in which transfer can manifest itself, were taken into consideration, namely facilitation (positive transfer) and intrusion (negative transfer). We carried out this step by equating the correct modal usage given by students with corresponding usage in Standard Arabic (category (i)), and their erroneous modal usage with the corresponding one in Standard Arabic (category (ii), (iii) and (iv))

#### 1.3.2.1 Positive transfer: (category (i))

An analysis of all the correct modal usage in the first category, i.e. when the two languages respect the same rules, has revealed that when the basis of our analysis is contrast between modal structure usage in English and the one in Standard Arabic, learners' answers are, on the whole due to positive transfer from Standard Arabic.

<i>Total</i>	<i>Positive Transfer</i>		<i>Other Origins</i>	
	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
349	349	100		

***Table 10: Category (i): Degree of Positive Transfer from Standard Arabic in the Learner's Modal Verb Usage***



**Figure 7: Category (i): Degree of Positive Transfer from Standard Arabic in the Learner's Modal Verb Usage**

This result shows that Standard Arabic can be a source of knowledge that may facilitate production when there are similarities between the two languages as their conceptualization of the real situation is concerned.

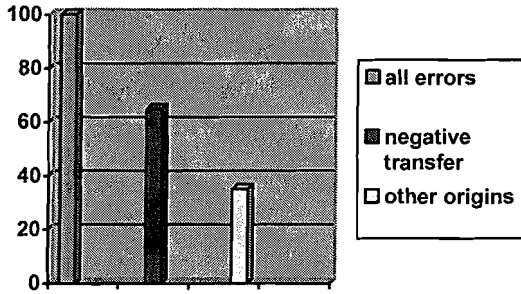
### 2.3.1. Negative transfer from Standard Arabic: (category (ii), (iii), and (iv))

An analysis of all transfer errors has shown that when the basis of our analysis is the differences between Standard Arabic and English, learners' errors are, overall, due to interference from this language.

<i>Total</i>	<i>Negative Transfer</i>		<i>Other Origins</i>	
	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
1176	763	64.88	413	35.12

**Table 11: Degree of Negative Transfer in the Second, Third, and Fourth Categories**

In this stage, emphasis is also put on the extent to which errors in modal usage in the last three categories are due to transfer from Standard Arabic. The analysis of the errors made by learners in the stated categories has revealed that Algerian learners of English tend largely to transfer negatively the usage of Standard Arabic modal structure.



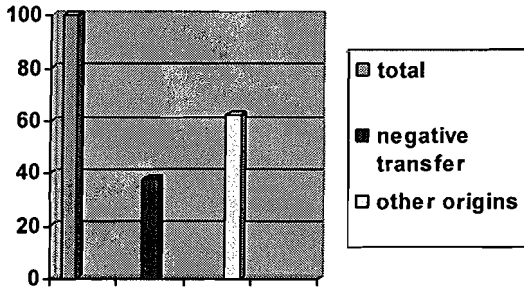
**Figure 8: Degree of Negative Transfer in the Second, Third, and Fourth Categories**

Yet, led by the results we reached in the first step, an analysis of learners' errors by taking into consideration differences in modal usage between English and the other languages used in Algeria is necessary. The results we get when analysing the errors made by learners, and which cannot be explained in terms of differences between Standard Arabic and English, i.e. errors of origins other than St.Ar. show that Algerian Arabic, French, and Berber affect, to a non-negligible extent, learners' modal usage.

<i>Total</i>	<i>Negative Transfer from Alg. Ar., Fr. and Ber.</i>		<i>Other Origins</i>	
	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
413	156	37.78	257	62.22

**Table 12: Degree of Negative Transfer from Algerian Arabic, French and Berber (errors of other origins) in the Second, Third, and Forth Categories**

In this category, learners' erroneous usage of English modal structure is not only due to standard Arabic but to other languages spoken in Algeria such as French and Berber.



**Figure 9: Degree of Negative Transfer from Algerian Arabic, French and Berber (errors of other origins) in the Second, Third, and Forth Categories**

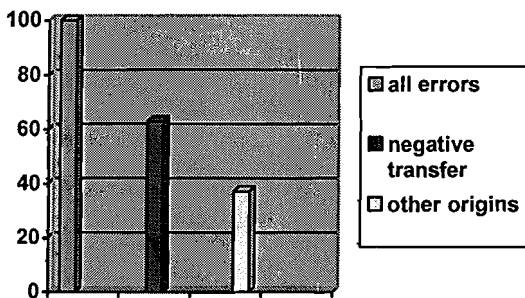
In this category, the learners' erroneous usage of English modal structure is not only due to Standard Arabic but to other languages spoken in Algeria such as French and Berber.

**a) Category (ii)**

The results we got are as follows:

<i>Total</i>	<i>Negative Transfer</i>		<i>Other Origins</i>	
	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
342	215	62.86	127	37.14

**Table 13: Degree of Negative Transfer from Standard Arabic in the Second Category**



**Figure 10: Degree of Negative Transfer from Standard Arabic in the Second Category**

Errors due transfer from Standard Arabic are:

*Instead of*  
→

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1- I must to go out of the country.                    | - I must go out of the country.                    |
| 2- I might to encounter new persons.                   | - I might encounter new persons.                   |
| 3- I should to study hard to get great time in summer. | - I should study hard to get great time in summer. |
| 4- I can to go wherever I want.                        | - I can go wherever I want.                        |
| 5- I should to give up smoking.                        | - Should give up smoking.                          |

These errors can be traced back to Standard Arabic where, for instance, sentence n°1 corresponds in Standard Arabic to:

yajib ?an akhrouj mina lbalad

In that case, the two languages have different modal structures. The erroneous use of ‘to’ could be explained by the fact that, in Standard Arabic learners use the particle /?an/ (أن) and it is transferred to English to become ‘to’. Hence, instead of saying: I must go out of the country, Algerian learners add ‘to’.

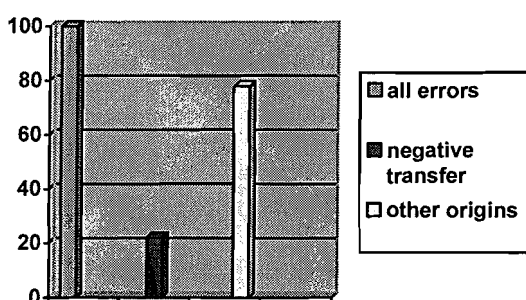
And the same process occurred in all the sentences of this category.

Learners’ erroneous usage in this category can also stem from the influence of Algerian Arabic, Berber, and French. As to the degree of influence of Berber, Algerian Arabic, and French on the learners’ errors that cannot be traced back to the influence of Standard Arabic, the results we came out with are the following:

<i>Total</i>	<i>Negative Transfer from Alg. Ar., Fr. and Ber.</i>		<i>Other Origins</i>	
	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
127	28	22.04	99	77.96

**Table 14: Degree of Negative Transfer from Algerian Arabic, French and Berber in the Second Category**

Learners' erroneous usage in this category can also stem from the influence of Algerian Arabic, Berber, and French. As to the degree of influence of Berber, Algerian Arabic, and French on the learners' errors that cannot be traced back to the influence of Standard Arabic, the results we came out which are the following:



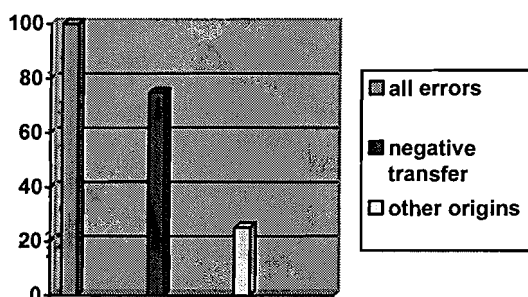
**Figure 11: Degree of Negative Transfer from Algerian Arabic, French and Berber in the Second Category**

**b) Category (iii):**

The results we reached are the following:

<i>Total</i>	<i>Negative Transfer</i>		<i>Other Origins</i>	
	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
413	309	74.81	104	25.19

**Table 15: Degree of Negative Transfer from Standard Arabic in the Third Category**



**Figure 12: Degree of Negative Transfer from Standard Arabic in the Third Category**

The modal usage was as follows:

*Instead of*  
→

- |   |                                       |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| 1- It might rains.                      | - It might rain.                      |
| 2- My best friend may comes from Egypt. | - My best friend may come from Egypt. |
| 3- My father should gives me his car .  | - My father should give me his car.   |
| 4- His mother will enjoys the surprise. | - His mother will enjoy the surprise. |
| 5- Father must takes rest.              | - Father must take rest.              |

When there is a difference between modal structure in English and Arabic, the percentage of transfer errors (74.81%) was considerable. Students, in that case, used an agreement between the subject and the verb that follows the modal as is the case in Standard Arabic.

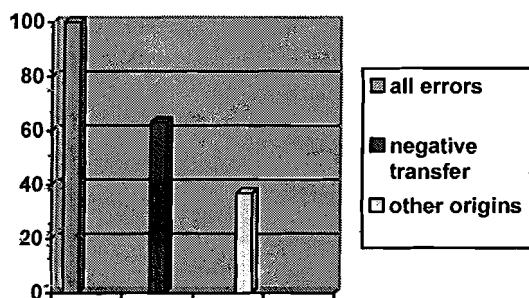
For instance, Sentence n°1 → qad yanzilou lmatarou

Here there is an agreement between the verb yanzilou and the subject lmatarou. The same thing happened in the others sentences.

**c) Category (iv):**

<i>Total</i>	<i>Negative Transfer</i>		<i>Other Origins</i>	
	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
298	188	63.08	110	36.92

**Table 16: Degree of Negative Transfer from Standard Arabic in the Fourth Category**



**Figure 13: Degree of Negative Transfer from Standard Arabic in the Fourth Category**

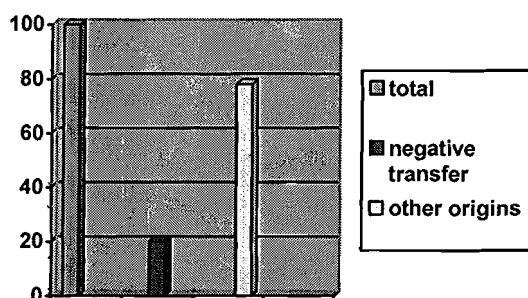
The modal usage was as follows:

- |   | <i>Instead of</i><br>→                |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| 1- It might rains.                      | - It might rain.                      |
| 2- My best friend may comes from Egypt. | - My best friend may come from Egypt. |
| 3- My father should gives me his car .  | - My father should give me his car.   |
| 4- His mother will enjoys the surprise. | - His mother will enjoy the surprise. |
| 5- Father must takes rest.              | - Father must take rest.              |

<i>Total</i>	<i>Negative Transfer from Alg. Ar., Fr. and Ber.</i>		<i>Other Origins</i>	
	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
110	22	20	88	78

**Table 17: Degree of Negative Transfer from Algerian Arabic, French and Berber in the Fourth Category**

This table demonstrates that Algerian learners' modal usage can be traced back to origins other than Standard Arabic, such as Algerian Arabic, French as well as Berber.



**Figure 14: Degree of Negative Transfer from Algerian Arabic, French and Berber in the Fourth Category**

The modal usage was as follows:

*Instead of*  
→

- |   |                                       |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| 1- It might rains.                      | - It might rain.                      |
| 2- My best friend may comes from Egypt. | - My best friend may come from Egypt. |
| 3- My father should gives me his car .  | - My father should give me his car.   |
| 4- His mother will enjoys the surprise. | - His mother will enjoy the surprise. |
| 5- Father must takes rest.              | - Father must take rest.              |

The first conclusions one can draw from all these results is that Second year Algerian students do not adequately master the English modal usage. The results we came out are the following:

<i>The categories analyzed</i>	<i>Step 1</i>				<i>Step 2</i>			
	<i>Correct Usage</i>		<i>Wrong Usage</i>		<i>Positive Transfer</i>		<i>Negative Transfer</i>	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
<i>Category (i)</i>	349	72.70	131	27.30	349	100	/	/
<i>Category (ii)</i>	138	27.50	342	72.50	/	/	215	62.86
<i>Category (iii)</i>	67	13.96	413	86.04	/	/	309	74.81
<i>Category (iv)</i>	182	37.92	298	62.08	/	/	188	63.08

**Table 18: Overall Results of Transfer from Standard Arabic in the Two Steps**

Analysing globally the results, it was found that problems Algerian learners of English have with modals are of three types:

- (category (ii))
- (category (iii))
- Category (iv))

When the handling of English modals was erroneous, Standard Arabic would have been the major source of error. However, errors could also be the result of

negative transfer from other languages and dialects used in Algeria (Algerian Arabic, French and Berber).

Nevertheless, we also reached the conclusion that students found little difficulty handling English modals when they have similar structural rules.

## **2- The Students' Questionnaire**

The data required for the conduct of this study, that is intended to know the extent of which Standard Arabic affects the Algerian Learners modal verb structure, was collected through the administration of a questionnaire. The questionnaire is to find the origins and natures of errors found in students' answers of the test (see the Students' Test p. 93).

### **2.1 The Sample**

The questionnaire was handed to second year students of English, at the Faculty of Letters and Languages, University of Annaba.

### **2.2 Description of the questionnaire**

The questionnaire was designed to be quick and easy for Algerian learners of English to complete, with several questions involving tick boxes. An explanation was made concerning the aim of the questionnaire, i.e. which is to know the extent and effect of Standard Arabic on Algerian learners' usage of the English modal structure. It also aims at improving learners' performance in this grammatical area.

### **2.3 Analysis of the results**

**Question n°1:** Are modal verbs a difficult area in learning English?

Sixty seven of the learners out of eighty agreed that they face difficulties in learning modal verbs; this is due to the complexity of their structure and meaning.

**Question n°2:** Do you face problems in using the structure of English modal verbs?

Sixty six out of eighty of the respondents approved that modal structure constitutes a problem since most of the students don't know the exact rules governing the said structure.

**Question n°3:** Do you refer to Standard Arabic when trying to use the appropriate modal structure?

Forty nine out of eighty learners declare using Arabic as a source of knowledge especially when facing difficulties.

**Question n°4:** Do you refer to Berber when trying to use the appropriate modal structure?

Yet, there are fifteen students out of eighty who make use of Berber in order to find the correct modal structure.

**Question n°5:** Do you refer to French when trying to use the appropriate modal structure?

The results show that nineteen out of eighty of the questioned learners state that French can be used as a support to understand the English modal structure.

Thus, learners will transfer the French modal structure to English which would result with errors.

**Question n°6:** Do you refer to Algerian Arabic when trying to use the appropriate modal structure?

Indeed, thirty six out of eighty of the Algerian learners tend to transfer either positively or negatively the modal structure from Algerian Arabic to English.

**Question n°7:** Contrast between Standard Arabic modal structure and the one of English can help you understand this part of grammar?

The findings obtained in this question show that fifty six out of eighty of the students; agree to have a contrastive analysis between Standard Arabic and English modal structure. According to the answers, the aim of contrastive analysis is to better understand the similarities and differences of both languages, and thus avoid negative transfer.

**Question n°8:** Can modal verbs co-occur in the same sentence?

The data collected demonstrate that seventy four out of twenty learners agreed to the fact that there is no co-occurrence of modals in the same sentence. At this point, there is no co-occurrence of modals in both Standard Arabic and English.

**Question n°9:** Do the verb following the modal take an “-s” in the third person?

There are thirty nine of the respondents who answered positively that there is an agreement between the subject and the verb that follows the modal. This is the case in Standard Arabic where it is said: /mina ?al mohtamal ?an ya?ti sadiki min misr/ من المحتمل أن يأتي صديقي من مصر, my friend may come from Egypt. In Standard Arabic there is an agreement between the subject (Friend) and the verb (come), this is why some learners used the following sentence: \*my friend may comes from Egypt which is incorrect. Consequently, the Algerian learners have transferred the structure of their mother tongue to English. The same case could be used in French as well as Berber.

**Question n°10:** Do modal verbs take an “-ed” in the past?

The majority of respondents (sixty nine) answered that the past of modal verbs is not formed by adding –ed to the end.

**Question n°11:** Do you use a noun after a modal verb?

The results show of the answers revealed show that, it is possible to use a noun after a modal verb since forty three of the learners approved it (which is incorrect). Standard Arabic does use a co-occurrence of modals with a given noun; this is a case of negative transfer to the target language.

**Question n°12:** Do you use the particle “to” after English modal verbs?

Fifty one of the learners agreed that English modal verbs are followed by the particle “to” as is the case in Standard Arabic: /mina ?al moulzimi ?an ?oughadira ?al balda/ من الملزم أن أغير البلاد. The particle “أن” in Standard Arabic is transferred to English “to” and the sentence become \*I must to go out of the country; instead of I must go out of the country. It is a negative transfer since it misleads the student who will use an incorrect form.

**Question n°13:** Can the use of list play an important role in learning English modals meanings?

Sixty seven of students advocate that lists can be helpful to understand the various shades of meaning conveyed by modals, and thus facilitate the learning process.

**Question n°14:** What is the best methods of learning grammar: implicit, explicit or eclectic?

Eleven students have chosen the implicit method, nineteen the explicit method and the majority of forty learners who advocated the eclectic method which is thorough and complete since its grammar is taught inductively and deductively.

### **3. The Teachers' Questionnaire**

This questionnaire was developed as a supportive tool to our chapter on the pedagogical implications. With the questionnaire, we intended to tap into the teachers' experiences with the grammatical structure under investigation, as well as on the teaching method that could be used to improve learners' performance in this grammatical area.

#### **3.1 The Sample**

The questionnaire was handed in to eleven grammar teachers at the Department of Foreign Languages, Faculty of Arts and Languages, University of Annaba. The eleven teachers were either teaching grammar the year of the administration of the questionnaire (2006), or have taught grammar in the past.

#### **3.2 Description of the questionnaire**

In the preface of the questionnaire we gave an explanation to the teachers on the aims behind the administration of the questionnaire, i.e. that it is intended to the analysis of whether and to what extent Standard Arabic affects the Algerian learners' English modal usage; and that it also aims at tapping into their experiences on the teaching method that could be suitable for such a situation as well as the effect of the various constraints of transfer on the

Algerian learners' modal usage. The teachers were required to answer the questionnaire by ticking the appropriate box, or by making a full statement wherever needed.

The questionnaire contains ten questions about whether modal usage is a problematic area for Algerian learners (question n° 1), the extent to which it is (question n° 2). It is also about the effect of the various factors influencing L1 transfer (learner-based vs. language-based factors) on the Algerian learners' modal usage (question n°3). Question n°4 of the questionnaire aims at finding out about the teaching method that teachers use in their teaching of grammar; whereas the goal of the following question (n° 5) is to show the method they use for teaching modals in particular. Question n° 6, 7, and 8 have a respective objective to see whether Standard Arabic can be used to teach English modals to Algerian learners ; if 'no', why?; and if in teaching English modal usage, contrast between modal usage in Standard Arabic and the one in English can help Algerian learners acquire this part of speech. The last two questions are devoted to whether the use of lists plays an important role in explaining the meaning of modals (question n° 9), and if 'yes' the extent to which it does (question n° 10).

### 3.3 Analysis of the results

The analysis of some questions (question n°2 and 10) is carried out following the techniques of percentage of classes by the application of the law of mode, which is obtained from the summary of data in the form of the law of Surge:  $C = \text{outspread} / 1 + 3.32 \log (N)$ . The outspread is equivalent to the number of numbers. The central tendency is expressed by the following arithmetic average:

$$x = \frac{\sum fix_i}{\sum fi} \quad xi = \frac{a + b}{2} \text{ for a class } [a, b[$$

**Question n° 1:** is modal usage a problematic area for Algerian learners of English?

<i>Answers</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
<i>Yes</i>	10	90.91
<i>No</i>	1	9.09
<i>Total</i>	11	100

**Table19: Difficulty of Verb Modal Usage**

Ten (90.91) of the teachers questioned believe that modal usage is a problematic area for Algerian learners of English.

**Question n°2:** if 'yes', to what extent? (Choose 1, 2, or 3 to show the level of importance)

<i>Level of importance</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
<i>1</i>	0	0
<i>2</i>	3	36.37
<i>3</i>	7	63.63
<i>Total</i>	10	100

**Table20: Degree of Difficulty of Modal Verb Usage**

The analysis of the results obtained in this question follows the law of Surge:

$$C = \frac{\text{Outspread}}{1 + 3.32 \cdot \text{Log}(N)}$$

$$N = 10$$

$$\text{Log}(N) = 1$$

$$\text{Outspread} = 3 - 1 = 2$$

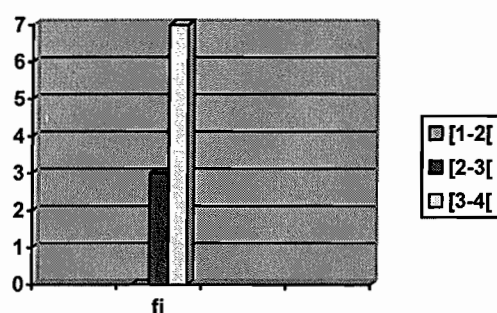
$$/ C = \frac{2}{1 + 3.32 \cdot (1)}$$

This means that our classes are:

[1-2[, [2-3[, [3-4[

<i>Classes</i>	<i>if</i>	<i>xi</i>	<i>fix</i>
[1-2[	0	0	0
[2-3[	3	36.37	7.5
[3-4[	7	63.63	24.5
<i>Total</i>	$\sum if = 10$	/	$\sum fix = 41$

**Table21: Effect of Different Factors on Learners' Modal Usage (Class Groupings)**



**Figure15: Effect of the Different Factors on Learners' Modal Usage**

Since the mode class is [3-4[with an absolute majority of seven, this demonstrates that nearly the majority of our teachers believe that handling modal usage can be a difficult enterprise for Algerian learners.

**Question n°3:** factors influencing L1 (first language) transfer affect the Algerian learners' modal usage. (Put 0, 1, 2, or 3 next to each factor to show its level of importance)

*Learner-Based Factors:*

- a) Proficiency
- b) Age

c) Target language exposure and use

d) Context

*Language- Based Factors:*

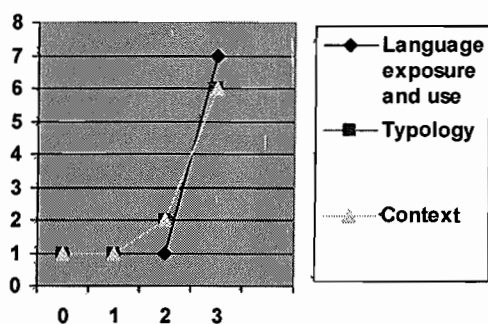
e) Language – typology (amount of linguistic distance between the two Languages)

f) Word class

g) Frequency (content vs. function words)

	<i>a</i>		<i>b</i>		<i>c</i>		<i>d</i>		<i>e</i>		<i>f</i>		<i>g</i>	
	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%
<i>0</i>	3	27.28	4	36.36	1	9.09	1	9.09	4	36.37	1	9.09	1	9.09
<i>1</i>	2	18.18	2	18.18	1	9.09	1	9.09	2	18.18	3	27.28	1	9.09
<i>2</i>	3	27.28	1	9.09	1	9.09	2	18.18	2	18.18	2	18.18	2	18.18
<i>3</i>	2	18.18	1	9.09	7	63.64	6	54.55	1	9.09	4	36.36	6	54.55
<i>No answer</i>	1	9.10	3	27.28	1	9.09	1	9.09	2	18.18	1	9.09	1	9.09
<i>Total</i>	11	100	11	100	11	100	11	100	11	100	11	100	11	100

**Table 22: Extent of the Effect of the Different factors influencing L1 Transfer on the Learners' Modal Usage**



**Figure 16: Extent of the Effect of Target Language Exposure and Use, Typology, and Context on Learners' Modal Usage**

The results show that both language- based factors and learner- based factors influence the Algerian learners' modal usage to varying degrees. Three factors

emerge as having the highest effect: target language exposure and use, context, typology.

**Question n°4:** the method you use when you teach grammar is

- Explicit
- Implicit
- Eclectic (a combination of the explicit and implicit method)

<i>Method</i>	N	%
<i>Explicit</i>	0	0
<i>Implicit</i>	2	18.18
<i>Eclectic</i>	9	81.82
<i>Total</i>	11	100

**Table 23: Methods Used for Teaching Grammar**

The percentage of teachers who would use the implicit method in teaching grammar is of 18.18%. With this method, learners are taught inductively grammar rules, i.e. they are unable to state explicitly those rules. However, the majority of the teachers (81.82%) prone an eclectic method for teaching grammar. This method is a combination of an explicit and an implicit way of teaching grammar. This means that teachers are for the explicit statement of the grammatical rules with a communicative framework.

**Question n°5:** the method you use when you teach modals is the:

- Explicit
- Implicit
- Eclectic

<i>Method</i>	N	%
<i>Explicit</i>	3	27.27
<i>Implicit</i>	0	0

<i>Eclectic</i>	7	63.64
<i>No Answer</i>	1	9.09
<i>Total</i>	11	100

**Table 24: Methods Used for Teaching Modals**

Whereas 27.27% of the teachers use the explicit method for teaching modals –where the meaning of modals would be presented inductively or deductively and practice of the meanings in question do not follow the presentation- 63.64% follow the eclectic method to teach modals.

**Question 6:** Standard Arabic can be used to teach English grammar to Algerian learners.

<i>Answers</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
<i>Yes</i>	2	18.18
<i>No</i>	9	81.82
<i>Total</i>	11	100

**Table 25: The Use of Standard Arabic in Teaching Grammar**

The majority of teachers (81.82%) do not resort to the use of Standard Arabic to teach grammar.

- The necessity of making students think in terms of the target language rather than the first language.
- Not all concepts expressed in one language are necessarily found in the other language.
- A necessity of development of the learners' consciousness of the right use through appropriate tasks.

**Question n°7:** In teaching English modal usage, contrast between modal usage in Standard Arabic and the one in English can help Algerian learners acquire this part of speech.

<i>Answers</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
<i>Yes</i>	10	90.91
<i>No</i>	1	9.09
<i>Total</i>	11	100

**Table 26: Contrast between Standard Arabic and English in Teaching Modals**

90.91% of the teachers agree that contrast between modal usage in Standard Arabic and the one in English can be helpful to Algerian learners. In fact, eight teachers of those who advocate the use of Standard Arabic for teaching grammar (question n°7) are not against the contrast between the two languages for teaching modals.

**Question n°9:** The use of lists can play an important role in explaining the meaning of modals.

<i>Answers</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
<i>Yes</i>	10	90.91
<i>No</i>	1	9.09
<i>Total</i>	11	100

**Table 27: The Use of Lists in Teaching some Modals**

Only 9.10 % of teachers consider lists of little help (level 1) in teaching modals.

According to the law of Sturge:

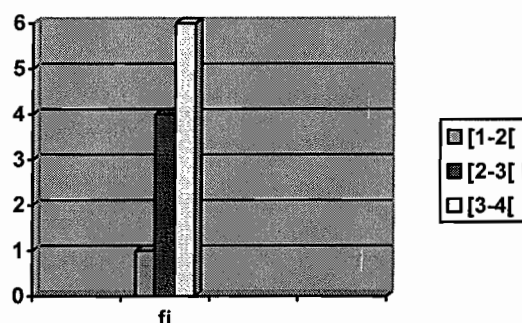
$$C = \frac{\text{outspread}}{1 + 3.32 \cdot \text{Log}(N)}$$

$N = 11$   
 $\text{Log}(N) = 1.0414$   
 $\text{Outspread} = 3 - 1 = 2$

$$C = \frac{2}{1 + 3.32 \cdot (1.0414)}$$

<i>Classes</i>	<i>f<sub>i</sub></i>	<i>x<sub>i</sub></i>	<i>fix<sub>i</sub></i>
[1-2[	1	1.5	1.5
[2-3[	4	2.5	10
[3-4[	6	3.5	21
<b>Total</b>	$\sum f_i = 11$	/	$\sum fix_i = 31$

**Table 28: Degree of Importance of Diagrams' Use in Teaching Modals (Class Groupings)**



**Figure 17: Degree of Importance of Diagrams' Use in Teaching Modals**

[3-4[ is the mode class where the majority is Six. So, more than half of the teachers believe that lists as well as illustrations can be an important instructional visual aid for teaching modals.

The results show that the majority of grammar teachers look at modal usage as being a problematic area for Algerian learners. They also consider the amount of target language exposure and use, typology, and word class as factors having

the highest level of importance as factors influencing L1 transfer. As for the method the best method for teaching modals is the eclectic one. For what concerns contrast between modal usages in both languages, nearly all teachers think of it as a way that may help learners acquire the part of speech investigated. Finally, all the teachers agree on the usefulness of using lists in explaining the meanings of modals.

#### **4. Interpretation of the Results**

The questionnaire revealed that Standard Arabic affects the Algerian learners' modal usage, and it manifests itself either in the form of positive or negative transfer. However, the testees tend to transfer when the construction of modal + particle is more marked in Standard Arabic than it is in English. The test also revealed that other forms of Arabic such as Algerian Arabic, as well as other languages used in Algerian, namely, French and Berber could also affect the learners' modal usage. In addition to that, the teachers' questionnaire (see p.78) has shown that language distance and the amount of target language exposure and use (see table 22, p.82) can be important factors influencing transfer.

##### **4.1 Teaching Modals**

###### **4.1.1 The Method**

Modals are high frequency words which are of vital importance to foreign learners with regard to understanding the language and making themselves understood. Yet, the biggest problems ESL learners face with modals is their meanings and structure as Cook (1978) states that: "the problem lies not only in the surface positioning of modals or in their wide range of meanings, but in associating the right modal with the right meaning". (p.5)

Teachers need to raise learners' awareness of the important features of English modal semantics – accounting for permission, obligation, prohibition...etc – through explicit instruction in the form of 'consciousness raising' or what

Sharwood-Smith (1993) refers to as 'input enhancement' (63.64 % of the teacher to whom the questionnaire was handed out-see (Table 24, p.84) advocate the use of the use of the eclectic method for teaching modals).this method can be useful only if accompanied by examples aimed at the production of grammatical structures, by facilitating intake through comprehension of grammatical features.

Moreover, this method can prove to be more useful if emphasis is put on the learners' understanding of the basic meanings of modals because, firstly, students could be confused about why we sometimes use one modal rather than another which seems to be similar in meaning.

In sum, learners should be helped to restructure their L1 concepts and define now semantic boundaries. Secondly, the learners must be aware of the present and future time relationships in modal contexts without using agreements between the Subject and the modal and without conjugating the modal itself as opposed to Arabic. So learners who are unclear about the structure and the different meanings of modals are likely to be disadvantaged.

#### **4.1.2 A Model Lesson**

Our model lesson for teaching modals is organized into three stages: the presentation stage, the isolation and the explanation stage, and the practice stage (Ur, 1988):

1. The presentation stage: in this stage, we present the class with a text which includes a variety of English modals. This stage aims at getting the learners to perceive the form of English modals (modals vs. semi modals). In fact, the objective of this stage, according to Ur (1988) "is to introduce and ensure an understanding of the language that will be practised and used later" (p. 129). Modals, for instance, can be highlighted by underlining them.
2. The isolation and explanation stage: in which we focus on leading learners to understand the functional characteristics of modals and different meanings they express. In explaining the literal meaning

of modals, teachers can resort to the use of lists – 54.54% of grammar teachers (see, Table 28, p.86) were to a large extent in favour of using lists for teaching modals – and /or verbal cues which help to explain the different meanings of modals.

Karkkainen (1992) suggests beginning at the level of sentence and teach the semantics of these items first, “because of the fairly distinct core meanings that they may have” (p. 213). He further suggests teaching the syntactic patterns related to these meanings. Thus creating the idea of a “modal grammar” (Ibid: p.214).

At this level, Standard Arabic can be used as a means of explanation by raising the learners’ attention to equivalences and differences between the two languages (in our questionnaire –see Annex, Table 26, p. 85). 91% of the teachers agreed on contrast between Standard Arabic and English in teaching modals).

3. The practise stage: it consists of a series of activities whose aim is to cause the learners to absorb English modal usage thoroughly. Those activities can be of two kinds:

a. Meaningful drill activities: in such activities, “the learner cannot complete the drill without fully understanding structurally and semantically, what he is saying” (Paulston, 1971: 206). Example of such activities can be gap filling, and description questions about meanings (in which learners, if they have understood the core analytical meaning will be ready to discuss the meaning by paraphrasing).

b. Communicative drill activities: such activities should lead the learner to engage into free communication where practice of the use of modals should be the main objective.

Examples of such activities can be conversing and writing a story.

## **Conclusion**

In the light of what has been presented in this chapter, the results shown that Algerian learners do have difficulties and problems when handling the modal verbs structure. In fact, Standard Arabic affects the English modal usage either positively when both languages use the same structure, i.e. when there is no co occurrence of the modal verb in the same sentence or negatively, when the two languages use different structures as it is the case when using the particle “to” or the agreement between the subject and the verb that follows the modal. In addition to that, teachers should make learners understand the basic meanings of modals because a thorough teaching and explaining of the concept of modals and modality is the best way for students to learn. Such a presentation may lead to a mastery and acquisition of the usage of the part of speech in question.

## Conclusion

In this dissertation, we set out to find the extent to which Standard Arabic affects the Algerian learners' modal usage in English. We also tried to give some pedagogical suggestions on the method that should be used to teach the learners.

The conclusion we got from the analysis of the students' test was that even though Standard Arabic could have been at the origin of errors as well as the correct answers made by Algerian learners in their judgement about correct usage of modals, it was not only the source of knowledge which could have affected their usage: Algerian Arabic, French and Berber could have done so. However, in all cases, it came out that problems learners have with modals are of three types: wrong usage of modals, use of particle, co-occurring with a noun.

Because of the very asystematic nature of the rules governing the usage of the part of speech investigated in this dissertation, we have suggested that to acquire this part of speech, teaching should have as its main objective, in addition to the learners' understanding of the modals' grammatical properties, the understanding of the prototypical meaning of modals by engaging learners into meaningful and communicative drill activities.

In helping learners achieve such an objective, we have argued in favour of the use of lists as a useful means of explanation; and we are also in favour of the use of Standard Arabic to account for similarities and differences between the two languages and thus help the learners reconstruct their conceptual system in accordance with the target language formal correspondences.

## *Appendixes*

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*Appendix I*  
*The Student Questionnaire*

*This questionnaire is part of a research work which is intended to the analysis of whether and to what extent Standard Arabic affects Algerian learners' English modal verbs' structure. The principle aim of the questionnaire is to explore the nature of errors made by Algerian learners concerning English structure and trying to find the best way to teach them.*

*I would be grateful if you could answer the following questionnaire by ticking (✓) the appropriate box.*

*Thank you for your participation, we greatly appreciate your help.*

*Miss Nesrine SAOUDI*  
*Department of Foreign Languages*  
*University Centre Oum El Bouaghi*

1- Are modal verbs a difficult area in learning English?

Yes  No

If "yes", to what extent? (Choose 1, 2 or 3 to show the level of importance)

1  2  3

2- Do you have problems with using modal verbs?

Yes  No

3- Do you refer to Algerian Arabic when trying to use the appropriate modal verb?

Yes  No

4- Is there an agreement between the subject and the modal verb?

Yes  No

5- Do modal verbs take "-s" in the third person?

Yes  No

6-Do modal verbs take "-ed" in the past?

Yes  No

7- Do teachers use Standard Arabic to teach English grammar to Algerian Learners?

Yes  No

8- In teaching English modal verb's usage, contrast between modal verb usage in Standard Arabic and the one in English can help you as learners to acquire this part of speech.

Yes  No

8- If "No", why?

.....

9- *The use of lists can play an important role in explaining the meaning of some modal verbs.*

Yes

No

10- *If “yes”, to what extent? (Choose 1, 2 or 3 to show the level of importance)*

1

2

3

11- *Do you use a noun after a modal verb?*

Yes

No

12- *Do you use the particle “to” after a modal verb?*

Yes

No

13- *The use of list can play an important role in explaining the meaning of some modal verbs.*

Yes

No

14- *What is the best method of learning grammar?*

*Implicit*

*Explicit*

*Eclectic*

## *The Student Test*

Rewrite the sentences so that they have the same meanings as the original. You must use a modal verb.

What are your plans for the weekend?

Make a note in the boxes bellow of all the things you might do, could do, should do, must do, can do and will do:

I might ...	I could ...	I should ...
I must ...	I can ...	I will ...

*Appendix II*  
*The Teacher's Questionnaire*

*Dear teacher,*

*This questionnaire is part of a research work which is intended to the analysis of whether and to what extent Standard Arabic affects Algerian learners' modal verb's usage. As for the questionnaire, it aims at tapping into your experiences on the teaching method that could be suitable for such a situation as well as the effect of the various constraints of transfer on the Algerian learners' usage of modal verbs.*

*I would be grateful if you could answer the following questionnaire by ticking (√) the appropriate box, or by marking a full statement wherever needed.*

*Thank you for your collaboration.*

*Miss Nesrine SAOUDI*  
*Department of Foreign Languages*  
*University Centre Oum El Bouaghi*

1- Is modal verbs usage a problematic area for Algerian learners?

Yes

No

2- If "yes", to what extent? (Choose 1, 2 or 3 to show the level of importance)

1

2

3

3- Factors influencing L1 (First Language) transfer affect the Algerian learners' modal verb's usage. (Put 0, 1, and 2 next to each category to show the level of importance of each factor)

Learner- Based Factors:

a) Proficiency

b) Target language exposure and use

c) Context (sociolinguistic factors)

d) Age

Language- Based Factors:

e) Language- Typology (linguistic distance between two languages)

f) Word Class (content Vs function words)

g) Frequency

4- The method you use when teaching grammar is the:

a) Explicit

b) Implicit

c) Eclectic (an association of the explicit and implicit method)

5- The method you use when teaching modal verbs:

a) Explicit

b) Implicit

c) Eclectic

6- *Standard Arabic can be used to teach English grammar to Algerian Learners.*

Yes

No

7- *In teaching English modal verb's usage, contrast between modal verb usage in Standard Arabic and the one in English can help Algerian learners acquire this part of speech.*

Yes

No

8- *If "No", why?*

.....

9- *The use of lists can play an important role in explaining the meaning of some modal verbs.*

Yes

No

10- *If "yes", to what extent? (Choose 1, 2 or 3 to show the level of importance)*

1

2

3

11- *Do learners make use of agreement between the subject and the verb following the modal?*

Yes

No

12- *Do learners use the particle "to" after the modal verb?*

Yes

No

13- *Do learners employ nouns after modal verbs?*

Yes

No

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## RÉSUMÉ

L'objet de ce travail de recherche porte sur l'effet de la langue arabe standard sur l'usage des verbes modaux en anglais par les étudiants Algériens. Ce travail est aussi consacré à trouver la méthode d'enseignement la plus appropriée à cette situation.

L'hypothèse fut évaluée au moyen d'un test administré aux étudiants, et dont les résultats démontrent que le transfert de la langue arabe standard peut être à l'origine de l'usage correct des verbes modaux, comme il peut aussi être à l'origine des erreurs d'usage de types suivants :

- Accord entre le verbe et le sujet,
- l'usage d'un verbe modal superflu,
- l'omission d'un verbe modal requis.

Les résultats ont également démontré la tendance des étudiants à ne pas recourir au transfert quand l'usage des verbes modaux en anglais, comparé à celui en langue arabe standard, est non – marqué. Cependant, d'autres langues à savoir l'Arabe algérien, le Berbère, et le Français, peuvent avoir les mêmes effets que la langue arabe standard sur l'usage des verbes modaux par ces étudiants. Quant au questionnaire distribué aux enseignants de grammaire les résultats démontrent que, pour ces derniers, la méthode la plus adéquate à l'enseignement des verbes modaux est la méthode éclectique.

Basée sur ces conclusions, une leçon modèle ainsi que quelques verbes modaux ont été fournis aux enseignants, avec l'espoir de pouvoir les aider à mieux comprendre, prévoir, et anticiper l'usage des verbes modaux des étudiants, et faire que ces derniers puissent surmonter les problèmes qu'ils ont avec cette catégorie grammaticale.

## ***ERRATA***

- ***Top Page:*** Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences, instead of Institute of Letters and Languages.
- ***Top Page:*** Transfer of Modal Structure from Standard Arabic to English; Case Study: Second Year Students, Department of English, University of Annaba, instead of Transfer of Modal from Standard Arabic to English.
- ***Top Page:*** Year 2010, instead of Year 2009.
- ***Abstract, Page I, First Paragraph:*** The purpose of this work is to examine ....on acquiring an understanding of modal verb usage in English, instead of The purpose of this work is to examine ....in acquiring an understanding of modal verb usage in English.
- ***Abstract, Page I, Second Paragraph:*** The stated hypothesis was evaluated; instead of the hypothesis was evaluated.
- ***Abstract, Page I, Second Paragraph:*** Standard Arabic would affect the correct use of modal verbs; instead of Standard Arabic may be responsible for affect the correct use of modal verbs.
- ***Abstract, Page I, Third Paragraph:*** The test results also showed the tendency of student to use transfer from Arabic to English when facing difficulties; instead of The results also showed the tendency of student to use transfer when facing difficulties.
- ***Abstract, Page I, Fourth Paragraph:*** Based on the findings suggested in the interpretation of the results; instead of Based on these findings.
- ***Chapter One, Introduction, Page 04:*** The introduction is revised.
- ***Chapter One, Conclusion, Page 23:*** This chapter shows that there is a considerable evidence; instead of thus, it seems clear that there that there is a considerable evidence.

- ***Chapter Two, Introduction, Page 24:*** This chapter shed lights the issue of grammar instruction; instead of In this chapter I will be defining grammar and I will also try to shed light the issue of grammar instruction.
- ***Chapter Three, Introduction, Page 44:*** The introduction is revised
- ***Chapter Three, Definition of Modality, Page 49:*** ELL (English Language Learning; instead of ELL.
- ***Chapter Four, The Sample, Page 60:*** The sample of this study is second year student; instead of the subjects of this study are second year students.
- ***Chapter Four, Description of the test, Page 60:*** Most of the students completed the test in around one hour; instead of Most of the students completed the test and returned it at the end of the day.
- ***Chapter Four, Page 87:*** 4.Interpretation of the Results; instead of 4.Pedagogical Implications.