



MODAL VERBS IN ENGLISH AND SHAHMUKHI PUNJABI LANGUAGE: A CORPUS DRIVEN COMPARATIVE STUDY

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Abstract

The present study attempts to examine the function and use of modal verbs in English and the Shahmukhi Punjabi language. Particular emphasis is laid on syntactic and functional characteristics of modality in Shahmukhi Punjabi. Qualitative exploratory research method is used for comparative research study of the modal verbs of English and Shahmukhi Punjabi. Simpson's (1997) model on modality & Thompsons' (2004) framework, derived from functional grammar is used as a framework. The corpus is made up of 100 Translated Punjabi short stories from the site RVEL. The scope of the discussion is related to epistemic, deontic and dynamic aspects of modality in both languages showing how dynamic modality is expressed in Shahmukhi Punjabi through structures for example 'ہو سکتا ہے' is giving the expression of the modals 'may' and 'might' in English. The results reveal significant differences on the basis of grammar and contextual understanding in both languages. This research shows the syntax and semantics variations in the construction of modal expressions and lays a base for future inquiries into Shahmukhi Punjabi across the study of modality. It adds to the linguistic study of the South Asian languages in understanding the complexities of their syntax and semantics.

Keywords: Modal verbs, Shahmukhi Punjabi Language, Corpus Driven, Comparative Study

Introduction

The study of modality is a universal linguistic phenomenon, it is structurally represented varies considerably from language to language. Comparative studies of modality embody Bybee et al. (1994) and then show many differences in how modality is structured among grammatical systems. Modality in English has been extensively studied but research on modality in Shahmukhi Punjabi remains limited and underdeveloped. This gap affords the opportunity to probe the working of modality in Shahmukhi Punjabi and how the English language relates with it. This research adopts a corpus-driven approach, looking at 100 Shahmukhi Punjabi short stories translated from English so as to work on modal expressions of both languages. By combining insights from contrastive linguistics and translation studies, this research seems to portray modality transformation during translation while cultural and contextual shifts play a crucial role (Catford, 1965).

This is important in that this study does not rely on machine translations, but uses only human translations afforded by a native speaker, ensuring theoretical validity, reliability, and authenticity of the data. In linking theoretical linguistics and practical translation studies, this research would add to the understanding of modality as a universal yet linguistically varied phenomenon. By comparing English corpus of short stories with Shahmukhi Punjabi corpus, valuable insights would, hopefully, be provided to linguists, educators, and translators. It will also serve as a first step towards the documentation and preservation of Shahmukhi Punjabi, contributing towards a better understanding of South Asian linguistics while encouraging linguistic diversity and cross-culture understanding.

Research Questions

This study is conducted to answer the given research questions.

1. How modal verbs are expressed in English and Shahmukhi Punjabi languages?
2. What are (dis) similarities in English and Shahmukhi Punjabi languages?

Significance of the study

The present research enhances the valuable resource of contemporary linguistic studies and their cognate fields in explaining the modality system in Shahmukhi Punjabi, a relatively

overlooked, yet culturally vibrant language of Pakistan. By establishing a contrast between the structures of modality of Shahmukhi Punjabi and English, such study will expand upon modality typology, hence elucidating cultural practices which are embedded in the mentioned linguistic structures. Furthermore, the study provides interesting insights into translation studies; it additionally provides useful guidelines in respecting teaching English and Shahmukhi Punjabi in multifaceted communities by indicating how modal expressions are to be translated in between these two languages. Through this investigation, dialectic diversity in Pakistan will be right to privacy by witnessing the uniqueness of Shahmukhi Punjabi to help the translators, educators, and students to view and tackle modality. The study is, therefore, a further step into the direction of an enhanced appreciation of modality as a universal phenomenon of human languages; it encourages further work in documenting the dying less-known languages and culture by preserving, protecting, and promoting them.

Literature Review

According to Kalogjera (1975) the research on English modals can be divided into two broad strands. The first is to study the lexical function of modals in the surface structures with data from corpora or elicitation techniques; the second is to study the systemic position of modals in deep structure of the language. These two research directions are important to the extent of practical usage of modals in language. Despite the absence of research method, population, and data collection technique in Kalogjera's work, it raises the importance of contemporary research approaches to the formation of statements about the language use. His study gives a general background on the existing status of literature and highlights emergent and significant characteristics of corpora and computational technologies in understanding language.

In her paper under review, Traugott (2011) overviews the diachronic system of modality as a linguistic category and discusses how the dynamics of that system might be related to social and cultural change. The change of modality is discussed in the paper with reference to epistemic, deontic, and dynamic modalities. Pursuant to Traugott, the identified shifts contribute to new developments on the society among them the technological, globalization and cultural interaction. Showing that modality structures have had to adapt to these changes based on the historical analysis of documents, letters, and literary works, the author provides some useful information for understanding the nature of language change.

In their research, Panocová and Lukačín (2019) focus on epistemic modality used in the AMR for two types of articles, medical and humanities articles. Their study employs corpus analysis in order to compare the distribution of significance of modal auxiliaries and modal adverbs. The authors establish that, medical papers prefer modal auxiliaries and humanities papers both modal auxiliaries and lexical modal markers. Based on this result, it can be hypothesized that epistemic modality is a factor that affects the development of arguments in scholarly papers. The authors also stress the significance of explaining the use of epistemic modal markers as foundational to argumentation in academic writing courses.

Nordlinger and Traugott (2013) do this by concentrating on the epistemic use of 'ought to'. Their study analyses the diachronic subjectivity of 'ought to'. On the basis of 130 news stories published between 1960 and 1990 the authors discuss the differences in the subjectivity of the term's application and its range. Their outcome shows that the word "ought to" can work both deontically and epistemically; the subjectivity and scope of this word can be defined by the context. The study concludes that 'ought to' is developed in a way that is different from the rest of the epistemic modals and therefore it can offer very useful information to the understanding of modality in English.

For the particular goal, Weina Li's (2016) paper focuses on modality differences in English abstracts: studying modality as an indicator of China English and analyzing the effects of the writer's cultural background on modality use in writing. This paper is now set to investigate

the cultural identity anxiety in the use of modal system where Chinese authors are compared to the native English-speaking authors by looking at their modality used in English abstracts.

Namely the Systemic-Functional Linguistics (SFL) framework is the focus of the study with the focus on the Application-Interpersonal Metafunction (AIM) in the given framework. To a certain extent, that how the AIM model created by Halliday and Martin can be applied to analyse modalities in writing. The study is a comparative one involving abstracts written in English by two groups of authors – Chinese and authors for whom English is the native language. In this study, the subject of analysis is the academic abstracts as to the genre and the intended purpose of the analysis is to consider the modality from the perspective of SFL's AIM metafunction. Two sets of 100 abstracts were generated from computer science articles indexed in SCI from mainland China in Chinese, and from English speaking countries in English. Descriptive collection, cognitive collection, and statistical collection are the strategies that can be applied to gather data.

According to (Mahmood et al., 2013) a comparative corpus-driven stylistic analysis of modal verbs in British English and Pakistani literature was the study's goal. Corpora of British English fiction (BEF) and Pakistani English fiction (PEF), each with a million words, had been assembled for this purpose. The CLAWS tag set C7 was used to perform POS tagging on both corpora. For a thorough analysis of modal verbs, concordance lines of the tagged data were manually examined using the Antconc 3.2.4 program. Because it helped discover different ideas that were transmitted through the use of modal verbs in PEF and BEF, the research was significant. Additionally, the study helped understand additional word classes stylistically.

With a view to operationalizing the same, the paper aims at offering a comparative analysis of interrogative syntactic constructions of Punjabi and English based on the framework of REST, revised extended standard transformational generative theory by Hussain & Mehdi (2023). The present objective thus revolves around various aspects of these languages, where special emphasis is placed on attempts to demonstrate, particularly with regard to syntactic structures, how such surface forms can be derived from deeper forms by means of transformational rules. The main research questions addressed are twofold: first of all, what distinctions can be made with regard to the Punjabi open-ended interrogative syntactic constructions if observed within the framework of the REST model? Secondly, which transformational or movement rules apply to the transition from deep structures in Punjabi to source surface structures?

The study used a 100,000-word dataset to investigate finite single-word lexical verbs in Shahmukhi Punjabi, with an emphasis on morphological features. It verified that Punjabi verbs were classified according to verbal finiteness and exposed a variety of inflections associated with number, gender, aspect, and voice. Shahmukhi Punjabi was preserved and linguistic knowledge was enhanced by this study (Haider et al., 2024).

In order to better understand how modal verbs reflect judgment and attitude within the framework of Halliday and Matthiessen's Systemic Functional Grammar, this study examined how they were used in the literature review sections of research publications written by Pakistani and Native authors. A corpus of 40 research papers showed that while dynamic modal verbs were equally employed by groups, Pakistani writers tended to use epistemic and deontic modal verbs. When compared to their Native counterparts, Pakistani authors, however, lacked an appropriate academic writing tone. To improve their pragmatic ability and successfully express complex attitudes in academic writing, English language learners must get a solid grasp of modal verbs, according to the findings (Fatima, Gill, Mahmood, & Asghar, 2024).

The modal verbs of need and obligation, a test ground for grammatical change, were demonstrated to indicate change and variety in world Englishes (Nie, 2024). Prior research

focused mostly on English as a second language (ESL) and English as a native language (ENL). By examining variations in the modal verbs of need and obligation in English used as a Lingua Franca (ELF), the study expanded on this line of inquiry. According to descriptive data, ELF had characteristics with ESL variations and was similar to American English. The ELF also showed differences from the ENL and ESL types that emerged in multilingual interactions. Mixed-effects logistic regression on the usage of must and have to was used in the multivariate analysis. This approach incorporates social and linguistic aspects. Previously underutilized metadata from the VOICE corpus was used in this investigation. According to the findings of the inferential statistics, ELF grammar was affected by the same sociolinguistic elements that influenced variation in ENL and ESL variations. The benefits of examining ELF from a variationist sociolinguistic standpoint were also illustrated by these findings, which also moved ELF closer to other English variations.

The study (Bozdağ, Morris, & Mo, 2024) examined the frequency of English modal verbs and the impact of lexico-syntactic factors including subject pronominality, grammatical patterns, and collocated verbs on Turkish and Chinese L2 learners' usage of these verbs. Both groups showed comparable preferences for modal verbs and structures, according to a Bayesian probabilistic analysis of the Turkish and Chinese subcorpora from the International Corpus of Learner English (ICLE). In more comprehensive studies, there were no discernible differences between the groups. However, a contextual influence surfaced when essays with a common theme were examined, emphasizing the connection between essay themes and the use of modal verbs. This highlighted how learners' use of modal verbs is shaped by context, highlighting the intricacy of language acquisition and the variables impacting

In above literature there is a limited exploration of modality in English and Shahmukhi Punjabi, particularly in structural differences. Existing literature lacks comprehensive comparative analyses, and there is a need to bridge this gap by examining how structural nuances influence the expression of modality in these languages. This study will also explore how the occurred structural differences changed the meanings of both languages.

Methodology

The chosen research design for this study is qualitative exploratory research method because it can analyze the complex linguistic intricacies of modality in both English and Shahmukhi Punjabi. A comprehensive understanding of the context is provided by qualitative methods, like in-depth interviews and textual analysis of a corpus of translated short stories. This allows for a deep investigation of phrases connected to possibility, certainty, obligation, necessity, and permission. This method enables a more thorough and contextualized examination, leading to a more profound understanding of the ways in which modality appears in both languages. The research has followed the purposeful sampling technique. A corpus of short stories have been chosen which consists on one 100 short stories. The corpus is the translated Punjabi short stories which have the Punjabi translations given on the Rvel.org website. The reason is that the Punjabi translation of the short stories is translated by the native speakers of Punjabi, not by machine.

The elements of the analytical framework were based on the linguistic theories pertinent to modality, namely Simpson's (1997) model of modality and Thompson's (2004) functional grammar. Simpson's theory gives specific information about syntactic and semantic aspect, whereas Thompson's functional grammar is more focused to give detail about modulation in different type of discursive. Integration of these theories made it possible to offer an overall evaluation of the theoretical insight into the concept of modality besides the findings of research studies.

Analysis & Discussion

Modality

According to Portner's (2009) the semantic pragmatic idea of modality has gained more attention and is extensively examined in relation to spoken languages all over the world. "Modality is the linguistic phenomenon whereby grammar allows one to say things about, or on the basis of situations which need not be real. Modality is basically the Modal Space between negative or positive polarity. The space is filled through speaker's intentions of possibility, necessity and ability. Modality is further divided into sub types like deontic modality, epistemic modality and dynamic modality. It is usually expressed through modal verbs and other modal expressions. The below given examples will reflect modal space in the terms of interpersonal metafunction.

Description of Modal Space

According to Thompson (2004) description of modal space

He writes good books.		
Modal Space	She may write good books.	Epistemic modality (express possibility)
	She might write good books.	Express negative possibility
	She must write good books	Deontic modality express necessity
	She can write good books.	Dynamic modality (express ability)
	She could write good books.	(express past ability)
	She should write good books.	Deontic modality (express obligation)

The above description of modal verbs is not fixed categories. Each modal verb changes its type and meaning according to situational context. For example the modal verb 'must' in the below examples explain the different meaning according to context.

Modality in Punjabi

Various modal expressions are also found in Shahmukhi Punjabi which is the Persian script of Punjabi used mainly in Pakistan. Contrary to English modals in Shahmukhi Punjabi are placed in a different syntactic and morphological framework being typical of this language's grammar (Bhardwaj, 2016). Modal verbs particles or auxiliary constructions which co-occur with the verb in order to represent the speaker's attitude to the modal verbs are used in Punjabi to express modality. There are translated Punjabi modal verbs that express the modality in Punjabi.

Punjabi Modal Verbs

English sentences	Modal verbs	Punjabi modal verbs	Types of modality
He can write good novel.	Can	سکدا اے	Dynamic modality (express present ability)
He could write good novel.	Could	سکداسی	Dynamic modality (express past ability)
He may write good novel.	May	ہو سکدا اے	Epistemic modality (express possibility)
He might write good novel.	Might	ہو سکدا اے	Epistemic modality (express possibility)
He should write good novel.	Should	چاہیدا	Deontic modality (express obligation)

He must write good novel.	Must	ضرور	Deontic modality express necessity
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Typology of modality

Epistemic modality (probability, certainty, uncertainty)

Epistemic modality shows the speaker's evaluation of a statement, including the level of truth or the possibility of a particular claim or statement (Bybee, Perkins, & Pagliuca, 1995). Epistemic modality is very crucial in determining whether the speaker is highly certain, somewhat certain or uncertain regarding the information being presented.

For example

Sara must be in school. (Degree of certainty)

He might be in garage. (Degree of uncertainty)

Epistemic modality in Punjabi

In Shahmukhi Punjabi language Modal verb 'May' 'Might' epistemic modality works differently. In Punjabi language modal verbs may functions as 'سکدا' The word 'سکدا' gives meanings of the modal verb 'can' if we add 'ہو' with the word 'سکدا' it will give the meanings of 'May'. With the 'ہو سکدا اے' the auxiliary 'اے' indicates present tense. The modal verb 'might' works same as 'may' works in Punjabi and it is also translated or gives expressions of 'ہو سکدا اے'.

Modal verbs	English Realization	Punjabi Realization
May	It maybe that in some queer way he identifies himself with the kite flying so free and so high above him, and it's as it were an escape from the monotony of life.	ہو سکدا اے اوہ کسے عجیب طریقے اپنے آپ نوں گڈی آر ، ازاد تے اچا اڈا مسوس کردا اے، تے ایہ حیاتی دی یکسانیت / اکو جیہے ہون توں جان چڈھان والی گل اے/ فرار۔
	'And may I ask who she is and how you got to know her?	تے میں پُچھ سکنی آن اوہ کون این تے تیری کتھوں واقف بنی؟'
Might	' Mightn't be a bad idea,' said Mrs. Sunbury	مسز سنبری نے جواب دتا، ایہ بھیڑا خیال تے نہیں ہو سکدا
	It might be that the freedom movement gives the best example.	ہو سکدا اے کہ کسے ناں کسے طرحاں آزادی تے مہم جوئی دی سبھ توں اچی مثال نوں ظاہر کردی اے

Deontic Modality

Deontic modality is related to duties, rights or requirements according to the social norms or laws or one's individual preference (Nuyts, 2006). It is frequently used in directives, rules and in ethical statement. For example, 'You must finish your homework' (prescribe) creates a

sense of obligation in the listener, which is explained by the pressure from outside social or authoritative source.

Deontic Modality in Shahmukhi Punjabi

In Shahmukhi Punjabi language deontic modality works with the words 'ضرور', 'لازمی'. Sometimes these words work as an adjective rather than verb. When it works as an adjective it indicates the importance, necessity and essential of a noun.

Deontic modality, when it functions as modal verb in language, the particular modal verb proceeds with verb (action word). As in the below examples 'must make', 'must be', 'must have', 'must give', 'must come' are all are modal verbs followed by verb. In Punjabi, the rule is all the time not same. The first example follows the English rules, but in example 2 ضرور is followed w adjective کمالا. There are some translation variations; it may be because the translator is not completely aware of the meanings of modality.

Description of Modal Verb 'Must'

1	Must	First of all I must make it plain that it is not my story and that I knew none of the persons with whom it is concerned.	سبھ ہ توں پہلاں تے میں ابہ گل ضرور دس دیاں کہ ابہ میری کہانی نہیں تے ناں ای میں ابہدے وچ موجود کسے بندے نوں جانناں وان۔
2		'He must be crazy.'	'اوہ ضرور کمالا ہونا ایں۔'

Dynamic Modality

Dynamic modality refers to one's capacity, capability and ability of doing something. In this kind of modality, the modal verbs 'can' and 'could' are used. The modal verb 'can' gives the meanings of present ability of doing an action and 'could' gives the expression of past ability. Dynamic modality points to doer's capacity or inclination or likelihood to do an action; competency or aptitude (Nuyts, 2006). For example, the ability domain Characterized by abilities include such phrases as, 'He can swim.' Or the willingness domain And characterized by willingness is, 'She will help you.'

Dynamic Modality in Shahmukhi Punjabi

Dynamic modality in Shahmukhi Punjabi language works as 'کر سکا', 'سکا', 'سکدے', 'کر سکا سی' '، 'سکدے سن'۔

The modal verb 'can' is translated as 'سکا', 'کر سکا', the present auxiliary is 'اے' in Punjabi language. We use 'اے' after سکا to make it the present ability (can). The past auxiliaries in Punjabi are 'سی' and 'سن'. These past auxiliaries are added with 'سکا' to show the past ability as 'سی' (could).

Present Ability Can as 'سکا', 'سکا اے', 'سکدے اے'

Description of Modal Verb 'Can'

I tell him he can't let her starve, and all he says is: "Why not?"	- میں دسیا کہ توں تے اوہنوں بھکھ نال نہیں مار سکا، تے آخدا اے 'کئیوں نہیں
Raff and you can't get rid of them.'	تے فیر تسیں اوہناں توں جان نہیں چھڈا سکدے
I can tell you.'	میں تینوں دس سکنا اں

Past Ability Could as 'سکا سی' (Singular Subject)

The past auxiliaries are 'سن' and 'سی', could is the past form of 'can'. When we show present ability, capacity or capability of doing something 'can' is used. The modal verb 'could' is used to express the past ability. The below given examples are taken from Punjabi corpus to

explain the accurate use of 'could' in Punjabi language. The words 'سکداسی' 'express the past ability of a singular subject and 'سکدے سن' show the past ability of plural subject.

Past Ability Could as 'سکداسی' (Singular Subject)

The past auxiliaries are 'سے', 'سن' and could is the past form of 'can'. When we show present ability, capacity or capability of doing something 'can' is used. The modal verb 'could' is used to express the past ability. The below given examples are taken from Punjabi corpus to explain the accurate use of 'could' in Punjabi language. The words "سکداسی" express the past ability of a singular subject and 'سکدے سن' show the past ability of plural subject.

Description of Modal Verb 'Could'

He could not afford the basic needs of Anila.	اوہ انیلا دیاں ضرورتاں پوریاں کرن دا متحمل نہیں ہوسکدا سی۔
This is Mr. Morgon, alright, he could do that.	اے تے مسٹر مورگون اے، ٹھیک اے، اوہ کرسکدا سی
Asif do not want to go to the market but he could not refuse his father as well.	آصف اچ منڈی جانا نہیں چاہندا سی پر ابا دی گل موڑ وی نہیں سکدا سی۔

Could as 'سکدے سن' (Plural Subject)

Description of Modal Verb 'Could'

They could come Canada with my grandmother.	اوہ میری نانی نال کینیڈا آسکدے سن۔
People could only think that.	لوکی ایہی سوچ سکدے سن۔

The modal verb 'Should'

The modal verb 'should' gives the expression of advice, expectation and obligation. It usually contains the meanings of that something is inspected good/right to do. There are certain other expressions of 'should' are obligation, politeness, advice, expectation and probability.

The modal verb 'Should' in Punjabi language

'Should' in Punjabi language works as 'چاہیدا'. This not the whole translation of 'should' in Punjabi, if we give the tag 'چاہیدا' to ask for should it will not give the meanings of the modal verb or modality. There must be a main verb before the word 'چاہیدا' for example 'کرنا چاہیدا', 'ہونا چاہیدا'. If we talk about the contextual meanings of should as obligation, it will express social ethics and manners. The below given examples will give the expression of obligation in its context.

Obligation

Description of Modal Verb 'Should' as obligation

They forget that they should show honor to the majesty.	تاں اوہ بھل گئے کہ اوہناں نوں بادشاہ دنال آدر مان ظاہر کرنا چاہیدا اے
There should be fear of father among children.	بالاں دے ذہناں وچ پیو دا ڈر ہونا چاہیدا اے

Expectation

Description of Modal Verb 'Should' as Expectation

The house should be same like that.	انج ای کوئی گھر ہونا چاہیدا اے
You should be happy I have struggled only for you.	تینوں تے خوش ہونا چاہیدا سی تیری خاطر تے ایہ ساری پی کٹی اے۔
It should happen accidently with me.	انج دا میرے نال حادثاتی ہونا چاہیدا سی

Semantic nuances of Shahmukhi Punjabi which provide a highly context sensitive understanding of the modality. The study also revealed that Shahmukhi Punjabi speakers additionally utilize other aspects such as ‘تے’ and ‘وی’ to alter the extent of modality which also set it from the stiff syntactical regulation of the English modals. These differences are attributed to the realization in Shahmukhi Punjabi and English in the framework of different linguistic and cultural settings. For example, the element of modal expressions reveals that Shahmukhi Punjabi is more engaged with the speaker’s social and cultural factors; they provide more flexibility for individual styles and contexts in communication than Existential Punjabi.

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