Pakistan Social Sciences Review
www.pssr.org.pk

RESEARCH PAPER

Modal Auxiliaries in Pakistani English Newspapers: Social and Pedagogical Perspectives

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PAPER INFO	ABSTRACT
 Corresponding Author: r.khan@mu.edu.pk	This study aims at analyzing the nativisation of certain modal verbs in Pakistani English newspapers. The modal verbs convey social meanings apart from their grammatical functions. In many cases the choice between will/would and can/could is not in accordance with the norms of Standard British English. Modal auxiliaries are considered very problematic for non-native learners and speakers. This study examines the use of modal-auxiliaries-verbs in Pakistani written English with special focus on their social and pedagogical perspectives. The data for the study have been taken from English newspapers. The frequency list has been generated by using the software AntConc 3.5.7. The findings of the study can be used to teach the auxiliaries to the students of English particularly in the appropriate social contexts.

Introduction

It is a Speakers use modal verbs to express different emotions and intensions (Liao & Liao, 2009).There are nine modal verbs in English including 'will, would, shall, should, must, may, might, can, could'(Conrad, Biber,& Leech, 2002) and these verbs are semantically very complex. Some expressions like 'ought to, need to, used to' can act as modal verbs and are called "marginal modals" (Kennedy, 2002). In the domain of second language learning and teaching, "*modal auxiliary verbs*" are considered the utmost challenging items of grammar (Vethamani, Manaf & Akbari,2010; Khojasteh & Reinders, 2013). This challenging factor and complexity cause trouble in learning modal auxiliary verbs for ESL learners. Events or actions present in mind often not happening in future are mostly described by these verbs (Hoye, 1997) and some of them share similar primary meanings causing trouble for the users. Thompson, DiCerbo, Mahoney

and MacSwan (2002) claim that these complex verbs are not easy to categorize into meaningful chunks for presenting information in terms of teaching modal auxiliary verbs. Thus they have become a problem in teaching and learning of English language (Vethamani et al., 2010).Being an important part of semantics and grammar, these verbs express emotions, intentions and expectancy to influence other's decisions. Therefore, it is very much necessary for effective communication for the learners of English to be clear in terms of meanings and the use of modal auxiliary verbs. Consequently, the teachers play an effective part in teaching modal auxiliary verbs but teaching modality is a very challenging task because there are different schools of thoughts regarding modality.

Different linguistic schools explain modality in various ways yet there is no consensus on a single definition of modality. In this paper, we will deal with different definitions of modality to start with. Firstly, Huddleston and Pullum (2005) explain modality in terms of 'necessity' and 'possibility'. In other words, modality is speaker's decision of a particular subject maintaining possibility and necessity. Secondly, modality is explained by Quirk et al., (1985) in relation to speaker's judgment of a subject's genuineness. Thirdly, Palmer (2001) described that modality is a speaker's subjective attitude or opinion towards a topic. Likewise fourthly, Halliday (1970) explained it in terms of interference and getting a chance to assert his viewpoint in speaking incident whereas Palmer (2001) has categorized this phenomenon as 'interpersonal function'. On the other hand, Halliday (1994) proposed the theory of various language functions in which interactive connections between speaker and addressee's attitudes are held by interpersonal function, and it performs more than one function.

Thus, keeping in view the various definitions discussed above, it can be summarized that still the semanticists have no consensus on a single opinion and they are searching for similarities between modal expressions. However, according to Collins (2009), some semantic notions are common in every suggested definition i.e. ability, possibility, obligation, permission, necessity and hypotheticality. Moreover, Depraetere and Reed (2006) also claim that all modal utterances having non-factual features always require expressing un-factual circumstances and these are similar in all modal expressions. These notions are also expressed by different means of verbal and non-verbal forms (Haliday, 1970). Likewise, Quirk et. al (1985) state that there are specifically two basic functions of modals in speaking and writing: firstly they are used for improvement in interaction and secondly they are used as a tool of expression relating to purpose, opinion, free will, understanding, obligation and other associated notions.

L2 Learners and Semantics of Modals' Expressions

The frequent use of modal auxiliaries in newspaper corpus provides an opportunity to learners to get sufficient input of language exposure (Kader, Begi, & Vaseghi, 2013). This study also helps in better understanding of using modals and to overcome the issue faced by learners in terms of acquiring the semantic and social distribution of these models.

Newspaper corpus having frequent use of modal auxiliary verbs which could be taught in a language classroom would enhance students' knowledge of the modals regarding their accurate use. In the corpus entries engaging topics would also appeal learners and they would take interest. It would also make them realize the applicability of modal auxiliary verbs.

For teaching grammar of second language in an interesting way, the teachers should use an appropriate material so that learners get motivation to understand and learn it. Therefore, newspaper corpus can assist the classroom learning as it can be an alternative teaching material in any learning settings if there is requirement for teaching specific language features like semantic function of modal auxiliary verbs. Furthermore, newspaper is written for all readers and various topics from different domains of life are discussed in it e.g. family, relationships, and politics, sports, and health, education, work and general topics. Therefore, newspaper corpus can be used in classroom for teaching specific features of language because reading different texts is very valuable for the students.

Meaningful learning is important for learning and transferring knowledge to real life situations. For such type of learning atmosphere, instructors can give the students such assignments requiring learners to make the actual use modal auxiliaries to complete the assigned tasks. Role play is one of these examples where students are assigned situations to perform their roles by making predictions and giving advice. This activity can be continued in both the ways through advice or in the form of conversation. Besides, for teaching grammatical structures, teachers should motivate the students to pick out the modal auxiliary verbs in the listed sentences or to highlight these models in a text (Celce- Murcia& McIntosh, 1979). In this way, teachers can develop consciousness for grammatical generalization of a text. Moreover, group work approach can also be developed in students for inducing functions and rules from modals that were highlighted in the text.

Semantics deals with the lexical sense whereas syntax is associated with lexical shape (Palmer, 2001). Therefore, it can be said that various semantic functions are attached with modal auxiliary verbs, the reason behind this fact is that one modal expresses different distinct meanings and one specific meaning can be attached to different modal auxiliary verbs (Khojasteh &Mukundan 2011). The core semantic categorization of modal auxiliary verbs is adopted from Biber et al.,

(1999) for this paper. According to this categorization, three fundamental divisions are given (cited in Khojasteh, 2011) below:

1. May, Might, Can, Could   (possibility/ability/permission)
2. Shall, Would, Will   (necessity/obligation)
3. Should, Must   (prediction, volition)

The semantic functions of above mentioned classification of modal auxiliary verbs are explained in detail in Table 1.

Table1
Biberetal's (1999) description of modal semantic class

Modal Auxiliary Verbs	Semantic Functions		Examples
Can	i. ii. iii.	Permission Possibility Ability	You *can* read my book. Your point of view on this topic *can* be useful. I *can* listen what he's talking about.
Could	i. ii. iii.	Permission Possibility Ability	They didn't know that they *could* see him. It *could* be anything you choose. I *could* n't feel my hand.
Must	i. ii.	Obligation Necessity	He *must* be cautious to prevent dangerous consequences. She *must* have left already.
Should	i. ii.	Obligation Necessity	You *should* relax. That *should* have been Sydney.
May	i. ii.	Possibility Permission	It *may* rain tomorrow. You *may* do your language work if you want to.
Might	i. ii.	Possibility Permission	It *might* rain tomorrow. She said I *might* go.
Shall	i. ii.	Prediction Volition	I *shall* be on holidays for certain. I *shall* help you.
Will	i. ii.	Prediction Volition	Gas prices *will* drop soon. And then we'*ll* bring them home to take it.
Would	i. ii.	Prediction Volition	This new move by government *would* considerably affect Social Security principles. I *would* just read the book as well.

Table 1 shows the complexity of modal auxiliary verbs for L2 learners as they express sometimes different functions e.g. possibility, inclination, probability,

permission, ability and obligation. EFL and ESL learners both face difficulty in terms of learning semantic functions of modal auxiliary verbs. So this study addresses the following research questions to discuss the above-mentioned issue:

Literature Review

Literature shows many corpus based studies on modal auxiliary verbs. A few of them have investigated the aspectual semantic functions of modals whereas others only explored the modals' distribution (Quirketal,1985;Coates,1983; Biberet al,1999). Some historical and regional variant forms of modal auxiliary verbs have also been explored in different studies (Collins, 1991;Biberetal.1999). Additionally, out of 20 per cent of all verb constituents, modal auxiliaries typically comprise of 8 percent of all verbs (Kennedy, 2002). 1457721 word tokens (1.45%) are tagged as modal auxiliaries in British National Corpus (Quirk et al., 1985; Kennedy, 2002) and similar results are found in this study having 72.7% modal auxiliaries (will, can, would, would) in Pakistani English newspaper corpus and the most frequently used modal auxiliary is *will* which is 25% of all other modal auxiliary verbs. Further, Coates (1983) found 17.7% modals in spoken LOB (Lancaster-Oslo/Bergen Corpus) and in spoken LLC (London-Lund Corpus), whereas 14.6% modals were found in written British Englih. Biber et al (1998) also investigated the variant use of *should* and *must* having semantic functions of necessity and obligation respectively over the period of time, and they found that *have got to* and *have to* which are considered semi modals are used more frequently with the passage of time.

Literature also shows some comparative studies in the use of modal auxiliary verbs as Römer (2010) has conducted a comparative corpus based research by using German textbook series and BNC to find out the variant forms of modal auxiliary verbs used by non-native speakers. She analyzed 10 million word spoken part of BNC and found that modal auxiliaries are more frequent in spoken English as compared to written English. Moreover, *can, would* and *will* were found more frequent modals in her research. Her findings of the use of negation with *can* and *could* are also supported by Kennedy (2002). She analyzed that contracted forms e.g. *can't* is much more frequent as compared to full forms e.g. *cannot*. She has revealed that there are many differences in the use of modal auxiliaries in terms of frequency, sematic use and co-occurrences in between BNC and English taught in German schools. Syntactically, some models are overused e.g. *will/'ll* and *can* whereas some models are underused e.g. *should, might, could* and *would/'ll* as compared to BNC. On the other hand, there are also some variant uses of modal auxiliaries in terms of semantics where textbooks portray an overuse of the ability meaning of *can* and *could compared to BNC where these models are mostly used in terms of possibility.* She further suggests that corpus-driven approaches should be utilized to facilitate learners and teachers for authentic learning and teaching.

Wong (1983), Rosli and Malachi (1989), Manaf (2007) and Torabiardakani, Khojasteh and Shokrpour (2015) conducted researches on learning modal

auxiliaries of non-native learners in terms of their semantic functions. They claimed that L2 learners were uncertain in using modal auxiliaries in sentences in respect of semantics and syntax. Another similar research was conducted by Bose (2005) for in India and he reported the same findings. Moreover, Aijmer (2002) and Viana (2006) also conducted the same research in Sweden and Brazil respectively and reported that L2 learners in Swedish were tended in overuse of these verbs having limited information regarding larger sentence patterns and modal phrases, and they were having weak understanding in terms of their register-interference aspect. Likewise, Brazilian students were not aware of the actual use of modal auxiliaries and therefore they wrote composition in a non-proficient way. Some other similar studies on the same perspective have been reported by the renowned linguists such as Wong (1983), Hoye,(1997) and Thornbury(1999) but still there is dearth in literature in respect of learner-corpus studies for learning modal auxiliaries in different non-native settings. To the best of our knowledge, there is no corpus based study done in Pakistan English to investigate whether the learners are familiar with various semantic functions of these verbs and which modal auxiliaries are more frequent in Pakistani English. Moreover, the scope of this research is comparative in nature as it aims to explore how L2 bilinguals in Pakistan use modal auxiliaries differently with reference to British English.

Methodology

Recently, the research has been fascinated by the development of computer based language corpora. These particular data bases comprised of millions of texts having billions of contextual words. The researchers are now able to do frequency counts for exploring different distinct patterns in language. 'Concordance' is one of those programs enabling researchers to reveal the contexts of certain phrases and words occurring in a sentence. This study comprises of analytical approach for exploring the inconsistency and discrepancy in teaching and learning modal auxiliaries for L2 learners in Pakistani context. Moreover, it is significant to mention that the methodological base of this study is not only rooted in corpus linguistics but it also covers discourse analysis for analyzing lexico-grammatical relationships of modal auxiliaries.

Newspaper corpus is a reliable material which illustrates the grammar being taught (Chujo & Oghigian, 2008) and it also proves that the use of language is for real purposes in factual life thus, providing the students supplement along with their textbooks. Concordance lines generated in this study are also helpful in understanding the proper use of modal auxiliaries in the context of factual real life.

Population and Sampling

This study has employed a corpus of Pakistani English newspapers containing Dawn (D), Daily Times (DT), The News (TN), Nation (N), and Business Recorder (BR). The number of tokens and types for (D) are 2308174 and 51163, for (DT) are 1772143 and 43550, for (TN) are 1833489 and 40689, for (N) are 1638982

and 39132, and for (BR) tokens and types are 1604370and 35914 respectively. Thus, total number of tokens for corpus is 9158558 and number of types is 88618.

Table2
Description of Corpus

S. No	Newspapers	Tokens	Types
1	Dawn (D)	2308174	51163
2	Daily Times (DT)	1772143	43550
3	The News (TN)	1833489	40689
4	Nation (N)	1638982	39132
5	Business Recorder (BR)	1604370	35914
	Total	9158558	88618
Type-Token Ratio (TTR) = (Type/Token)*100= 0.96%			

Concordances of all modal auxiliaries' variants (lemma) are extracted such as *may, might, can, could, shall, should, must, might, ought, will* and *would* in corpus of English newspapers by using Antconc. Lemma comprised of all modal auxiliaries enclitics e.g. *I'll*is counted as variant form of *will* whereas *shan't* is considered as variant of *shall.* Some other expressions like *'ought to, need to, used to'*which called "marginal modals" (Kennedy, 2002) have been discussed in this paper. Further, no manual extraction of modal auxiliaries is done in this study.

Antconc Concordance Tool: Instrumentation

This tool is designed by Laurence Anthony and it is commonly used software in corpus linguistics. Concordance is typically used for displaying tokens list, frequency list, key word in context (KWIC) etc. (Wiechmann & Fuhs, 2006). Many versions of this tool are freely available and perform their function very effectively just like other paid concordances. This study only involves frequency list and concordance lines. After extracting frequency list of variant forms of modal auxiliaries, their phrase structures were considered. Then concordance entries were generated with the help of concord tool.

Data Analysis and Discussion

Modal auxiliaries are used in a variety of contexts in Pakistani English newspapers. To show prediction along with possibility *'will'* and *'would'* are the most frequent modals used in Pakistani English, while *'shall'* as well as *might* are the least used modal verbs. This study offers a detailed account of employing modal auxiliaries by Pakistani users of English in newspapers.

Table 3
Details of Modal Auxiliaries by Pakistani Users

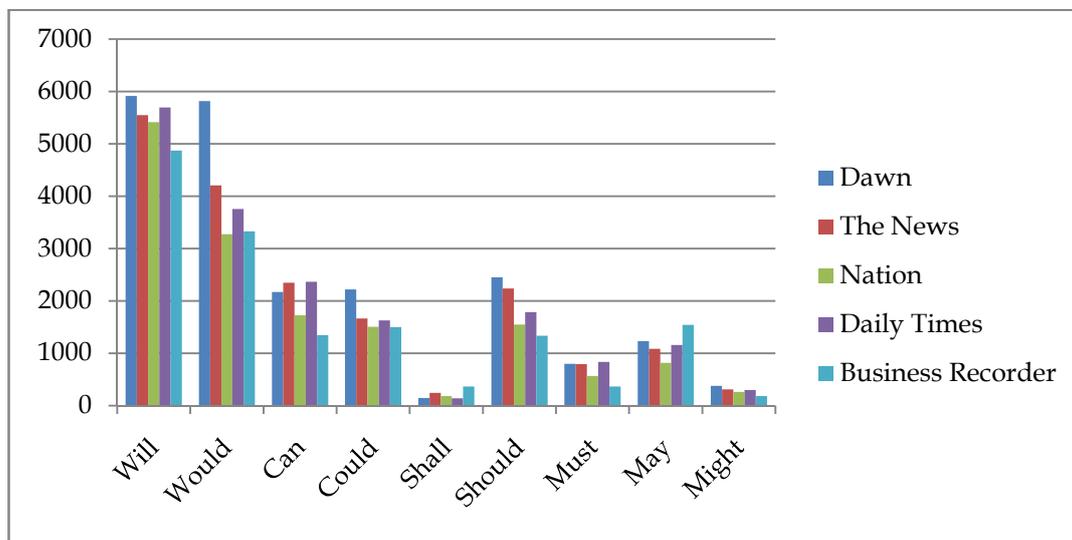|	Dawn	The News	Nation	Daily Times	Business Recorder	Total
Will	5915	5551	5415	5697	4869	27447
Would	5819	4208	3272	3756	3330	20385
Can	2169	2349	1727	2366	1346	9957
Could	2218	1666	1507	1625	1497	8513
Shall	147	241	185	139	363	1075
Should	2449	2236	1550	1787	1334	9356
Must	799	795	568	834	363	3359
May	1229	1086	816	1160	1543	5834
Might	380	314	260	301	185	1440

Figure 1: Frequency of Modals in Pakistani English Newspaper

The above figure indicates that 'will' is the most frequent modal in Pakistani English newspapers. Some semi modals like need to, will have to, dare to etc. are used as well in newspapers.

Table 4
Use of Semi-Modals in Pakistani English Newspaper

	Dawn	The News	Nation	Daily Times	Business Recorder	Total
Need to	446	541	397	498	386	2268
Ought to	62	26	17	28	19	152
Will have to	120	132	78	111	60	501
Have to	409	366	324	367	231	1697
Had to	313	208	205	178	102	1006

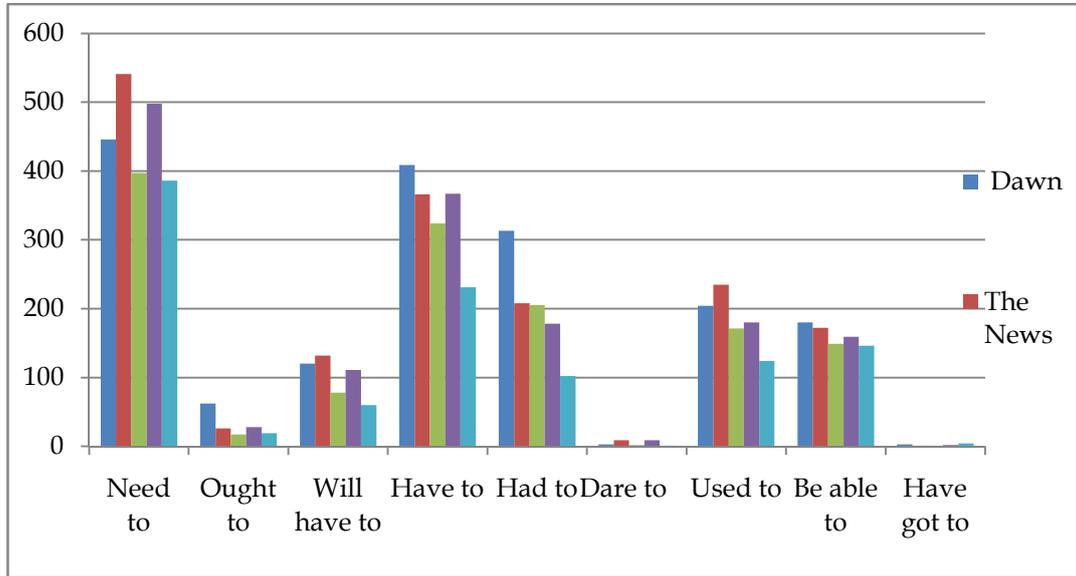| Dare to	3	9	2	9	1	24
Used to	204	235	171	180	124	914
Be able to	180	172	149	159	146	806
Have got to	3	1	1	2	4	11

Figure 2: Frequency of Semi-Modals in Pakistani English Newspapers

The findings of this study show that '*need to*'is used more frequently and '*have got to'* is the least used modal auxiliaries in Pakistani English newspaper corpus. Various interesting patterns are observed in frequency list generated from Pakistani newspaper corpus. It can be seen in the data that all nine modal verbs as well as the modal verbs which are called semi 'modal auxiliary verbs' are used. In Pakistani newspaper corpus a total average of these verbs is 1.01% out of 0.96%TTR. *Will* and *would* are used as the highest frequent modal auxiliary verbs as compared to other modals and they are also called modal of probability. This result is in accordance with that of Kennedy (2002); as per claim, these AUX account for just about 23% of the total modal tokens in BNC (British National Corpus). These modal auxiliaries also show time yet to come or it could also be used to refer to prediction or volition (Biber et al, 1999). The findings of this paper show that *will* and *would* are used to express possibility or prediction in Pakistani newspaper corpus. Oppositely *shall* and *might* are modal auxiliaries which are not used frequently in Pakistani newspaper writing. These findings are similar with the results of Quirk et al (1985) and Coates (1983) that *might* as well as*shall* are not frequently used modal auxiliaries in modern English than *can, could, would* and *will* as they are used frequently.

Semantic Distribution of Modal Auxiliary Verbs

The findings of this research show that every modal auxiliary verb used in Pakistani newspaper corpus has different semantic functions. For identifying their various distinct functions, sentences having modal auxiliary verbs were categorized by using Concordancing tool and then sorted out following the alike modals present. After sorting them, modal auxiliary verbs had been analyzed; they were presented according to the functions as mentioned in the above Table 1. Table 3 shows that modals of possibility and prediction are used more frequently in this targeted data.

Modals of Prediction or Possibility

Modal of possibility and Prediction indicate the future event. The most frequent modals of prediction or volition and possibility are *will* and *would* respectively. Through violation, however, a strong level of certainty and a strong degree of free will of man is conveyed. Future actions and animate subjects usually implicate the sense of willingness. However, the distinction between volition and prediction is very vague (Biber at al., 1999). The findings of this paper suggest that the use of *will* and *would* for prediction function is far greater as compared to volition. Modal auxiliary *will* expresses future event and its semantic function is prediction, however, the degree of certainty is very strong and it is also used for confident statements. Though these statements are not inevitably true but they express the validity of arguments. Besides, some conditional clauses are closely attached with many sentences since it is very obvious from the examples given below:

1. **If** the issue worked wonders for enlarging the base of the party for three decades, **it is** not only unlikely for the same vote-bank magic to work but more likely to backfire on BJP's face. (28 November, 2018 DT)

2. **If** the person appointed to the post holds visas of the United Kingdom and Pakistan, **it helps** the person [to run the affairs], he added. (17 November, 2018 DT)

3. **If** there was a need for resolute and spirited performance on the hockey field from the Greenshirts, World **Cup is** the stage. (28 November, 2018 TN)

4. **If** you missed the last couple of months, pop star Zayn Malik and supermodel Gigi **Hadid are** officially back together. (25 November, 2018 D)

In British English, *would* is used in the main clause of conditional constructions with past tense in the if-clause. However, this construction is not always observed in Pakistani English. The nonexistence of *would* can be seen in the above examples. Moreover, it can be observed that prediction is highly reliant on the fulfillment of

any of the future conditions. Following are some examples of *will* showing prediction:

1. She will arrive on time.

2. We will win our match today.

Following are some of the examples violation by using *will*:

1. She will understand the ways to work hard to get whats he wants a this working place.

2. Before you lose your temper, you should keep in mind that it's a short period and he will snap out of it in due time.

In Standard British English, the modal verb 'will' occurs with hope to show optimism while wish is described by 'would' to refer to imaginary things. However, we can see the use of 'would' with hope in the following examples:

1. `We hope that this **would** discourage them from experimenting with drugs themselves, while also practicing the use design for advocacy, ` she said. (17 November, 2018 D)

2. I hope that the Taliban and other Afghans **would** use the (presidential) election as a deadline to achieve a peace agreement. (19 November, 2018 TN)

In British English, will is also used to express the future actions and events. The non-native speakers of English prefer the use of 'will' and consider it grammatical correct in many cases (O'Hara-Davies, 2010). In Pakistani journalistic writing 'will' is used instead of 'would' and vice versa in some cases. Here are a few examples:

1. I **will** request Bushra Bibi that she should continue reminding her husband that he has become prime minister of the country, she said. (30 November, 2018 TN)

2. However, we **will** request them to also ensure registration of the remaining FIRs,`he added. (27 November, 2018 D)

3. How **will** you explain evil in a world where immoral actions are no longer viewed as the workings of an evil? (14 November, 2018 TN)

4. **Would** we have to wait for the World Bank to bring officials of both the countries to the table for negotiations yet again? (25 November, 2018 D)

5. **Would** we have to live with the image of devotees of TLP stealing bananas from a child vendor in Sheikhupura? (5 November, 2018 DT)

Modal verb ***may*** is used to express possibility or permission, whereas probability is indicated rarely by this modal auxiliary verb (Bieber et al., 2002). Anyhow, data that is targeted here shows that modal auxiliary verbs' *may'* and *'might'* are least used by Pakistani English newspaper journalists to express possibility. Examples are given below:

1. I may go traveling next year.

2. They might attend the awards ceremony tomorrow night.

Conclusion and Implications

This study analyzed the use of modals in Pakistani English newspaper corpus. The results of this paper clearly show that *will* that is followed by *would* is the most frequently used modal auxiliary verb which is evidently present in the newspapers included in the targeted corpus. Both the modals are used to express prediction and possibility in newspaper writing. However, the least frequent modals are *shall* and *might* which are used for the function of necessity and obligation. They are also used for expressing suggestion and advice which is considered a more polite approach.

This study is also helpful in teaching as the frequency list generated in this paper can be used for learners in the classroom. With the help of this frequency list, teachers can emphasize the selected items by using newspaper corpus e.g. the most frequent modals 'prediction and possibility' whereas other similar modal auxiliary verbs can also be taught through this corpus like *will, may, shall, would and* might. Moreover, the frequent occurrences of modals of prediction and possibility show frequent repetition of words, and this is very useful for teaching modals to learners because it improves the memory and understanding of matter. No doubt, for acquiring words, repetition is a good approach because words are about to be memorized while reading if the reader reads them at least seven times by giving space intervals (Thornbury, 2004).

Modern education is opposed to retelling of rules, thus, a table containing modal auxiliary verbs' functions can be provided to learners with a task of listing these verbs with their appropriate functions. Through this task, students will observe that functions of modal auxiliaries sometime overlap. In other words, one modal auxiliary can have multiple meanings. Lack of understanding in terms of modal auxiliaries may cause problems in acquiring these models, and consequently, inappropriate use of these verbs will be observed in learners' writing and speech. Thus the empirical findings suggest that newspaper corpus comprised of great frequency of the use of modal auxiliary verbs and this corpus could easily be used by teachers as a teaching material in language learning classrooms. This approach will make the learners to confront the natural language. Therefore, it can be claimed that students and teachers can gain insights from this study.

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