

English Language and Translation 2

1st Language - 2018-19

Lesson 4: 27 November 2017

Modality – Examples of Function

M Hammersley – 27 Nov 2018

Can

Epistemic Modality

- I can see you tomorrow. (Future – High Probability)
- You can eat very well in this restaurant. (Generic Possibility)
- It can't be him. (Contra-factual)

Deontic Modality

- Can I ask a question? (Permission)
- I can speak English. (Ability)
- You cannot smoke in this room (Prohibition)

Could

Epistemic Modality

- I could see you tomorrow. (Future – Mid Probability)
- You could eat very well in this restaurant. (Past Generic Possibility)
- It couldn't be him. (Contra-factual)

Deontic Modality

- Could I ask a question? (Permission)
- I could speak English. (Past Ability)
- You could not smoke in that room (Past Prohibition)
- If I could speak French, I could work in Paris. (Subjunctive - Conditional)

May

Epistemic Modality

- I may see you tomorrow. (Future – Lower Probability)
- You may eat very well in this restaurant. (Generic Possibility – Lower Probability)

Deontic Modality

- May I ask a question? (Permission)

Might

Epistemic Modality

- I might see you tomorrow. (Future – Lower Probability)
- You might eat very well in this restaurant. (Generic Possibility – Lower Probability)

Deontic Modality

- Might I ask a question? (Permission)

Must

Epistemic Modality

- I must go tomorrow. (Future – High Probability)
- He must be here by now (Deduction)

Deontic Modality

- You must finish your work. (Obligation)
- You must not go out today (Negative obligation)

Must/Have to

Epistemic Modality

- I must see you tomorrow. (Future – High Probability) external
- I have to go tomorrow (Future - High Probability) internal

Deontic Modality

- I must finish my work. (Obligation) internal
- You have to finish your work. (Obligation) external
- You must not go out today (Obligation)
- You do not have to go out today (No necessity)

Shall

Epistemic Modality

- I shall see you tomorrow. (Future – High Probability)

Deontic Modality

- You shall be here at 6.00 o'clock. (Obligation)
- Shall I help you? (Offer)
- Shall we have lunch? (Invitation)

Should

Epistemic Modality

- I should see you tomorrow. (Future – High Probability)
- You should eat very well in this restaurant, if the new chef is there.
- I should speak English, but I do not. (Probability)

Deontic Modality

- You should register by the end of the week. (Moral obligation)
- Should I ask a question? (Volition)
- If you can, you should speak English. (Conditional)

Ought to

Epistemic Modality

- I ought to see you tomorrow. (Future – High Probability)
- You ought to eat very well in this restaurant, if the new chef is there.
- I ought speak English, but I do not. (Probability)

Deontic Modality

- You ought to register by the end of the week. (Moral obligation)
- Ought I (to) ask a question? (Volition)
- If you can, you ought to speak English. (Conditional)

Need (to)

Deontic Modality

- You need to register by the end of the week. (Necessity/obligation)
- Need I ask a question? (Necessity/obligation)
- Do I need to ask a question? (Necessity/obligation)
- I needn't speak English. (No necessity/obligation)
- I don't need to speak English. (No necessity/obligation)

Dare (to)

Deontic Modality

- Dare I ask a question? (Volition)
- Do I dare to ask a question? (Volition)
- I dare to speak English. (Volition)
- *I dare speak English.
- I daren't speak English. (Volition)
- I don't dare to speak English. (Volition)
- I dare say you speak English. (Fixed, idiomatic expression)