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Meanings of English Modals in Arabic

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Abstract: Arabic counterparts of English modal verbs represent a big problem for learners whether they are English or Arabs since most of these counterparts do not occur to the learners' mind because they are not classified in any uniform manner. Each English modal concept is expressed in Arabic by several items and expressions in the literature of grammar. Even the learners of English in our society could not remember them all and each modal is rendered into Arabic by those learners via a single famous item. Modals in English are, however, a small group of single words or, in other words, they are numbered in the English language. The subject in this paper is investigated by selecting English sample sentences that are translated into Arabic by using Modern Standard Arabic which is understood throughout the whole Arab homeland.

The research presents a proper opportunity for learners to get intensified knowledge about the modals in Arabic which mostly seem vague to the English learners of Arabic and even to the learners of English in our universities. The material posed in this study is not debated by many scholars, i.e., little has been said about the subject by researchers up to now. The importance of the subject is strongly felt by varieties of learners .

This paper is restricted to Arabic counterparts of the English modal verbs. However, the modals implying complex verb phrases and complex clauses from English to Arabic are not dealt with in this research. Moreover, the Arabic counterparts of the modals: dare, used to, and need which are used as marginal or semi-modals in English are not investigated in this study. Reasonable information on the negative and interrogative Arabic counterparts of modals is taken from Arabic and English

references and thoroughly analyzed by the researchers of this paper. In so doing, the material of this paper is made more concentrated and more intensive because the topic of modal counterparts in Arabic involves immense and lengthy information in the literature of grammar. For this reason, the researchers have been preparing for the subject for a long time now.

1 Introduction

Already the research heading “On Modality of the English Modal Verbs” has been written and published which deals entirely with the semantics of modals in English and since our native language in Iraq is Arabic, it is normally expected to think of writing a new research on Arabic equivalents of the English modals in order to get a complete and clear image about the topic both in English and Arabic and to obtain a total advantage in understanding the subject in both languages

The English modals and their Arabic counterparts cannot be escaped in daily communication in the two languages. The difficulty with the Arabic counterparts arises from the fact that they are not classified as an independent grammatical category and they cannot be considered in any strict sense of the word modal verbs though some equivalents in Arabic are lexical verbs as well. The theme of the research seems a bit complicated and beyond simplicity because it can only be tackled in the two languages through the exposure of the material at different linguistic levels and criteria. At any event, the Arabic expressions expressing the modal meanings can be categorized into groups, and each of which will have common semantic function and certain syntactic characteristics.

The degree of difficulty seems higher for those whose native language is English than the Iraqis in particular and Arabs in general because, in case of Iraqis and Arabs, the Arabic language is innately endowed by birth in their minds. The Arabic counterparts in the research have been presented via the writers’ intuition checked by some prominent teachers of university and professors in Arabic grammar at Baghdad university and Tikrit university. Many modal concepts have been suggested by them as well and especially by late Dr. Pro. Mahdi M. Al Makhzoomi who suggested ample Arabic items and equivalents with their semantic and syntactic features before his death.

2 Arabic Sentence Constituents

It is necessary to identify the basic constituents of the Arabic statements, regarding sentence types and word-order. Basically, sentences in Arabic can be categorized into two types: nominal and verbal sentences. The former originally start with a subject (substantive or noun) called مبتدأ which requires a predicate خبر that completes its meaning, as revealed below: (الراجحي، 1975، صفحة 77)

(1) اخوك طالب.

(lit.) Your brother student.

Your brother is a student.

A verb corresponding to verb to be is absent in the above Arabic sentence. Anyhow, the predicate of the nominal sentence may include a lexical verb, as in:

(2) الولد يرسم.

The boy is drawing.

(3) البنت تركض.

The girl is running.

In the above sentences, يرسم and تركض have double qualities as verbs and being predicates at the same time. A verbal sentence in Arabic must start with a full verb فعل غير ناقص. One should, therefore, say in Arabic:

(4) قال علي الحقيقة.

(lit) said Ali the truth. (not)

Ali said the truth.

3. Modal Structure and Meanings in Arabic

The following material is devoted for syntactic and semantic description of modal structure and meanings in Arabic. The modal meanings and concepts which will be dealt with here in the body of this research are respectively listed under subtitles in the coming pages.

3.1. Ability

The ability concept is expressed in Arabic either by lexical verbs or by “lexico-functional” items which consists of lexical words associated with functional particles. The following examples show how the ability sense found its way in the native language of Arabic:

(5) نحن نستطيع ان نلعب في الاماكن الخطرة.

We can play in risky places.

(6) هي تقدر ان تركض طويلا.

She can manage a long run.

(7) انت تتمكن ان تكتب الرسالة الان.

You can write the letter now.

(8) يمكننا ان نحرس الموقع جيدا.

We can guard the position well.

The first three verbs نستطيع, تقدر and تتمكن are usually used to express the English idea of ability in Arabic. These verbs are inflected for person. The verb يمكننا may be used side by side before the particle من making up a “lexico-functional” expression. A verbal noun in this case should be placed following the particle من instead of an imperfect subjunctive with ان. The verb يمكننا has an attached pronominal suffix indicating person.

The ability sense can be indicated in Arabic by the active participle قادر (able) or called by some (the noun of the agent), as revealed in the following example:

(9) هم قادرون ان يقاتلوا بشجاعة.

They can fight bravely.

When قادر is followed by a verbal noun not by ان with an imperfect subjunctive, the particle على should be inserted before that verbal noun, in this case a “lexico-functional” expression exists, as revealed below:

(10) نحن قادرين على بدء الهجوم.

We can begin the attack.

Sometimes a verb in the subjunctive with ان may follow the preposition على, as in:

(11) هو قادر على ان يفصلها.

He can fire her.

This modal meaning can be realized by other Arabic constructions, such as:

(12) باستطاعتها ان تنهي العمل بسرعة.

She can finish the work fast.

(13) بإمكانه ان ينقذ الطفل.

He can save the child.

باستطاعتها and بإمكانه are literally translated as: (it is within her ability) and (within his power).

The particle (لـ) and its allomorph (لـ) with an attached pronoun plus the noun قدرة which means “ability” or “power” is used to give this modal meaning. The following example clarifies this point well. (Wehr, 1974, p. 745)

(14) لي القدرة على رفع الحقيبة.

(lit.) I have the ability to lift my bag.

I can lift my bag.

Can in the sentence “He can put an end to the state of chaos in the country” can be translated into Arabic. بمقدوره ان ينهي حالة الفوضى في البلاد. (noun of the object) with the inseparable particle بـ annexed at the beginning is an exact counterpart of the English modal can in the sense of ability. بمقدوره can be given the English paraphrase (within(his)ability). The Arabic equivalent of can is usually followed either by the imperfect subjunctive with ان referring to the future time as in the example given earlier or by the verbal noun (انهاء), which replaces the subjunctive verb, denoting all-time action that takes place habitually rather than the future time. All Arabic expression available in this section are equally used to mean the ability sense of can. This group of items is equal in realizing the modal concept of ability. The information posed under this subtitle (ability) shows that Arabic uses various items and counterparts to express the English ability of can. These expressions are numerous and more comprehensive in Arabic than in English.

To express the ability in the past, the defective perfect verb كان is either placed directly before any Arabic equivalent that expresses the notion of ability or before the subject of the sentence except in case of the Arabic modal expression لي القدرة where the defective verb is always inserted before it. See the examples below:

(15) كان يستطيع ان يدرس العربية في شبابه.

b كان هو يستطيع ان يدرس العربية في شبابه.

He could teach Arabic in his youth.

(16) كان له القدرة على امتطاء الخيل عندما كان شابا.

He could ride horses when he was young.

3.1.1. Negative and Interrogative Ability in Arabic

In question formation of an Arabic sentence, the particles أ or هل should be introduced at the beginning, as in the following:

(17) هل انت تتمكن من ان تقود العربية؟

Can you drive the car?

(18) أ تستطيع سماع تلك الاغنية؟

Can you hear that song?

It is easily noticed that هل is a full word, whereas أ is a prefix used in interrogation. Negation of lexical verbs conveying the modal meaning of "ability" is made by adding the particle لا any of these lexical verbs, as in:

(19) هو لا يستطيع ان يرى جيدا.

(lit.) He not can see well.

He cannot see well.

The verbal noun or the imperfect subjunctive can be found negated in the Arabic language as well, as in:

(20) هو دائما يقدر ألا يكتب الدرس.

You can always not write the lesson.

In the above example the particle لا is combined with ان giving the resulting form ألا. Like English, the Arabic lexical items cannot make sense alone in the sentence; a verbal noun or a verb in the subjunctive mode preceded by ان is required unless such complement has already been mentioned in the context, e.g.:

(21) هو يستطيع حملا ثقيلًا.

He can heavy load.

(22) هل يستطيع علي السباحة؟ نعم ، يستطيع.

Can Ali swim? Yes, he can.

Two negatives may occasionally be encountered in Arabic: one is used to negate the Arabic modal verb carrying the ability sense and the other negates the imperfect verb governed by ان, e.g.:

(23) انتم لا تستطيعون دائما ألا تمكثوا هنا.

You cannot always not stay here.

3.2. Permission

Lexical verbs, "lexico-functional" expressions and particles are modal means of expressing the permission concepts as clarified in the following examples:

(24) يمكنك ان تتناول قرح شاي.

You may have a cup of tea.

(25) (هي) تستطيع ان تجلس الان.

She may be seated now.

(26) يستطيعون ان يغادروا الصف.
They can leave the classroom.
(27) يسمح له ان يعمل معهم.

He can work with them.

The lexical verb يمكن (be possible), يستطيع and يقدر (be able) and the lexical passive verb يسمح (it is allowed or permitted) have a semantically important role in denoting the permission concept in Arabic. يسمح is a passive verb not inflected for person or number; but a pronominal suffix may be attached to له to indicate the person offered permission. Both يستطيع and يقدر are inflected for person, but their inflection for number is only when the subject is implied or precedes them, as in:

(28) يستطيعون اثبات الحقيقة.
They can prove the truth.
(29) الرجال يستطيعون ان يغيروا أماكنهم.

The men may change their places.

Anyhow, the passive verb includes the speaker's impersonal role which carries politeness towards the person to whom permission is granted, e.g., :

(30) يسمح لك ان تدخل.
You may come in.

In addition to the lexical verbs mentioned earlier, there are some distinctive means of expressing the modal meaning of permission accurately; these means are, however, called "lexico-functional" constructions, e.g.,

(31) رب العمل الى العامل: بإمكانك ان تغادر المعمل الان.
The manufacturer to the worker: You may leave the factory now.
(32) باستطاعتكم ان تقرأوا كتاب التاريخ.

You can read the history book.

Both constructions بإمكانك (it is within (your) possibility) and باستطاعتكم (it is within (pl. your) ability) show politeness on the part of the speaker.

The passive participle مسموح (the noun of the object) may be used to express the concept of permission semantically equal to the lexical passive verb يسمح. both are semantically related, thus, they are derived via syntactic transformational rules from the same underling form, e.g., :

(33) مسموح له ان يلتحق بالكلية العسكرية.
He may join the Military College.

Permission is also expressed by the particle له or its allomorph لـ which is not inflected for person or number, but either a pronominal suffix is annexed to it to indicate the person to whom permission is granted or it is attached to a proper noun, e.g., :

(34) له ان يحضر الاجتماع.
He may attend the meeting.
(35) لمحمد ان يدخن في تلك الغرفة.
Mohammed can smoke in that room.

3.2.1 Negative and Interrogative Permission in Arabic

The lexical verbs يُمكن, يُقدر, يُستطيع and يُسمح which convey the modal meaning of permission are normally negated by introducing the particle لا before them, as exemplified in the following:

(36) لا يُسمح لك ان تدخن هنا.

(lit. not allowed for you to smoke.)

You (sg.) may not smoke.

In negation of the past participle مُسموح, the particle غير is obligatorily used before it, as in the following: (Wehr, 1974, p. 332)

(37) غير مُسموح لكم ان تمكثوا مدة طويلة.

You (pl.) cannot stay for a long time.

As for the particle لـ and the "lexico-functional" constructions, one needs to make use of ليس, a particle resembles a verb, when negation is intended, e.g., :

(38) ليس لكم ان تكتبوا.

You (pl.) cannot write.

(39) ليس باستطاعتها ان تخرج في الظلام.

She may not go out in the dark.

An imperfect subjunctive verb or a verbal noun which follows the Arabic modal counterpart of permission can be negated as well, e.g.,:

(40) لـك دوماً لا تكتب .

You may always not write.

Sometimes the items of modal meanings can be seen at the beginning of the sentence before the particle of negation.

An interrogative permission sense is realized by using هل and أـ before the verbs يُستطيع, يُقدر and يُمكن. These two particles are used in the same way with the passive verb يُسمح and the passive participle مُسموح and the same is true with the constructions بإمكانه and باستطاعته. The following examples are exclusively illustrative for some cases:

(41) a. هل يستطيع ان يتبع اوامرها؟

b. أ يستطيع ان يتبع اوامرها؟

a. Can he follow her order?

b. May he follow her order?

(42) a. أ يسمح (أ مسموح) لك السير في ذلك الشارع؟

b. هل يسمح (هل مسموح) لك السير في ذلك الشارع؟

May you go in that street?

Might you go in that street?

3.3 Possibility and Probability

Modal possibility or probability is expressed in Arabic through particles, lexical items and "lexico-functional" items. The particles are used as normally as the

other items in Modern Standard Arabic, i.e., they are used on a par with lexical or "lexico-functional" expressions, e.g., :

(43) قد يشارك رئيس الفريق في المباراة غدا.

The captain may / might / can / could participate in the match tomorrow.

(44) ربما تصل البضائع الى الميناء الشهر القادم.

The goods may/might/ can/could arrive at the seaport next month.

(45) لعلك تجد حلا للمشكلة.

You may/ might /can/ could find a solution for the problem.

قد in the first example comes before an imperfect verb يشارك, and only in this case it carries the modal concept of possibility. Moreover, it refers to futurity which is called in Arabic a "particle of expectation". This particle is used to give the meaning of possibility and even "doubt". In short, it is tailored to indicate less certain future action; قد with the imperfect emphasizes a tentative action of the verb. In sentence (44), the meaning of possibility is obtained through the particle ربما which is made up of the preposition رب and the annexed ما - رب cannot be used alone to express the meaning of possibility. If it is used alone, it becomes void of possibility sense. ربما carries the possibility sense which is expected by the speaker about present and future ideas. A perfect verb may follow ربما and in this case it is perfect in form but imperfect in function, e.g., :

(46) ربما عدت اليك.

I may/ might return to you.

In (45), the particle لعل with the pronominal ك - is used to express the modality of possibility. This particle was historically a verb, but later on it has totally lost its verbal characteristic. It has, however, become a particle of uncertainty which governs a noun in the accusative or an attached pronoun which is grammatically considered to be in the accusative and a predicate in the nominative. It is one of the sisters of إن, all of which resembles verb. قد and ربما are more preferable in translation than لعل which is meagerly used on lips of Arab speakers.

The modality of possibility can be got through the lexical verb يمكن, as in:

(47) يمكن ان تحدث البراكين فجأة في اليابان.

Volcanoes can/ could take place suddenly in Japan.

The "lexcio-functional" construction من الممكن (it is possible) which is uninflected for person, gender, and number carries this concept, notice the example below:

(49) من الممكن ان تقود المفاوضات الى حل عادل.

Negotiations can/could lead to a just solution.

Possibility and probability are in most cases interrelated semantically which mean about the same concept and what is possible can be probable to achieve; anyhow, the probability meaning can be found in the language and daily communication when the lexical passive verb يحتمل (it seems probable) or the

construction من المحتمل (it is likely) are in use. Both expressions are uninflected for person, gender and number, as shown below: (Wehr, 1974, pp. 207-208)

(50) يَحْتَمِلُ ان يكون في البيت.

He may/ might be at home.

(51) من المحتمل ان يدرس الطلاب بجد قبل الامتحان.

The students may / might study hard before the exam.

3.3.1 Negative and Interrogative Arabic Possibility and Probability

As it is the case with the ability and permission senses previously explained, Arab speakers also resort to هل and — as linguistic tools to form interrogated possibility or probability. These particles cannot suit the Arabic modal equivalents, viz, ربما, قد and لعل to make questions; but they can occur altogether with the other expressions: من المحتمل, يَحْتَمِلُ, من الممكن, يُمْكِنُ if interrogation is required. The following examples illustrate this point:

(52) أيمكننا (هل يمكننا) مشاهدة المسرحية في التلفزيون هذه الليلة؟

May/ might/ can/ could we watch the play on TV tonight?

(53) أَيَحْتَمِلُ (هل يَحْتَمِلُ) ان يجدوا المفتاح تحت السجادة؟

May/ might/ can/ could they find the key under the rug?

Negated possibility and improbability concept entails introducing the negation tools: لا and غير. The former, and as far as the Arabic items: ربما, قد and لعل, always occupies the medial position between any of the afore-mentioned items and the main imperfect verb, e.g.:

(54) ربما (قد or لعله) لا يرسل المال غدا.

He may/might / can/could not send the money tomorrow.

لا comes before يُمْكِنُ or يَحْتَمِلُ to express the negated concept of possibility or probability, see the example below:

(55) لا يَحْتَمِلُ (لا يُمْكِنُ) ان تجد المفقودين احياء.

You may/ might/ can/ could not find the missing alive.

The latter, غير is used with regard to the expressions من المحتمل and من الممكن which is usually placed in a central position between من and الممكن or between من and المحتمل, as in :

(56) من غير المحتمل (من غير الممكن) ان يفوز فريقنا المباراة.

Our team may/ might / can / could not win the match.

3.4 Obligation, Certainty, Necessity, Advice

The obligation items can be made clear in the sentences below:

(Named H M, 1955, p. 104)

(57) يجب ان تنهي العمل حالا.

You must finish your work soon.

(58) يلزمك ان تتبع نصيحتي.

You must follow my advice.

يجب and يلزم are imperfect lexical verbs used to refer to the modal concept of obligation, which are not inflected for person, number nor gender. A verb in the

subjunctive preceded by ان usually follows them. A verbal noun may be used following them, as in:

(59) يجب اطاعة والديك.

You must obey your parents.

(60) يلزم الإمساك بالسارق.

The thief must be arrested.

The particle على with an annexed pronoun or a noun may be inserted in medial position between the imperfect lexical verb يجب and the subjunctive form of the main verb governed by ان or it is acceptable to find a verbal noun following يجب على as well:

(61) يجب عليه حشو البندقية.

He must load the gun.

Using the particle على side by side with the verb يجب intensifies the concept of obliging order. The particle على with an annexed pronoun or with an independent noun may stand by themselves to give the full meaning of obligation without the need of يجب in the sentence, as shown below:

(62) عليك ان تستحم الان.

You must take a bath now.

(63) على نمارق ان تكتب واجبها البيتي.

Namariq must write her homework.

It is obvious to note that whenever a pronominal suffix is attached to على the last long vowel sound in على changes into the diphthong ay as in the sentence (62).

يجب is a semantically stronger way of expressing order than that concept of necessity which is expressed by the particle على alone. For this reason, one can conclude that the lexical verb يجب is an Arabic equivalent to must in meaning, whereas ينبغي which will be discussed later, is an accurate counterpart to should. على alone is used for mild and polite way of obligation. The obligation sense implies certainty of doing an action under the speaker's order. Both Arabic and English confirm that the fulfillment of the action is certain.

In addition to the modal equivalent expressing obligation previously mentioned, the lexical items ملزم (obliged) and مطالب (required) are used to express this concept as well. These two items are inflected in terms of number, person, and gender. A verb in the subjunctive introduced by ان or a verbal noun obligatorily comes after any of them. When ملزم or مطالب is used in the sentence the inseparable ـيـ should be attached at the beginning of the following verbal noun, e.g. :

(64) هي ملزمة بمساعدة أمها.

She must help her mother.

(65) هم مطالبون ان يحضروا المحاضرة.

They must attend the lecture.

The inseparable particle is not required if the imperfect subjunctive with ان is used following any of these two items. The obligatory use of the separate pronouns or

nouns directly before the items ملزم or مطالب as subjects of the sentences is considered as less polite way of expressing obligation because it shows the personal touch of obliging others to do certain actions.

لا بد (no escape) is usually used to give the meaning of obligation, e.g.:

(66) لا بد ان يدرس التاريخ.

He must teach history.

An imperfect subjunctive governed by ان is usually put after لا بد but sometimes the particle من may optionally exist after لا بد and before ان. But when a verbal noun is used in the sentence, the particle من becomes obligatory, like:

(67) لا بد من زيارة عمك اسبوعيا.

You must visit your uncle weekly.

A gentle of "obligation" can be tangibly sensed by use of the lexical imperfect verb ينبغي (be necessary) in a place before a verbal noun or an imperfect subjunctive with ان. This is a polite way of expressing "obligation" in Arabic. In other words, this lexical imperfect verb is used to inform others that it is necessary to do certain actions. This verb is not inflected in terms of person, number and gender, as in:

(68) يجب ان تفعل ما يقول.

You should do as he says.

The particles سوف and س are used sometimes to convey the idea of "obligation" when the context is sufficient and clear, as noticed below:

(69) المدرب للاعبين: سوف تلعبون بقوة.

Coach to footballers: "You must play strongly."

كان, the defective verb, is placed before the lexical imperfect verb ينبغي when the past concept of "necessity" is wanted because انبغي is its obsolete past form. The English modals Ought to and have to are equal in meaning to should and all these modals are translated into Arabic through the counterparts ينبغي and لا بد. Therefore, what is said about "should" can be applied to have to and ought to as well.

The "advice" meaning may inclusively contain polite "obligation", as shown below:

(70) احبذ ان تكون حاضرا في المناظرة.

You should be present in the debate.

(71) انصحك ان تتفاوض معهم.

You ought to negotiate with them.

(72) من الأفضل ان تجادل بهدوء.

You have to argue quietly.

The lexical verb احبذ (I prefer) in (70) is inflected for the first person only; it includes the direct way of granting "advice". It is followed by an imperfect subjunctive with ان. The verb انصح in (71) is treated like احبذ and both demonstrate the personal role of giving advice, whereas the expression من الأفضل in the last example is described with impersonal role in offering "advice". Other expressions can be found in the

Arabic language, such as من المفصل and من المستحسن are used to express the notion of mild "obligation"

3.4.1 Negative And Interrogative Obligation, Necessity and Advice in Arabic

The negative particles لا, ليس, and غير may be introduced with the foregoing devices of obligation to negate the modal meaning in Arabic. لا is used with يجب, يلزم and ينبغي, whereas the other two negators (ليس and غير) are used with the participles مطالب and ملزم. Here are some examples:

(73) لا يجب ان تكتب.

You must (sg.) not write.

(74) (a) انت لست مطالباً برؤيته حالا.

(b) انت غير مطالب برؤيته حالا.

You (sg.) should not see him soon.

The expressions انصح and احذ are negated by placing the particle لا before any of them. The negation particle غير is put in a medial position between من and any of the next items: المفضل or الضروري, المستحسن. لا is used after من الافضل ان or لا بد ان and before the subjunctive imperfect verb. When سوف is used to express what is necessary to be done, the negative particle لن should be used after it to make a negative expression, selected examples shown below:

(75) لا انصح ان تذهب بمفردك.

You (sg.) ought not to go alone.

(76) من غير المفضل مقابلتهم في حانة.

You (sg.) should not meet them in a pub.

(77) من الافضل الا تأكل كثيرا.

You (sg.) must not eat too much.

In (77) ان and لا are combined together to form الا.

The interrogative particles هل and -أ are used with the foregoing devices of expressing obligation e.g.,

(78) هل يجب عليه (أ يجب عليه) ان ينتبه للمحاضرة؟

Must he pay attention to the lecture?

(79) (a) هل انت ملزم (هل انت مطالب) ان تغادر المكان؟

(b) أ أنت ملزم (أ أنت مطالب) ان تغادر المكان؟

Must you(sg.) leave the place?

Only -أ is used with the phrase لا بد when question formation is intended, e.g., :

(80) أ لا بد من زيارته في المستشفى؟

Must he be visited in the hospital?

These interrogative particles can also collocate with other expressions that suggest the meanings of "obligation", "necessity" and "advice" in making questions, such as : من المستحسن or من المفضل, من الافضل, من الضروري :

(81) هل من الضروري (أ من الضروري) ان يدونوا ملاحظات خلال المحاضرة؟

Should they have notes during the lecture?

3.5 Offer, Request, Suggestion

The commonest ways used by the native speaker of Arabic in expressing “offer” are clearly exemplified in the following instances:

(82) هل أستطيع (هل يمكنني أو هل أقدر) ان اقرا لك؟

Can I read to you?

“offer” denotation in the above example is expressed by “lexico-functional” constructions ; the interrogative particle هل used together with أستطيع, يمكن and أقدر are utilized in giving the meaning of this concept. The inseparable interrogative particle – ا – may substitute for هل, anyhow. The verbs أستطيع and أقدر are inflected for the first person to show that the agent of the action is the speaker, whereas the first person pronominal suffix is annexed to يمكن. either a verbal noun or an imperfect subjunctive with ان follows these modal constructions.

(Wright, 1977, p. 68)

The verbal nouns استطاعة and امكان may be used to denote this concept:

(83) (a) باستطاعتي ان افعل لك ذلك.

(b) بإمكانني ان افعل لك ذلك.

I can do that for you.

These verbal nouns always have the first person pronominal suffix to refer to the speaker as the agent of the action. The inseparable particle يـ is always attached at the beginning of each expression. In these constructions, the speaker indicates his ability or readiness to do something. Commitment in the mind of the speaker is implied in these constructions for doing what he is offering. The interrogative particle هل may precede any of these constructions in interrogative sentences conveying “offer”, as revealed below:

(84) هل باستطاعتي ان افعل لك ذلك؟

Can I do that for you?

Particle denotation of “offer” is found in these examples:

(85) هل احمل عنك الحقيبة؟

May I carry the bag for you?

(86) سأفعل لك ذلك.

I would do that for you.

The first example reveals the use of the interrogative particle هل preceding the indicative imperfect verb which is inflected for the first person. As for the second example, the inseparable particle سـ or سوف is use for “offer” indication.

The following are some of the commonest instances to illustrate the concept of request:

(87) ارجو ان تقرأ بصوت عال.

Can you (sg.) read louder?

(88) هل لك ان تعيد السؤال؟

Would you repeat the question?

(89) هل تتكرم ان تساعدني في هذا العمل؟

Would you help me in this work?

The lexical verb ارجو (request) in the first example is the modal carrier of request which is inflected for the first person, whereas the person being requested is denoted by a prefix, indicating the second person, annexed to the imperfect subjunctive with ان. As for ارجو, a pronominal suffix referring to the second person for emphasis may, however, be attached. The use of هلا denotes request of deep politeness found in formal situations, e.g., :

(90) هلا تساعدني؟

Can (Would) you help me?

The “lexico-functional” هل تتكرم in (89) carries the meaning of polite request because تتكرم explicitly denotes deep politeness towards the addressee. This verb if inflected for the second person.

The lexical verbs carrying meaning of “ability” and “possibility” also express request, as in the following:

(91) هل تستطيع (هل تقدر او هل يمكن) ان تزورني غدا؟

Can you visit me tomorrow?

The modal concept of request mentioned in the above example are : هل تستطيع , هل تقدر (are you able) and هل يمكن (is it possible) made up of the interrogative particle هل (أ-) may substitute for it, and the verbs which, save يمكن, are inflected for the second person. As for يمكن, a second person pronominal suffix may be attached to it: هل يمكنك (is it possible for you).

Other means of “request” denotation are “lexico-functional” items exemplified in the following sentences:

(92) أ من الممكن (هل بالإمكان او هل بإمكانك او هل باستطاعتك) ان تبحث عن الخاتم؟

Can you look for the ring?

By the way, through the following expressions أ من الممكن (is it possible) and هل بالإمكان (is it possible), the “request” sense is signified where the addressee is not directly referred to, whereas the other two examples contain the modal constructions: هل باستطاعتك (is it within (your) ability) and هل بإمكانك (lit. is it within (your) possibility) where the addressee is explicitly is referred to by a pronominal suffix.

To request or ask the addressee’s permission to do something will be seen in sentences like:

(93) هل باستطاعتي (هل يمكنني او أ من الممكن) ان اناقش القضية معك؟

May I discuss the matter with you.

The “lexico-functional” items هل باستطاعتي (is it within my ability), هل يمكنني (lit. is it within my possibility) and أ من الممكن (is it possible) are used for requesting the addressee to permit something. The first two constructions in sentence (93) have pronominal suffixes annexed to the modal expressions. It is possible to replace هل and أ by لعل in the constructions هل باستطاعتي and أ من الممكن and it is preferable to هل and أ because it has a strong force of requesting others or being requested.

Some words should be said about the suggestion concept expressed by some modals; that is to say the “offer” and “request” senses comprehend the idea of “suggestion” implicitly on the part of the speaker. So what is being offered or requested means to suggest doing something to the addressee. This sense has inclusively been mentioned in the previous material.

3.6 Future markers in Arabic

All grammarians of English agree that modals including shall and will are mainly used as future markers shaded with other meanings, such as: ability, permission, probability, order, willingness, intention, etc. But will can be utilized as a future marker only, i.e., this use is void of any other coloured meaning. Shall as a sole future marker is in the process of death or negligence, so this modal is used at present to indicate other meanings. In Arabic, the markers سوف and س are used to indicate the notion of futurity in the sentence like:

(94) سوف تصل (ستصل) الحافلة صباحا.

The bus will arrive in the morning.

The markers سوف and the inseparable س are equal in meaning to the English will.
see Scott (1962:113)

The Arabic markers of futurity are classically called “particles of amplification”. The word “amplification” means “widening” in that they convert the verb from narrow time, viz, present time to the wide time, viz, the future. Ziadah in “An Introduction to Modern Arabic” (1957:97) argues that س is a contraction of سوف. Moreover, he considers the abundance of the letters in سوف as carrying abundance of meaning. Ziadah’s claim, however, seems groundless and presents his own ideas.

The main indicative imperfect verb may compensate for س and سوف in denoting the future time, as in:

(95) تصل الحافلة صباحا.

The bus arrives in the morning.

The particle س or سوف is absent in the above Arabic instance and using the imperfect verb only is sufficient in denoting the future reference. The same feature is applied to the English sentence in which the ordinary verb “arrives” denotes future time, in this case there is no need to introduce the modal will.

3.7 Volitional Uses and Other Meanings in Arabic

The English modals shall, will and would as the rest ones have double semantic duties: futurity tinted with other certain meanings. In the previous sections, the researchers have discussed will as a future indicator only; but the following subtitles are devoted for the modal will side by side with shall and would indicating other meanings, besides, the future reference. Three shades of volitional willingness, intention and insistence are available in the Arabic literature. Other concepts, other than volitions, can be encountered in the Arabic language as well.

3.7.1 Willingness (weak volition)

The concept of willingness is conveyed in various ways, e.g., :

(96) انا مشغول، و لكنني سأحرص على مساعدتك.
I am busy, but I will help you.

(97) هم يرغبون ان يمكثوا معنا في مصايف الشمال.
They will stay in the north resorts.

(98) هي راغبة في ارسال خطاب لوالدتها.
She will send a letter to her mother.

(99) انا في عجلة من امري، لكنني سأخبرك الحقيقة.
I am in a hurry, but I will tell you the truth.

In the first two examples, the lexical verbs يحرص (be willing) and يرغب (wish) are used to express the volitive willingness. These lexical verbs are inflected for person whose willingness is exposed to.

The present participle (the noun of the agent) راغب (willing) is used with the particle في making up a “lexico-functional” expression usually inflected for number and gender, as shown in the third example. The forth example reveals that the modal concept of willingness may be conveyed through the future particles سوف and سي when the whole sentence is tented with such sense. The lexical verb يرغب and the present participle راغب semantically fall within the same scope and are closely related. Moreover, they are derived from one underlying form (base). يحرص when used with the particle على constitute a “lexico-functional” expression as in the first example, but when it is followed by a verbal noun, the particle على should be used. When the lexical verb يرغب and the present participle راغب precede a verbal noun, they must be collocated with the particle في, as in:

(100) ليس لدي الوقت الكافي، و لكنني ارغب (راغب) في لقاءك.
I have not enough time, but I will meet you.

Willingness on the part of the speaker regarding the addressee (a second person) can be fulfilled in the example below;

(101) انا راغب لك البقاء معنا طالما تحب.

You shall (will, would) stay with us as long as you like.

To convey the willingness meaning on the part of the speaker requires the existence of the first person singular (masc. and fem.) separate pronoun انا as in the above sentence. The present participle (the noun of the agent) may substituted for the lexical verb ارغب or احرص that is inflected for the first person only. The use of انا is optional in this case, as in the following sentence:

(102) (انا) احرص (ارغب) ان تبقى معنا ما دمت ترغب في ذلك.

You shall (will, would) stay with us as long as you like.

The particles سوف and سي are used to carry the willingness sense on the part of the speaker concerning the speaker himself, the second or the third person examples on the second and third persons are cited below:

(103) سيتذهب معنا الى النهر.

You shall (will, would) go with us to the river.

(104) سوف يصل محمد في الوقت المناسب.

Mohammed shall (will, would) arrive in time.

3.7.2 Intention (Intermediate Volition)

The following sentences show how “intention” is expressed in Arabic:

(105) انوي كتابة الرسالة.

I shall (will, would) write the letter.

(106) في النية ان ارافقه الى المتحف.

He shall (will, would) accompany him to the museum.

انوي (intend) in the first example is a lexical verb inflected only for the first person to show that the speaker is the agent of “intention”. An imperfect subjunctive with ان may substitute for the verbal noun. In both cases, no collocation with particles is seen. In the second example, a “lexico-functional” expression في نيّتي (in my intention) denotes the modal meaning of intention; it is made up of the particle في followed by the verbal noun to which is annexed the singular first person pronoun if the intention of the speaker is required.

سوف and سـ, however, may be used as carriers of intention since when the whole sentence is tented with this concept:

(107) سوف اخذ (سيأخذ) دورة في الفرنسية.

I shall have a French course.

3.7.3 Insistence (Strong Volition)

The items which provide the means for expressing the modal concept of “insistence” are found in the sentences below:

(108) يعتزم السباحة في المياه الخطرة.

He w'll (shall) go swimming in dangerous water.

(109) تصر ان تلعب في الأماكن الخطرة.

She w'll (shall) play in risky places.

(110) علي عازم علي ترك التدخين.

Ali w'll (shall) give up smoking.

(111) انا مصر ان انهي عملي بسرعة.

I w'll (shall) finish my work quickly.

In the first example, the lexical verb يعتزم (insist) has the modal meaning of “insistence”. This item is inflected for gender, number and person. This item, moreover, does not allow collocation with the preposition على whether a verbal noun or an imperfect subjunctive follows. In the second example, the lexical verb تصر (she insists) is used, and in this case the particle على may or may not be employed before the imperfect subjunctive introduced by ان. When a verbal noun follows, على should be introduced, constructing with the lexical verb a “lexico-functional” expression. يصر (insisting) in the fourth example shares the same semantic features with يصر. As for the third example, the present participle (the noun of the agent) عازم is preceded by a noun. Furthermore, it may be collocated with the particle على when

followed by a verb in the subjunctive governed by ان , but على becomes obligatory when a verbal noun follows:

(112) انا عازم على السفر غدا.

I will (shall) travel tomorrow.

The verbs اعتزم and اصر are inflected only for the first person to indicate “insistence” on the part of the speaker, e.g.:

(113) اصر ان تشارك في المهرجان.

She shall (will) take part in the celebration.

The first person pronoun انا obligatory precedes the participle عازم and مصر showing the speaker’s “insistence”,

(114) هم عازمون على ان يساعدوا آباءهم.

They shall (will) help their fathers.

The particles سوف and سـ are used to indicate “insistence” when the meaning of the whole sentence imports this concept, e.g. :

(115) سوف تدرس هذا الموضوع.

You shall(will) this subject.

(116) سأكمل تصليحه حالا.

I will (shall) complete its repair soon.

3.7.3.1 Negative and Interrogative Volitional Uses in Arabic

هل and -أ are basically used to introduce a question. If a question is intended with the volitional members, these particles are required, as shown below:

(117) هل يصير علي على السفر؟

Will Ali travel?

(118) أ تحرص الام على مساعدة ابنتها؟

Shall the mother help her daughter?

Negation entails using any of several particles like لن , غير , ليس and لا:

(119) (انا) احرص الا تعصي والدتك.

You shall (will) not disobey your mother.

(120) ليس في نيتي ان اعيره كتابي.

I shall (will) not lend him my book.

The first person singular separate pronoun انا is explicitly indicated when the volitive meanings “willingness”, “intention” and “insistence” on the part of the speaker are intended when using constructions other than the lexical verbs. Thus:

(121) انا راغب ان تساعد صديقك.

You will (shall) your friend.

(122) انا مصر ان تدرس بجد.

You shall (will) study hard.

3.7.4 Promise

“Promise” is conveyed in Arabic either by lexical verbs or the particles سـ and سوف , as exemplified in the following sentences:

(123) اعدك ان تدرس الشعر.

You shall teach poetry.

(124) اتعهد لك ان اراقب الباب.

I will keep an eye on the door.

(125) سيتحصل على نتائج مثمرة غدا.

You shall get fruitful results tomorrow.

(126) سوف نرسل كتباً لكل اصدقاءنا.

We will send books to all our friends.

The lexical verbs اعد and اتعهد (I promise) through which the present concept of “promise” is denoted. These two lexical verbs are inflected for the first person. In the latter two examples, the particles س and سوف are used for “promise” realization when the context indicates so.

3.7.4.1 negative and interrogative promise in Arabic

The interrogative particles هل and أ- are usually employed at the beginning of the sentence including “promise” expressions, as noticed below:

(127) هل اعدك بأرسالي خطاباً؟

Shall I send you a letter?

The verb expressions are negated by using the particle لا , as exemplified in the following:

(128) لا اتعهد لك ان تحصل على الكتاب.

You shall not get the book.

The particles س and سوف are usually negated by introducing the negative particle لن instead, e.g. :

(129) لن نلعب معهم الأسبوع المقبل.

We shall not play with them next week.

3.7.5 Command Denotation in Arabic

Apart from the imperative system which is commonly used in Arabic in expressing the direct command, “command” realization can be carried by various means, as given below:

(130) عليك ان تدرس بجد.

You will study hard or you must study hard.

(131) ليعمل محمد بدقة.

Mohammed must work precisely.

(132) سيترافق الوفد رغبت ام ابيت.

You shall accompany the delegation whether you wish or not.

In the first example, the particle على with a pronominal suffix is used for “command” indication. The second instance asserts the use of the inseparable particle لـ as a prefix to the imperfect jussive conveying a sense of indirect command. س and سوف the future particles, however, may show the concept of command modality as in the third example.

“Command” and “threat” are twin ideas and closely related. So giving a strong command is tantamount to “threat”. Thus, the two meanings are bound tightly. But the whole issue depend on the available context of the sentence and also the intention of the utterer towards the addressee. That is to say, the giver of the “command” is threatening to inflict a mischief against the person receiving the order if the action is not carried out.

3.8 Logical Inference

“lexico-functional” items express the concept of logical inference in the sentences below:

(133) هو شاحب الوجه، لا بد من انه مريض.

He is pale; he must (should, ought to) be sick.

(134) يضحك الولد، لا شك (لا ريب، لا محالة، لا مناص، لا مفر) انه سعيد.

The boy is laughing; he must (should, ought to) be happy.

(135) انت تعمل بدقة، حتما (قطعا) انك ماهر.

You are working precisely; you must (should, ought to) be skillful.

لا مناص، لا محالة (undoubtedly) لا ريب and لا شك (no avoidance) or لا بد (no escape) are the lexical items which carry the logical inference sense. لا مفر may optionally be followed by the particle من as in the first example. These expressions are of the same grammatical category, in that they share the same formal and syntactic characteristics and nearly all are semantically related. Each construction is made up of لا plus any of the following nouns مناص، محالة، شك، بد. this لا governs its noun in the accusative without nunation, and its predicate in the nominative. The negative particle and its noun form one entity. Separation, therefore, is not permissible, i.e., they should collocate with each other. Any of this group cannot stand on its own in the sentence; it must be followed by a nominal sentence representing its predicate, e.g.:

(Abdo, 1962, p. 77)

(136) لا بد انها تحتاج الى نظارات.

She must need glasses.

The members of this group are inflected for neither person, number nor gender, i.e., they always have the same form.

To the phrases of logical inference, the conjunction فـ may be prefixed to connect the preceding sentence and the following one, e.g.:

(137) القائد يبتسم، فلا بد انه منتصر.

The leader is smiling; he must (should, ought to) be victorious.

The normal position for these phrases in a sentence is initial; and no other position is permissible.

حتما (definitely) and قطعا (categorically) are used to express the concept of “logical inference” as in sentence (135). Al-Khateeb (2000:162, 330) substantiate that each item is called مفعول مطلق (cognate object). Any of the expressions is not

inflected in terms of person, number and gender. They both share the same formal and syntactic features; moreover, they are semantically related.

Apart from what has been mentioned above, لا بد may be used to indicate the modal concept of predictability conveyed by will which can replace must in many a sentence with slight change of effect, e.g., :

(138) لابد انها تقرأ الان.

She will be reading by now.

The usage of interrogative with the expressions indicating “logical inference” does not exist and out of question in Arabic in any case.

When negation is intended, we need to introduce either of the particles, ليس or غير , as in:

(139) ذلك الحيوان صغير، لابد انه ليس (غير) ثقيلًا.

That animal is small; it must be not heavy.

4 Conclusion

Having fulfilled the whole details of the research, the researchers commence to give the results reached after the material of this study has been re-examined several times by them:

1. Arabic does not possess an independent system corresponding to the English modal verbs as a unified subject; the modality concepts may be realized by means of different particles, lexical verbs (mostly collocated with certain prepositions) and “lexico-functional” (lexical items other than verbs used together with specific grammatical words to give the modal meaning).
2. The items implying the modal meanings cannot occur on their own because they do not give complete sense. Either a main verb, a verbal noun, or an imperfect subjunctive with ان , therefore, becomes obligatory.
3. The semantic difference between the verb in the subjunctive governed by ان and the verbal noun is that the former mostly signifies the future time, i.e. , unfulfilled action, whereas the latter indicates all-time action in a habitual sense.
4. Arabic uses ample items and counterparts to express the meanings of English modals. Each modal meaning is expressed by many Arabic equivalents. These equivalents are, however, more numerous and more comprehensive in Arabic than in English.
5. The items which usually convey meanings equivalent to some English modal concepts are the following lexical verbs sometimes collocated with prepositions:
- يصر - يعتزم - يحرص - يلزم - ينبغي - يجب - يمكن - يُسمح - يتمكن - يقدر - يستطيع
- يتكرم - يرغب - ينوي
6. The particle carrier of some modal meanings are cited below:
The preposition على , ربما , لعل , قد , لـ and its allomorph سـ sometimes used with annexed pronouns, the inseparable هل , سوف , سـ .

These particles have no lexical meanings but their meanings are understood through their grammatical function when employed with lexical items.

7. Lexical items other than verbs may be used with function words to express some modal concepts:
 - a. The inseparable prepositions بـ and لـ and its allomorph لـ following certain lexical items like ملزم بـ, مطالب بـ, راغب بـ and مسموح لـ.
 - b. The constructions made up of some lexical items preceding the separate prepositions على and من: متمكن من, قادر على, من الممكن, عازم على and مصر على.
 - c. Some constructions consists of the negative particle لا plus any of the nouns بد, شك, ريب, محالة, مناص, and مفر.
 - d. Some constructions are made up of the particle لـ or على and either a pronominal suffix or a following noun as لك and لمحمد, عليكم and على علي. in some cases the particles بـ or في are used with a following verbal noun like: في نية, بإمكان, بإستطاعة.
8. The particles هل, أـ, are used in question formation. هل is, however, used more frequently, but with constructions made up of the negative particle لا followed by any of the nouns: بد, شك, ريب, محالة, مناص, مفر, besides the particles ربما, قد, neither أـ nor هل are used to form a question.
9. The particles, lexical verbs and “lexico-functional” constructions form their negative by introducing one of several particles like: لا, ليس and غير, the first being the most commonly used. The position of the particle of negation varies according to the kind of modal item used and the part of the utterance to be negated.
10. There is no intention to burden the reader with all the syntactic details of each item due to complicated means of syntactic features of each concept. An overview is, however, handle to give the reader the chance of a somewhat closer acquaintance with the negative and interrogative processes in Arabic.
11. Some prosodic features such as stress and intonation may occasionally be used to indicate a question without using the interrogative particles هل and

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