

Modality in English and Standard Arabic: Paraphrase and Equivalence

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Abstract. This paper aims at establishing standard Arabic equivalents of English expressions pertaining to two major subcategories of modality. Beyond that an attempt is made to recognize on formal syntactico-semantic grounds the grammatical category of modality in standard Arabic, which Arabic grammarians have not explicitly recognized as a separate category.

Furthermore, it is hoped that this piece of work will serve three purposes:

1. helping Arab learners of English attain a better understanding of the function and semantics of English modal auxiliaries. Thus, 'He must have lost the way', for instance, does not express an obligation at all; it expresses an inference/conclusion.

2. helping foreign learners of Modern Standard Arabic attain some knowledge of the models of expressing modality in Arabic. For example, to express a slight likelihood in Standard Arabic, the particle /qad/ + Nonpast tense is used as in: / qād yanzilu lmāTāru masaaʔan / 'Rain might fall, in the evening.'

3. facilitating the task of students of English-Arabic translation insofar as modality is concerned. Thus, the English sentence 'He must be joking' is to be understood as an inference/conclusion, not as an obligation/necessity. Hence, it is wrong to translate it as 'yajibu / yanbaʔi ʔan ... | The appropriate translation is: ' laa budda ʔ annahu yamzah'

Brief reading conventions pertaining to some Arabic sounds.

1) *Consonants:*

ʔ glottal stop

θ voiceless, dental, non-sulcal fricative

ð voiced, dental non-sulcal fricative

ʃ voiceless, dento-alveolar, sulcal fricative

S voiceless, dento-alveolar, sulcal, emphatic fricative

D voiced, dento-alveolar, emphatic plosive
 T voiceless, dento-alveolar, emphatic plosive
 ð voiced, dental, non-sulcal, emphatic fricative
 j voiced, palato-alveolar affricate
 ɸ voiceless, pharyngeal : fricative
 ɣ voiced, pharyngeal fricative
 x voiceless, uvular fricative
 ɢ voiced, uvular fricative
 q voiceless, uvular plosive

2) Vowels:

Each vowel symbol stands for a range of vocalic sounds of the type indicated. Long vowels are shown by doubled letters. e.g. /aa-/ stands for a long front open vowel.

i front, close, spread
 e mid, front, spread
 a front, open, neutral
 ā back, open, neutral
 o mid, back, rounded
 u back, close, rounded

1. Introduction

Students of English as a foreign language cannot get very far without modal auxiliaries. The latter constitute a salient and basic category in the grammar of English and are as important as they are complex. The subtlety and complexity of the meaning and function of these modal auxiliaries are so very often disguised beneath a simple structural organization. Therefore, non-native learners of English, including university students majoring in English, take the meaning of modal auxiliaries for granted. As an example of misguided use of the modal auxiliary 'must,' for instance, consider:

1. He must have seen her.

Asked to paraphrase this sentence, 'enlightened' third and fourth year students majoring in English at a Jordanian University suggested the following:

- (a) It is necessary for him to see her.
- (b) It was necessary for him to see her.
- (c) He is obliged to see her.
- (d) He was obliged to see her.

Evidently, such paraphrases are motivated by a partial and misleading understanding of the semantics of 'must.' The students had assumed that 'must' expresses an obligation, and were astounded when it was pointed out to them that the sentence at 1 expresses an inference/ conclusion paraphrasable as (e):

(e) 'The only possible/reasonable conclusion is that he saw her.'⁽¹⁾

The question of translating English modal auxiliaries into Modern Standard Arabic (henceforth MSA) poses two fundamental problems:

(i) understanding the right meaning, and

(ii) finding the appropriate expression in Arabic that gives the meaning, i.e. an equivalent expression.

This paper is intended to deal with the principal issues involved in the translation into MSA of utterances containing English modal auxiliaries. It is hoped it will serve three purposes:

1. Helping Arab learners of English understand the function and semantics of English modal auxiliaries.

2. Helping foreign learners of MSA understand modes of expressing modality in Arabic.

3. Facilitating the task of students of English-Arabic translation insofar as modality is concerned.

2. Translation of English Modal Auxiliaries into MSA

Two main categories of modality will be dealt with in this paper, namely, *epistemic* and *deontic* modality.

2.1. Epistemic Modality

At the risk of oversimplification, epistemic modality may be construed as relating to utterances which involve judgements having to do with possibility or likelihood. Such judgements are usually informed by circumstantial evidence and/or previous experience. Imagine a situation where two or more people are discussing the whereabouts of the manager of a certain firm. On the basis of past experience and/or circumstantial evidence, one of the interlocutors might say:

1. The manager may be at home.

This sentence can be paraphrased as: 'It is possible that the manager is at home'

(1) Cf. F.R. Palmer, *Modality and the English Modals* (London; Longman, 1979), pp. 41-42.

which suggests that the modal auxiliary 'may' conveys a sense of possibility in this context. On the other hand, the same interlocutor might say:

2. The manager must be at home.

Which is paraphrasable as 'The only possible conclusion is that the manager is at home'.⁽²⁾ Here the modal auxiliary 'must' expresses the epistemic modality of a likely inference/conclusion.

Note that the epistemic modality in 1 and 2 above relates to the semantic proposition, i.e. meaning expressed by the declarative sentence 'The manager is at home.'⁽³⁾ In other words, 1 and 2 can be paraphrased respectively as: 'It is possible that *p*' and 'The only possible conclusion is that *p*', where *p* stands for the proposition in question.

Now consider the translation into MSA of 1 and 2 above (repeated here):

1. The manager may be at home.

- a) 'yumkinu an yakuuna lmudiiru filbayt,' or,
- b) 'mina lmumkini an yakuuna lmudiiru filbayt,' or,
- c) 'yuḥtamalu an yakuuna lmudiiru filbayt,'
anna lmudiirā filbayt,' or,
- d) 'mina lmuḥamali an yakuuna lmudiiru filbayt,'
anna lmudiirā filbayt,' or,
- e) 'rubbāmaa yakuunu lmudiiru filbayt,'
anna lmudiirā filbayt, or
- f) 'qād yakuunu lmudiiru filbayt,'

2. The manager must be at home.

- a) 'mina lmuʔakkadi ʔanna lmudiira filbayt,'
- b) 'laa budda ʔanna lmudiira filbayt,'

There is a remarkable similarity between the grammatical structure of the English and the equivalent Arabic expressions. All the Arabic translations contain an epistemic modal constituent followed by a proposition, paralleled to the corresponding English constituents. The multiplicity of Arabic forms (cf. (a) ... (f) under 1) is due to the fact that unlike English, Arabic does not seem to have grammaticalized modality — hence a variety of lexical items are used to express the meaning of a single English modal auxiliary. But it must not be assumed that the paraphrases (a) ... (f) under (1) are exact synonyms, notwithstanding the fact that they are plausible renderings of the meaning of the English sentence.

(2) Palmer, pp. 41-44.

(3) Ibid.

The forms 'yumkin' and 'mumkin' are relatable to the trilateral root /m-k-n/. But none of the most well known old lexicons of Arabic, e.g. *lisaanu 19ārāb*, seem to give the root /m-k-n/, an explicit epistemic sense. Nonetheless, the use of derivatives of the root/m-k-n/ to express epistemic modality of the type mentioned above is very common indeed in MSA, notably in journalistic Arabic. Consider the following examples taken from recent issues of Jordanian newspapers.

3. ?inna 19aalama laa *yumkinu* ?an yajuu9'
'Truly, it is not possible that the world will starve....'(4)
4. 'wakaana yumkinu ?an nafhama haza a lqaraar ... '
'It would have been possible for us to understand this decision ...'(5)
5. '?illaa ?annahu bittaxTiiTi 19ilmiyyi ssaalimi
yumkinu lwuSuulu ?ilaa nataa?ija mutaqaaddimah ... '
'But it is possible that comprehensive scientific planning will yield advanced results'(6)

The forms /yuḥtamal/ and /muḥtamal/ are, of course, derived from the tri-literal root /ḥ-m-l/, which is polysemic, and epistemic possibility or likelihood is one of its meanings. Here again, *lisaanu 19ārāb*, for instance, makes no mention of this meaning of /ḥ-m-l/, which is commonplace in MSA. Weather forecasts, for instance, abound in forms of /ḥ-m-l/ used epistemically.

The Arabic form /rubbāmaa/ is probably the nearest equivalent of English 'may'. Its use is subject to certain syntactic constraints:

- (i) It is normally followed by a verbal sentence introduced by a verb form, as in:
/rubbamaa yakuunu lmudiiru filbayt/.
- (ii) it can be followed by a nominal sentence introduced by the complementizer
'?anna' as in: /rubbamaa ?anna lmudiira filbayt/.

The modal particle /qād/ is always followed by a verb form, hence: /qād yakuunu lmudiiru filbayt/. Followed by a nonpast tense, 'qad' normally conveys the epistemic sense of uncertainty; it casts doubt on the likelihood of existence of the state or occurrence of the event. This is in contrast with, say,

qād kaana lmudirru filbayt

(4) *Al-Liwa'* newspaper, 22 April, 1987, p. 4.
 (5) *Al-Ra'y* newspaper, 29 April, 1987, p. 1.
 (6) *Al-Ra'y* newspaper, 26 April, 1987, p. 11.

where qād and the following past tense express a sense of certainty.

Now consider the second example, namely:

2. The manager must be at home.

Palmer paraphrases this use of epistemic 'must' as:

'The only possible conclusion is that ... '(7)
so, 2 is paraphrasable as:

'The only possible conclusion is that the manager is at home.'

The corresponding paraphrase in Arabic is:

laa budda ?anna lmudiirā filbayt.

In this modalized expression the speaker is suggesting that on the basis of available evidence it can be concluded that the manager is at home. The force of this modality might approach certainty but is not equivalent to certainty; it allows for an error margin, however slight it might be. Both English 'must' and Arabic 'laa budda' share these semantic implications.

of course, no past tense can be derived from 'must,' and in order to signal conclusions/inferences having to do with past-time states or events the expression:

(*must + have + past participle*)

is used. The Arabic equivalent is

(*laa budda ?anna + past tense*)

Consider 4 and 5 below:

4. The manager must have been at home.

'laa budda ?anna lumudiira kaana filbayt'

5. The Arabs must have settled here.

'laa budda ?anna l9araba ?aqamuun huna'.

(7) Palmer, p. 44.

The last two examples (4 and 5) are paraphrasable respectively as in 4 (a) and 5 (a):

4. a) The only possible conclusion is that the manager was at home.

'(lit) ?al?istintaaju lwahiidu lmmuhtamalu huwa ?anna lmudiira kaana filbayt.'

5. a) The only possible conclusion is that the Arabs settled here.

'(lit) ?al?istintaaju lwahiidu lmuhtamalu huwa ?anna l9araba ?aqaamuu hunaa.'

Perhaps these literal translations of 4 (a) and 5 (a) into Arabic are unsatisfactory, and native speakers of Arabic, notably Arabic scholars, tend to endorse them with reluctance. They are cited here simply as literal equivalents of the English paraphrases of modal expressions involving 'must + have + past participle.' In fact the former Arabic translations of 4 and 5, i.e. those involving 'laa budda ?anna + past tense' are very accurate equivalents of 'must + have + past participle.'

It must be emphasized at this junction that, for instance, 2 (i.e. The manager must be at home) and its past time correlative 4 (i.e. The manager must have been at home) are modalized expressions involving certain epistemic commitments on the part of the speaker. They are not equivalent to the corresponding non-modalized assertions at 6 and 7:

6. The manager is at home.

'?almudiiru filbayt'.

7. The manager was at home.

'?almudiiru kaana filbayt' or 'kaana lmudiiru filbayt'.

The examples at 6 and 7, in English and Arabic, are non-modalized assertions which may be true or false. The speaker here does not make any commitments vis-à-vis the proposition involved. 6 and 7 may be regarded as *factive* assertions (with no personal involvement) whereas 2 and 4 may be regarded as *non-factive* inferences. But it must be added that epistemic modalities are subjective in that they depend on the judgement of the speaker.⁽⁸⁾

Another English modal auxiliary can be used epistemically, namely 'will'. Consider:

8. Tell her Mr. Barber is here; she will remember Mr. Barber.

'?axbirhaa ?anna ssayyid baarbar hunaa; satadkuru ssayyid baarbar.'

(8) Ibid., p. 42.

Perhaps the Arabic translation at 8 is not as informative as the English expression. The word /bitta?kiid/ 'certainly' can be added to the Arabic translation to make it a closer equivalent of the English expression, i.e. 8 is best rendered in Arabic as:

'?axbirhaa ?anna ssayyid baarbar hunaa;
satadkuru ssayyid baarbar bitta?kiid.'

Negation of Epistemic Modality

The negation of epistemic modality generates interesting semantic implications, and the Arabic translation ought to be attempted with even more care in order to capture the attendant semantic nuances. Consider:

9. It may not rain tomorrow.
'qad laa tumTiru gadan.
rubbamaa (?annahaa) laa tumTiru gadan.

The sentence at 9 can be paraphrased as in 9 (a)

9. a) It is possible that it not rain tomorrow.

This paraphrase clearly suggests that the modality in 9 is not negated; rather it is the main verb that is negated. The corresponding Arabic version at 9 depicts this semantic interpretation rather unequivocally because the negative marker 'laa' always occurs immediately before the syntactic element it negates. Hence, in the Arabic equivalent of 9 it is evident that 'laa' belongs with the main verb 'tumTiru,' and not with the modal element 'qad'/'rubbamaa.'

Now consider the Arabic equivalents of the following sentences which involve negated epistemic modality.⁽⁹⁾

10. He may be in the library.
'qad/rubbamaa yakuuna filmaktabah.'
11. He must be in the library.
'laa budda ?annahu filmaktabah'
12. He can't be in the library.
'laa yumkinu ?an yakuuna filmaktabah.'

On the one hand 'may' and 'can't' in example 10 and 12 respectively are, as it were,

(9) Ibid., p. 155.

at opposite ends of the epistemic scale of likelihood, 'may' being at the lower end of this scale and 'can't' at the higher end. Thus, 10 states that 'It is possible that (he be in the library)' whereas 12 means 'It is not possible/reasonable that (he be in the library).' On the other hand, epistemic 'must' in 11 has no negative. Thus 13 can hardly be interpreted epistemically.

13. He mustn't be in the library.

Insofar as the modality is concerned 12 is, in fact, the negative of 11. Compare the paraphrase of each of these sentences at 11 (a) and 12 (a) respectively:

11 (a) It is reasonable to conclude/The only possible conclusion is that he is in the library.

12 (a) It is reasonable to conclude/The only possible conclusion is that he is not in the library.

Thus, in 12 (as the paraphrase at 12 (a) shows) the modality is negated but not the main verb. The Arabic translation of 12 is congruent with this interpretation: it shows that the negative particle 'laa' immediately precedes the modal element 'yumkin' and therefore negates the modality. Note too, that the Arabic translation of 10, 11 and 12 mirrors the same semantic relationships and contrasts involved in the English sentences. Hence 11 and 12 are antonymous inferences, whereas 10 and 12 are at opposite ends of the epistemic scale of possibility.

Now compare 12 and 14 below:

14. He may not be in the library.
'qad laa yakuunu filmaktabah'.

Whereas 12 indicates that 'It is not possible/reasonable that (he be in the library)' 14 says that 'It is possible that (he not be in the library)'. In 12 the modality is negative and the proposition (he be in the library) is positive, but in 14 the reverse is true, i.e. the modality is positive and the proposition is negative.⁽¹⁰⁾ The Arabic translations of 12 and 14 are perfect equivalences of the English sentences exhibiting the same semantic mapping. Thus in 12 the negative particle 'laa' immediately precedes the modal element 'yumkin' thereby negating the modality but in 14, the negative particle immediately precedes the proposition (yakunnu filmaktabah 'be in the library') thereby negating the proposition.

(10) Cf. Palmer, F.R. (6) 'Non-assertion and Modality,' in Allerton, D.J. *et al.*, eds. *Function and Context in Linguistic Analysis: A Festschrift for William Haas* (Cambridge; Cambridge University Press, 1979), p. 187.

The syntactic opposition exhibited in 12 and 14 and the corresponding Arabic equivalences hinge on the position of the negative particle. In English, the negative particle follows the modal auxiliary (and when contracted it is suffixed to the auxiliary), whereas in Arabic the distribution of the negative particle/*laa*/is different. Consequently, in English it is not obvious whether the negation pertains to the modality or to the proposition. In Arabic, on the other hand, the negative particle negates the element that follows it.

Perhaps it should be pointed out that in spoken English, the modal constituent 'May be' is used as in 15:

15. May be he is not in the library.

where the negative particle 'not' clearly belongs with the proposition (he be in the library). The Arabic equivalent is:

rubbamaa ?annahu laysa filmaktabah/ la9allahu laysa filmaktabah.

The appropriate negative particle here is, of course, /*laysa*/ 'not.' But equally the negative particle /*laa*/ has to be obligatorily selected if the proposition is expressed by means of a verbal sentence, as in 16:

16. May be she doesn't go to school every day.

'rubbamaa ?annahaa/la9allahaa laa tadhabu ?ila lmadrasati kulla yawm.'

As 16 shows, the syntactic and semantic structures of the English sentence and the Arabic equivalent, in this case, are remarkably similar.

2.2. Deontic Modality

Deontic modality pertains to the use of language to express desires, wants, commands, obligations, undertakings and permissions. It tends to share a great deal with performatives. 'By uttering a modal,' says Palmer, 'a speaker may actually give permission (May, Can), and make a promise or threat (Shall) or lay an obligation (Must).'⁽¹¹⁾ And since it is not possible to desire, give permission, promise, threaten, or lay an obligation in the past, deontic modality, like performatives, is compatible only with non-past events.

(11) Palmer, *Modality*, p. 58.

2.2.1. Permission

This subcategory of deontic modality is expressed by means of the following exponents: 'May', and 'Can.' Consider:

17. You may come in.

'laka/biwus9ika/bi?imkaanika/yumkinuka ?an tadxul.

18. He may borrow these books again if he wishes.

'lahu/biwus9ihi/bi?imkaanihi/yumkinuhu ?an yasta9 iira
haadihi lkutuba thetaaniyatan ?in šaa?.

19. You can see her now.

'laka/biwus9ika/bi?imkaanika/yumkinuka ?an taraaha l?aan.

In English, deontic 'may' is more formal than 'can.'⁽¹²⁾ Ehrman noted that the use of 'can' for permission is most frequent in speech, notably dialogue. It is rather difficult to find Arabic equivalents of 'may' and 'can' which bring out this stylistic difference. But since 'can' has semantic associations with physical ability elsewhere, it seems reasonable to translate it in Arabic by using 'bi?imkaanik' or 'biwus9ik,' both of which combine features of ability and permission simultaneously. 'lak,' which seems to be more formal than both 'bi?imkaanik' and 'biwus9ik,' can then be used as the equivalent of 'may'. Compare 20 and 21.

20. You may cross-examine the witness.

'laka ?an tastajwiba al-shaahid.

21. You can come in now.

'bi?imkaanika/biwus9ika ?an tadxula l?aan'.

2.2.2. Undertaking

The modal auxiliary 'shall' is used to give an undertaking, e.g. a promise, a guarantee, a threat. For instance:

22. You (m. sing.) shall meet the President tonight.

'lasawfa tuqaabilu/latuqaabilanna rra?iisa (haadihi) llaylah'.

23. You (m.pl.) shall see the fire of hell.

'latarawunna ljahiim'.

24. And he shall be content.

'walasawfa yarDaa.'

(12) Cf. Palmer, *Modality*, p. 60, and M.E. Ehrman, *The Meanings of the Modals in Present Day English* (The Hague : Mouton, 1966), pp. 12, 23.

As these examples show, the Arabic equivalents of deontic 'shall' combine the following grammatical features:

- (1) *la* → a particle of emphasis
- (2) *sawfa* → a particle of futurity
- (3) nonpast tense form without the so-called 'nunation',
i.e. n-of-emphasis, realized as a geminate alveolar nasal suffix, e.g.
lasawfa yarDaa
'He shall be content.'

Otherwise, 'sawfa' is dropped and a geminate alveolar nasal is suffixed to the nonpast as in e.g.

- latarawunna ljahiim*
'You (m.pl.) shall see the fire of hell.'

In example 22, the speaker gives an undertaking that his interlocutor will meet the President. In 23, the speaker warns his addressees that they will certainly see the fire of hell. In 24, the speaker assures his addressee that he will be happy and content.

2.2.3. Obligation/Necessity

Deontic obligation/necessity can be expressed by using the modal auxiliary 'must.' Examples:

25. You must be more careful in the future.

'*9alayka/?an takuuna ?akθar hađaran filmustaqbal*' or,
'*yajibu (9alayka) ?an takuuna ?akθara hađaran filmustaqbal*'

26. He must take this medicine three times a day.

'*9alayhi ?an yatanawala haada ddawaa?a θalaaθa marraatin filyawm*' or,
'*yajibu (9alayhi) ?an yatanaawala haada ddawaa?a θalaaθa marraatin filyawm*'.

The examples at 25 and 26 are respectively equivalent to the commands at 25 (a) and 26 (a).

25. a) Be more careful in the future.

'*kun ?akθara hađaran filmustaqbal*.'

26. a) Take this medicine three times a day.

'*tanaawal ħaađa ddawaa?a θalaaθa marraatin filyawm*.'

As can be seen in 25 and 26, the Arabic equivalents of deontic 'must' are the following:

either, *9alayka + ?an*
or, *yajibu (9alayka) + ?an*

Note that e.g. 'You must be careful' is ambiguous; it admits of two interpretations depending on whether 'must' is deontic or epistemic. The Arabic equivalents are:

- (a) 9alayka/yajibu (9alayka) ?an takuuna hadiraa (Deontic)
 (b) laabudda ?annaka hadir (Epistemic)

Two other modal auxiliaries, namely 'should' and 'ought to' are exponents of a mild obligation in comparison with 'must' which conveys a strong obligation. Consider 27, 28 and 29 below:

27. You should/ought to return the book to the library.
 'yanba 9ii ?an tu9iida lkitaaba ?ila lmaktabah.'
28. He should/ought to call the doctor.
 'yanba 9ii ?an yastad9iya TTabiib'.
29. I should/ought to resign.
 'yanba 9ii ?an ?astaqiil'.

Note that the equivalents of deontic must in Arabic are 'yajib/9ala + pronoun' whereas that of should/ought to is 'yanbagii.' The form 'yanba 9ii' in Arabic expresses the subject's obligations or duty,⁽¹³⁾ just as much as 'should/ought to' does in English.

It is by now evident that 'should' and 'ought to' have been used interchangeably. They 'have very similar meanings,' says Swan.⁽⁶⁾ They are used to express obligation and duty, to give advice and in general, what we think it is right or good for people to do.⁽¹⁴⁾ Further evidence of their similarity of meaning is adduced from the fact that "questions or remarks with 'ought to' can be answered with 'should',"⁽¹⁵⁾ as Thomson puts it. Consider:

30. a) You ought to read this book.
 'yanba 9ii ?an taqra?a haada lkitaab'.
 b) I know I should.
 '?a9rifu ?annahu yanba 9ii llii ?an ?af9al daalik,' or simply '?a9rfu daalik.'

It must be added that from a deontic point of view 'yanba 9ii' and its English equivalents seem to constitute marginal modals of obligation. As was mentioned above, deontic modality is compatible only with non-past events. Hence 31 (below) does not have a past time correlative.

31. You must do it.
 'yajibu ?an taf9alah.'

(13) A.J Thomson, and A.V Martinet, *A Practical English Grammar*, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), p. 135.

(14) M. Swan, *Practical English Usage* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), p. 550.

(15) Thomson and Martinet, p. 135.

It is true that 31 (a) is grammatical, but it conveys an epistemic, not a deontic mode of modality.

31. a) You must have done it.
'laa budda ?annaka fa9altah.'

In contrast should/ought to does have a past time counterpart. Compare 31 (above) and 32 (below):

- 32 You should/ought to have done it.
'kana yanba 9ii ?an taf9alah.'

The last sentence (in English and Arabic) suggests that the event was not fulfilled, and tends to have an admonitory effect.

2.2.4. Negation of Deontic Modality

2.2.4.1. Negation of Deontic Permission

Consider examples 33 and 34:

33. You may not come in.
a) 'laysa laka ?an tadxul.'
or
b) 'laa yumkinuka ?an tadxul.'
or
c) 'laa ?aaḏanu/?asmahu laka bidduxul.'
34. He may not borrow these books again.
a) 'laysa lahu ?an yasta 9iira haaḏihi lkutuba
(marratan) 9aaniyah.'
or
b) 'laa yumkinuhu ?an yasta9iira haaḏihi lkutuba
(marratan) 9aaniyah.'
or
c) 'laa ?aadanu/?asmahu lahu bisti9aarati haaḏihi
lkutubi (marratan) 9aaniyah.'

These two examples show that 'you may not' is translatable into Arabic as:

- a) laysa lak, or
b) laa yumkinuk, or
c) laa ?aaḏanu/?asmahu lak

Perhaps the most appropriate of these Arabic equivalents is the one at (a), i.e. 'laysa lak.' It is extremely formal and thus constitutes a perfect match for 'you may not,' which, as will be recalled, is highly formal in contrast with deontic 'You cannot.' It is worth adding that, out of context, the alternative at (b), i.e. 'laa yumkinuk' is

ambiguous: it can have a deontic interpretation having to do with permission, and in that case is a perfect match for English 'You cannot,' or an epistemic interpretation, i.e. possibility. Of course, the English forms at 33 and 34 are also ambiguous if not properly contextualized; each of them is capable of being interpreted deontically or epistemically. However, the Arabic equivalents at (a) and (c) are unambiguous, even if out of context; they can only be interpreted deontically.

From another point of view, what is negated in 33 and 34 is the modality, not the event of 'coming in' and 'borrowing' respectively. Similarly, and more evidently, in the Arabic forms at (a), (b) and (c) it is the modality that is negated; the occurrence of the negative elements 'laysa' and 'laa' before the modal element in the Arabic forms is a clear indication of the domain of negation.

2.2.4.2. Negation of Deontic Undertaking

Consider 35 and 36:

35. You shall not beat me next time.
'lan taḡlibanii filmarrati lqaadimah.'

36. He shall not be content.
'lan yarDaa.'

The appropriate Arabic particle of negating deontic 'shall' is 'lan,' which is equivalent to 'shall not.' Here the speaker guarantees that the event will not take place, i.e. what is negated here is the event, rather than the modality. Thus 35 can be paraphrased as 35 (a):

35. a) I guarantee that you will not beat me next time.

The same paraphrase is applicable to the Arabic equivalent of 35.

2.2.4.3. Negation of Deontic Obligation

Consider the examples at 36,

36. You must not lie.
a) 'ḡalayka ?an laa (assimilated to '?allaa') takḏib.'
or
b) 'yajibu (ḡalayka) ?an laa (assimilated to '?allaa') takḏib.'

This is an example of prohibition, i.e. (must not) in this case is equivalent to the prohibition (do not). The Arabic translation 'ḡalayka ?allaa' or 'yajibu (ḡalayka) ?allaa' conveys a parallel and synonymous prohibition. Obviously, it is the event and not the modality which is negated here, i.e. 36 can be paraphrased as 36 (a):

36. a) It is obligatory/necessary that you not lie.

Note that negation of the modality, i.e. It is not obligatory that you lie, is rendered in English by the use of another modal auxiliary as 37: in

37. You need not lie, or (to use 'have to' which strictly speaking is not a modal auxiliary) You don't have to lie.

The Arabic equivalent of 37 is

'laa yatawajjabu 9alayka ?an takdīb.'

which simply advances the negative element laa in 36 (b) to a position immediately before the modal verb. This confirms the consistency and predictability of the domain of negation in Arabic where, as a rule, the negative particle governs the element it immediately precedes. Thus, whereas in 36 (b) the negation is associated with 'takdīb' 'you lie,' it is associated with 'yatawjjab' 'you must' in 37.

It is worth remembering that 'yanbaḡii?allaa' is equivalent to 'you should not/ought not to' where the negation is associated with the event, not with the modality.

3.0. Conclusion

An attempt is made in this paper to recognize Arabic equivalents of the English modal auxiliaries which constitute a distinct and well-established grammatical category. In particular, two subcategories of modality conveyed by such modal auxiliaries are examined, namely, epistemic and deontic modality. Arabic grammarians have not recognized modality as a grammatical category notwithstanding scattered references they made to the semantics of certain modal particles like /qād/ and/ rubbāmaa /. In fact, the very concept of modality does not figure in any of the standard grammars of Arabic to date. Hence, the need to look into ways and means of expressing modality in Arabic.

The well-defined category of English modal auxiliaries is used here as a frame of reference, and Arabic equivalents are presented as translations of these modal auxiliaries. The presentation is contrastive throughout, and Arabic is shown to be capable of expressing a wide range of epistemic and deontic modes of modality in its own terms, i.e. independently. In other words, modality in Arabic can be studied without reference to English, or any other language for that matter. What is important to establish here is whether modality in Arabic is a lexical or grammatical category. It is of course easiest to say that modality in Arabic is a lexical category. However, even this initial investigation indicates that the various exponents of modality in Arabic can be captured by a grammatical rule. The examples cited above show that modality in standard Arabic is expressed by a modal element (which is realized as a verb or a particle) followed by an embedded sentence usually introduced by ?an/ 9anna, e.g.

- a) *yajibu* (9alayka) ?an + S (where S stands for the embedded sentence);
- b) *yanba* ڤ ii (*laka*) ?an + S;
- c) *laka* ?an + S;
- d) *laa budda* ?anna + S;
- e) *yumkinu* ?an/?anna + S;
- f) *rubbamaa* ?anna + S.

Finally, it is perhaps in order to claim that the theoretical and practical implications of this initial study are significant, and call for further research into this extremely interesting subject.

الموقفية modality* في اللغة الإنجليزية والعربية الفصيحة بين الشرح والتكافؤ

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ملخص البحث . يهدف البحث إلى تحديد مكافئات عربية فصحي لتعابير إنجليزية تتعلق بفئة الأفعال المسماة modal auxiliaries. كما أن في هذا البحث محاولة مبدئية للتعرف على بعض السمات العربية الفصيحة النحوية والمعنوية «للموقفية» modality علمًا بأن النحاة العرب لم يعرضوا في كتبهم النحوية لهذا الموضوع . ومن المؤمل أن يخدم هذا البحث الأغراض الأخرى التالية:

- مساعدة الطلبة العرب الذين يتعلمون اللغة الإنجليزية لغة أجنبية على فهم أدق لوظيفة ومعاني الأفعال المسماة modal auxiliaries في اللغة الإنجليزية .

- مساعدة الطلبة الأجانب الذين يتعلمون اللغة العربية الفصيحة كلغة أجنبية على اكتساب المهارة - في التراكيب العربية المناسبة للتعبير عن «الموقفية» .

- تسهيل مهمة طلبة الترجمة من الإنجليزية إلى العربية فيما يتعلق بتراكيب ومعاني الأفعال المشار إليها أعلاه، أي modal auxiliaries.

* استعملت كلمة «الموقفية» لترجمة كلمة "Modality"، وهذا اجتهاد ذاتي لغايات هذا الملخص باللغة العربية مع التأكيد على أن كلمة «الموقفية» لا تظهر في البحث . وكما ذكرت لم يتطرق النحاة العرب لهذا الموضوع وليس لدي الآن كلمة أكثر ملاءمة لترجمة "Modality".