

CHAPTER IV

RESEARCH FINDING AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the study's findings and discussion, stemming from the data collected to tackle the research questions. The findings of the research and the discussion of the research were divided into three sections in the chapter. The data analysis results were obtained through interviews, documentation, and observation regarding the use of modals and modalities by EFL university students in classroom activities. The study's findings reveal the researcher's observations and the following discussion about the facts in the field.

4.1 Research Findings

4.1.1 The Most Commonly Used Modals and Modalities in Classroom Activities

After analyzing the data on the use of modals and modalities in presentation, group work, and pair work activities across three distinct subjects—Translation: English-Indonesia, (TILL) Technology Integration in Language Learning, and Advanced Speaking—the data can be presented as follows:

a. Subject: Translation: English-Indonesia

Activity: Presentation

[Speaker 1]:

*But before we go to discuss about our material today we **would (dynamic: volition as request)** like to ask you to get ice-breaking first.*

[Speaker 1]:

*I **will (dynamic)** divide it into two sections,*

*So later the half of you **can (epistemic: possibility)** play the another section,*

*You **have to (deontic)** play this in that case.*

[Speaker 1]:

*Okay guys, I think that's enough, thank you guys. Okay, today we **would (dynamic)** like to discuss about eighteen types of translation, there are eighteen types of translation, what are they? For the presenter, let's begin.*

[Speaker 3]:

Okay okay guys, I **will (dynamic)** explain about material, here are eighteen types of translation,

For example, you **can (epistemic)** read in translation there are scenario, subtitle, editing, audiovisual and show marketing material.

[Speaker 3]:

For example, you **can (epistemic: possibility)** use the application Microsoft 365 because this Microsoft 365 is very good to make localization of the native language.

[Speaker 3]:

For example, like you **can (epistemic)** use Chatgpt, Deep L, QuillBot, as the translation website.

[Speaker 1]:

Maybe your friend **can (epistemic: ability)** help you?

[Speaker 3]:

So, the translation of this translation **requires (epistemic)** knowledge about the specialized field or domain of text.

For example, we **can (epistemic)** use the application on Google. We **can (epistemic)** use a teaching video. For example, we watch it on YouTube. There are many applications that we **can (dynamic)** use as our teaching.

[Speaker 1]:

This type of translation **requires (epistemic)** a high level and it's not except the E-world.

[Speaker 1]:

Guys, continue. So you **can (deontic)** check how your translation is.

[Speaker 1]:

For example, from Youtube, Google, and you **can (epistemic)** check also from chatgpt. Because chatgpt **can (dynamic)** help you well with your translation.

For example, you **can (epistemic)** check this type of translation in advertising, brochures, some websites, or social media text.

[Speaker 2]

Alright guys, let's jump to the next session that is QnA, so the first question is: what's the name of the translation that include this, google translate and Deep L? And the second question is, **can (epistemic: ability)** you give me the example of medical translation by this picture. If you want to answer the question, raise your hand and introduce yourself.

b. Subject: TILL (Technology Integration in Language Learning)

Activity: Group-Work

[Speaker 1]

We **will (dynamic: futurity)** discuss about technology integration in language learning.

This technology **can (epistemic)** also be used in various classes, such as virtual or non-virtual classes. Now, the second material is about TILL goals.

Okay, the next material **will be (epistemic)** explained by SS

[Speaker 2]

These resources **can (dynamic)** help participants improve their language skills, vocabulary, language skills, and improve their language skills.

Technology-based learning is an activity that **can (dynamic)** improve student's engagement and motivation; with the help such as interactive online exercises **can (dynamic)** increase student's engagement and motivation in the classroom. It also **can (dynamic)** help language learning to be more fun. Okay, the next one, learning experience. Technology integration **allows (dynamic)** learners to learn experience while two individual learners need interest and learn experience.

It gives the opportunities for learners to **be able to (dynamic: semi modal)** connect and collaborate with native speakers around the world.

And voice recognition through a software that **can (dynamic)** give a good guidance and feedback for students.

[Speaker 1]

Alright, so next session **will be (epistemic)** QnA, so if you have any question, you **can (epistemic)** ask guys.

[Speaker 3]

Assalamu'alaikum, my name is WA, I want to ask you about is this technology **will be (epistemic)** influenced in our future and is it going to have some impact in the long-term learning?

[Speaker 4]

Assalamu'alaikum, my name is EA, I **would (dynamic)** like to ask you guys, so according to your opinion, which one these technology that is most effective to be used in language learning class which is fun and not be boring?

[Speaker 1]

Okay, I **will (dynamic: futurity)** answer the question from WA, in the process of teaching and learning, there **must be (epistemic)** feelings between teachers and students. So, with the help of technology we **will (dynamic: futurity)** have a good interaction. Eye contact is one of the examples, so this technology at least **can (epistemic)** help the teacher but it **can't (epistemic)** replace the role of teacher.

[Speaker 2]

According to us, technology that is so effective to be used is the learning application. For example in virtual learning, we **can (epistemic)** use zoom, gmeet, in non-virtual like mobile phone is considered as technology also, or in focus.

[Speaker 4]

Then, what if we are having trouble with our connection?

[Speaker 2]

*So when you have a problem with the connection or something, it means you **have to (epistemic)** understand about your learning material well so you **can (dynamic)** explain your material easily*

c. Subject: Advance Speaking

Activity: Pair-Work

1st Conversation With Pairs

H : Hello Farah, where are you now? I'm lost here.

F: You just look at the Google maps that I sent you.

H: I don't understand and my battery is already 2%

F: Hello hello Hannah, where are you right now?

Suddenly the cellphone died and Hannah limped while walking down the street.

A: Hello ma'am, is there a problem with you?

H: I don't know where this is; I'm going to my friend's house, her name's Farah.

A: Who is Farah? And as far as I know, the name of Farah is not common here

H: Farah, she is a student of UINSU, **can (dynamic: ability)** you show me this direction from your maps?

A: You go straight and turn right and then just follow the road.

H: Okay, thank you very much

A: It's my pleasure

H: Faraaah

F: Hanaa, finally we met too, are you okay?

H: Yes Farah

F: You look very tired, and here's some water for you.

H: Thank you very much Farah

F: You're welcome Hannah

2nd Conversation With Pairs:

One day there was a group of alumni students from English education from UINSU who were discussing to plan their reunion.

H: Hello guys, how are you?

A: Hello everyone, I'm good

F: Hello too, Alhamdulillah good. How about you?

H: I'm good too, I really miss you guys.

F: By the way, it's been a long time since we met, is there any free time?

H: There is, but I **can't (epistemic)** make it on weekends because I have a lot of jobs.

A: What do you do? You're so busy

H: Don't you know? I've become a successful face and sometimes open private classes

F: How about tomorrow on Friday because it's a red date?

A & H: Okay, see you tomorrow

3rd Conversation With Pairs:

N: Hi mate, please open the maps, because when I get here I don't know the direction

L: I'll **(dynamic: futurity)** check the maps on my phone for a while

N: Oh, okay

L: Oh no, I **can't (epistemic)** find the direction in the maps because there is no network here

N: Wait wait, it seems that there is a man let's ask him the direction of our destination.

L: excuse me sir, we **would (dynamic)** like to ask you the direction of our destination

A: Is it okay where are you going?

N: We want to go to kemuning street

A: Oh kemuning street, you **can (dynamic)** take a straight path from here, fter that you **will (dynamic)** meet the mosque

L: What the mosque's name?

A: The name is Darul Haq mosque, after you find the mosque the alley is right next to the mosque

L & N: Thank you for helping us, may Allah bless you sir.

A: That's alright.

4.1.2 EFL University Students' Preferences for Specific Modal Verbs

The researcher's objective in this matter is to explain why EFL university students at UINSU prefer to use specific parts of modals as modality markers in their communication. After conducting interviews with three students from the 4th and 6th semester students at UINSU, from three different subjects during three different activities, the researcher discovered the answer, and the observation can be seen as follows:

a. Student 1 (Pair-Work Activity)

The researcher gave some questions regarding modals as modality markers—started from asking them with the significance of modals, namely how much do they know about modals? The student then replied:

"I know some common modal verbs, that's include can, could, may, might, must shall, should, will and would". (NZ).

Based on the statement above, it can be inferred that the student possesses a good understanding of modals and illustrates some common modals. In order to strengthen the research, another question is provided, namely: "What makes you choose or prefer to use these parts of modals in your communication? (Like can, could, will, should, would, may, must, shall, need, ought to, etc)". The student responded this question by giving this answer:

"I tend to use modal verbs mostly in my communication to convey the correct level of certainty, necessity, or ability. For example, "can" and "be able to" indicate capability, "may" and "might" express possibility, "must" and "have to" show obligation, and "would" and "should" suggest recommendation". (NZ).

Based on the student's response, it's clear that she comprehends the use of modals, as she articulated the function of the modal itself. This indicates the student's preferences in using specific modal verbs in communication. As modality markers, modals have a significance role in expressing ideas whether in spoken or written language, the speakers use them to express their degree of commitment on a proposition.

Finally, to understand the significance of modals trough this student's perspective, the researcher asked the question: "Do you believe it is essential to use modals in communication?" The student then provided their response.

“Yes of course, I do believe modals are generally necessary for clear and natural communication. Modals allow us to qualify our statements and convey our ideas of meaning that would be lost without them, like that sis. Of course, there are also instances where modals not strictly required, but they needed to improve the clarity of language”. (NZ).

The student acknowledged the significance of modals in communication. Furthermore, the student expressed confidence and spoke assertively about the importance of modals in communication. This demonstrates that modals, as modality makers (MMs), are instrumental in helping EFL learners establish effective communication. However, the last statement made by the student is acceptable. It is said that modals are not strictly required, as in the following example: *"get out from this house."* This command is expressed without a modal auxiliary, and the sense of this sentence indicates the speaker's anger towards the person being addressed.

a. Student 2 (Group-Work Activity)

The second viewpoint was provided by another student in response to the same question, and the detailed response is provided below:

“I think modals in one of the important parts in English grammar, it can be used to express like our opinion and thoughts with the words like “can”, “must”, “might”, also I think modal verbs can help us in communication so our communication look clear”. (KFN).

According to the statement above, modals allow people to express their interpretation and create engaging communication situations. The student also emphasized the significance of modal verbs in grammar. The student also mentioned some of the modals namely: can, must, and might. The same question was asked to find the information regarding the formulation of study, and the student then replied:

“I prefer to use modals based on the current situation. For example, in informal contexts, I would use "can", yet in formal situations, I would use "may". So, like in the sentence “you can ask the question”, I think it’s better to use may, “you may ask the question. This is an issue of manners that we must uphold”. (KFN).

The student’s preferences in using specific modals above offers a clear distinction between the uses of "can" and "may" in the analysis of modality. In the first example, the

use of "can" describes permission within the epistemic modality, referring to restricted worlds, human laws, and personal authority (another example of personal authority: "You can your salary now). This can be paraphrased as "permit" and "allow". In contrast, the second example conveys an insight of deontic permission, which is not a command and tends to be subjective and to perform acts of granting permission.

The last question was closed with the idea of asking whether modals is important or less important in English, and the answer is provided below:

"Of course sis! Modals are important in communication to express meaning clearly. They help us to make our interaction understandable. I think without modals, language would lack the flexibility and nuance needed for effective communication in a wide range of contexts". (KFN).

By reading the statement above, it can be concluded that the student also acknowledge the significance of modals in communication.

b. Student 3 (Presentation Activity)

To close the statement, the researcher was asked the last student with the exact same question, and the result is written below:

"Saya mengetahui modals dengan cukup baik, modals adalah jenis kata kerja bantu dalam bahasa inggris yang memiliki fungsi khusus seperti meminta izin, keharusan, nasihat dll, modals yang dimaksud yaitu could, can, should, will, would, may, might, must". ("I know modals quite well—modals are a type of auxiliary verb with specific functions, like: asking for permission, obligation, and suggestion, etc. The modal verbs I was talking about are could, can, should, will, would, may, and might.") (AH).

In the interview, the student showed a clear understanding of what a modal is and provided essential functions of modals. Additionally, she listed some common modals as mentioned above. Then, the same question was asked to find the information regarding the formulation of study, and the student then replied:

"Jadi pemilihan modals yang ada didalam kalimat penjelasan itu seperti can dan will karna kata tersebut pas dan cocok digunakan kak dan sudah biasa digunakan dan ketika memakai google translate atau deepl translator juga ketika mentranslatekan kata itu sudah muncul duluan kak". ("So the selection of modals in the explanation

sentence such as “can” and “will” is because those words are fitting and suitable to use, sis, and they are also commonly used in communication, and when I’m using Google Translate or Deepl Translator, those words appeared as the first list.”) (AH).

In reference to this statement, the researcher emphasizes some crucial points. For example, the use of modals "can" and "will" is closely linked to the student's communication skills. The student is quite familiar with these modals, and this familiarity stems from the student's previous experience with machine translation (MT). Machine translation combines the fields of translation and computer science, allowing the computer to automatically carry out the translation process. During this process, the system converts the source text in a specific language into another target text (Lin and Chien, 2009 & Irfan, 2017).

Jump to the last part of this interview, where the researcher asked the same question to another interviewee, and the respond is provided below:

“Yes it's exactly need because menurut saya dalam menggunakan modals didalam percakapan dapat membuat struktur kata yang kita sampaikan lebih rapi dan juga lebih sopan dalam menyampaikan sesuatu sesuai dengan konteks modals nya”. (“Yes, it's exactly need because in my opinion, using modals in conversation can make our word structure neater and also more polite in conveying something according to the context of the modals”.) (AH).

According to the student's statement, the function of modals can be fully understood, highlighting the importance of using modals in conversation to create a better connection and to convey statements in a polite manner. This use of modals in conveying the speaker's attitude towards a proposition is a key aspect of modality within the context of the utterances.

4.1.3 Kinds of Modality EFL University Students at UINSU Tend to Use

In the context of three diverse classroom activities, it is evident that students actively utilize modality in their communication. The data collected suggests that the predominant modalities used are epistemic and dynamic, with a nearly equal distribution between the two. Interestingly, deontic modalities are rarely employed by the students in their communication. These observations were made across classroom activities such as presentations, group work, and pair work, which the data can be provided below:

Table 3 the Most Commonly Used Modal and Modality in Classroom Activities

Activities	Kinds of Modality and Number of Uses	Kinds of Modal Verbs
Presentation	Epistemic: 11	Allow: 1
	Deontic : 2	Be able to: 1
	Dynamic: 6	Can: 22
Group Work	Epistemic: 11	Can't: 1
	Deontic : -	Have to (SM): 2
	Dynamic : 11	Must be: 1
Pair Work	Epistemic: 3	Require: 2
	Deontic : -	Will be: 3
	Dynamic: 4	Will: 5
		Would: 3

4.2 Discussion

This study has three findings: the most commonly used modals and modalities by EFL university students at UINSU in classroom activities (presentation, group-work, and pair-work), EFL university students' preferences for specific modal verbs, and kinds of modality by EFL university students at UINSU tend to use. The first findings show the evident that the **epistemic modality** is the most frequently used in classroom activities—it is utilized twenty five times more than other modalities, with the exception of group work activities, where the use is equal between epistemic and dynamic modalities. Dynamic modality on the other hand, was primarily used in group work and presentations, while it was also more general than

epistemic modality in pair work activities. Meanwhile, the use of deontic modality appears to be less frequent than other modals. In addition, the most commonly used modals can also be seen from the table. The table shows that the modal "**can**" is utilized twenty two times more than other modals. Further, the way students use modal verbs in communication depends on a mix of different factors. Student 1 takes a clear, structured approach, using modals to show certainty, necessity, or ability while making careful distinctions between their meanings. Student 2 focuses more on context and politeness, showing an awareness of how formality influences modal choices. Meanwhile, Student 3 relies on familiarity and tools like Google Translate, choosing modals based on common usage rather than strict grammar rules. These different perspectives show that using modal verbs isn't just about getting the grammar right—it's also shaped by social norms, personal habits, and outside influences. More importantly, this highlights that modality isn't just a fixed set of rules but a flexible, ever-changing part of language. It shifts depending on the situation, the people involved, and the tools we use, making it as much about communication and adaptability as it is about grammar. One relevant framework comes from Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), which suggests that language changes based on the situation (Halliday, 1994, p. 356). According to Halliday, people don't just use language to follow rules—they use it to communicate in ways that fit their needs. Student 1's structured use of modal verbs to express certainty, necessity, and ability aligns with Halliday's view that modality serves different interpersonal functions depending on the context (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). Another perspective comes from Hymes' (1972) idea of communicative competence argues that knowing a language isn't just about following grammar rules—it's also about knowing how to use it in real conversations (Hymes, 1972, p. 278). Besides, Bybee's (2010) usage-based language theory suggests that grammar is shaped by repeated language exposure rather than strict prescriptive rules (Bybee, 2010, p. 15). Student 3's reliance on Google Translate and common usage patterns aligns with this perspective, as their choices are influenced by frequency and familiarity rather than explicit grammatical instruction. In addition, it can be analyzed that EFL university students tend to use **epistemic and dynamic modalities most frequently**. These modalities are noticeable in classroom activities, which show that the use of epistemic and dynamic modalities is nearly equal in student communication, while deontic modalities are in fact rarely used.