

## MODALITY FUNCTION AND ITS APPLICATION TO ENGLISH AND TAMIL LANGUAGE CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS

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### **Abstract**

This paper tries to find the contrastive modality relationship between English and Tamil modality of verbs and to analyze the modal verbs, the classification of modal verbs and semantic application of the modal verbs are taken into account in order to be an attempt towards not only towards second language learning but also machine learning and machine translation. To analysis modality of both languages, the tool that was introduced by Shozo Naito and his team in their paper ‘CLASSIFICATION OF MODALITY FUNCTION AND ITS APPLICATION TO JAPANESE LANGUAGE ANALYSIS’. This paper tries to help ESL teachers in teaching functions and semantic applications of English modal verbs to Tamil students.

**Key Words:** Contrastive analysis, Modals, Tamil Models, Teaching models

### **Abbreviations**

TAM – tense, aspect and mode, ESL – English as Second Language, ELT – English

Language Teaching, SLT - Second Language Teaching

## **Introduction**

Both English and Tamil employ the complex process of combining inflection and compounding in denoting Tense, Aspect, and Mood (TAM) and there are proper, improper and defective equivalents in Tamil language modal verbs to English and vice-versa. In fact, Tense, Aspect, and Mood systems of English and Tamil operate differently and finding equivalents is a tough task. But for the purpose of Machine Translation and other linguistic application like ELT and SLT, it is very important to compromise certain peripheral differences between them and try to capture the core of their systems with the view in mind that what is conveyed in English can be transferred to Tamil without many distortions as our idea is to translate linguistic text in English into Tamil.

## **Need of the study**

The second language learning takes place in different manner. generally, second language learner always has the tendency to view the second language through the grammatical rules of his/her first language. (Lado, 1971). He said that those elements that are similar to his native language will be simple for him and those elements that are different will be difficult. At this context, it is evident that the language teacher and language learners should know the structures of both the mother tongue and the second languages. Because such knowledge can help the language teacher to identify the areas of influence of mother tongue on the second language and also to develop some methods to rectify the interferences. Lado (1971).

Though there is a need of understanding the contractiveness between Tamil and English modal verbs, understanding of the functions of a modal verb is very important not only for teaching but also various linguistic applications like machine learning and machine translation. Classification and applying the functional qualities of modal verbs in the

contrastive analysis will help us to understand both language modality function which will be more use full in machine translation.

Since the meaning of sentence consists of both proposition and modality, analysis of modality is as indispensable as that of proposition for natural language understanding (Fillmore C. J, 1975). Modality is additive information represented by auxiliary words such as modal particles, ending particles and auxiliary verbs. The auxiliary verb immediately follows or within a verb phrase and modality represented in such grammatically different context is incorporated into the case structure, and the result construction is named as extended case structure. (Palmer F. R, 1980).

### **Classification and functions of Modality**

Traditionally, modality has been classified into three categories i.e. tense, aspect and modal but Akira Shimazu has added one more category: implicature into modality. By employing logical expression as the representation of the meaning structure the modality functions as operations on logical expressions in strict terms.(on his 23rd Annual Meeting of the Association for Computational Linguistics). This paper follows classification of Akira Shimazu on modality to find higher order modal logic formalism in finding the modality functions.

1. Addition of the modality operator
2. Surface modification of the case structure
3. Semantic modification of the case structure
4. Determination of the scope of negation
5. Addition of the implicative meaning

## Analysis

This analysis is made over the functions of modality on the classified modality auxiliary verbs in both English and Tamil language. Examples given in this paper is limited due to the length of the paper. The findings of the analysis are listed in the continuation of the analysis.

### Addition of the modality operator

In both English and Tamil there are modal auxiliaries to indicate the modality. The auxiliary verbs like can, could, may, might, will, would, shall, should, must, have to, used to, dare to and need to are the modal verbs and whereas 'iru', 'vendu', 'aam', 'laam', and 'mudiyum' are some of Tamil modals to indicate the modality.

Example :

He may come today - may + come = modal + modal aux

Avar inRu vara-laam - vara + laam = verb + modal aux

### Surface modification of the case structure

Normally verbs have the case relationship with the noun phrases and modal verbs do not have. This logical expression satisfies in both languages.

Example :

He should/must buy this book

Avar intha puththakathai vaanga vendum

In both sentences should/must and 'vendum' do not have case relationship with this book = 'intha puththakathai'. They should with verb and indicate the modality of compulsion.

### Semantic modification of the case structure/ causatives function of modality verbs

'Causative' is the unique quality of auxiliaries. In English, help, make, get, let and hope are causative verbs. In Tamil all verbs can be derived in to causative by adding '-vithu'

the grammatical particle. More over in modern Tamil ‘vey’ and ‘ceyvithu’ are use to indicate causatives.

Example :

He made her passed in the examination

Avan avalai antha thervil theRichiyada veyththan - ‘(chei)-vey’ – modal causative

### **Determination of the scope of negation**

Modal auxiliaries accommodate with negation in English. As in English, the negation will be added with Tamil modals, in Tamil ‘mudiyathu’, ‘illai’ and ‘maata’ are negative indicators used with modal auxiliaries.

Example :

He can not do this work

Avanal intha velaiyai ceyya mudiyathu – mudiyum – affirmative auxiliary – yaathu  
partical negation added with auxiliary

### **Addition of the implicative meaning**

The implicative meanings in a language are Limitation (only), Degree (as), Extreme (about), Stress (even), Example (for example), Parallel (and), Addition (also), Selection (or), Uncertainty (some), Distinction (us for) and these meanings in both languages implied by modal auxiliaries. Modality has semantic relationship with these implicature.

Example:

It will be good only if it is so.

Ippadi irunthal thal ithu naRaga nadkkum

### **Findings**

- The category of the modality expression is unique, this category is assigned to the meaning structure in both languages.

- Both English and Tamil make use of inflection as well as compounding (i.e. combining main verbs with the auxiliary verbs) to express TAM.
- The important point to be noted from the point of view of word order is that auxiliary verbs in English precede the main verb in English, whereas in Tamil they follow the main verb.
- In English auxiliary verbs are inflected for Tense, Person and Number; whereas in Tamil they are inflected for Tense, Person, Number and Gender.
- Identical auxiliary verbs in complex constructions get deleted both in English and Tamil.
- Auxiliary verbs occur in a sequence to denote tense, mood, aspect, voice etc. in both English and Tamil. The modal auxiliary verb in English never occurs after a primary auxiliary verb in English, whereas, in Tamil primary auxiliary verb never occurs after a modal auxiliary verb (with the exception of few modal auxiliary verbs).
- Both Tamil and English express perfective and progressive sense by auxiliary verbs. But Tamil makes use of this device to express the completive and reflexive sense too.
- In English, 'Yes or No' interrogative sentences are derived from their respective affirmative sentences by shifting the relevant auxiliary verbs to the initial position and a question mark at the end of it. In Tamil, 'Yes or No' interrogative sentences are derived from their respective affirmative sentences by adding interrogative clitic 'aa' with question mark. This may be true with other Dravidian languages
- Daemon (a procedure to resolve ambiguities by using heuristics) is attached to the modality expression in both languages and it performs the three tasks :
  - (1) Disambiguating the function of the modality expression,

- (2) Determining the scope,
- (3) Adding the implicative meaning.

### **Conclusion**

It was stated at the outset that the purpose of this contrastive study of English and Tamil Tense, Aspect and Mood of verb was to determine the structural differences that would cause problems to a Tamil student learning English. In the course of the study we found that the Tamil auxiliary did not play the same crucial syntactic functions as the English counterpart in the structures examined, namely statements, negation, questions, passive, conditional clauses and reported speech.

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## Appendix

### TENSE

Past tense	Sub+V + past tense He wrote	Sub+V + past tense + PNG avan ezhutinaan
Present Tense	Sub+V+present tense He writes	Sub+V + present tense + PNG avan ezhutukiraan.

### ASPECT

Present perfect aspect	Sub+has / have + V3 He has written. I have written.	Sub+V + past participle + iru + present + PNG avan ezhutyirukkiRaan. ndaan ezhutyirukkiReen
Past perfect aspect	Sub+had + V3 He had written.	Sub+V + past participle + iru + past + PNG avan ezhutyirundtaan.
Present progressive aspect	Sub+'Be' verb+ present tense + V-ing He is writing.	Sub+V + past participle + koNTiru + present + PNG avan ezhutik koNTiukkiRaan
Past progressive aspect	Sub+'Be' verb + past tense + V-ing He was writing.	Sub+V + past participle + koNTiru + past+ PNG avan ezhutik koNTirundtaan
Future progressive aspect	Sub+will be/shall be verb +future tense + V-ing He will be writing a letter.	Sub+V + past participle + koNTiru + future + PNG avan kaTitam ezhutik koNTiruppaan
Future progressive aspect	Sub+will be/shall be verb +future tense + V-ing He will be writing a letter.	Sub+V + past participle + koNTiru + future + PNG avan kaTitam ezhutik koNTiruppaan

## MODAL EXPRESSIONS

Ability = be able to = be capable of = know how to	Sub+ can + V1 He can speak English but he can't write it very well.	Sub+V+infinitive +muTiyum/iyalum, avnaal ezheutamuTiyaatu.
I Permission =be allowed to = be permitted to ( <i>Can</i> is less formal than <i>may</i> in this sense.)	Sub+Can+V1 Can I smoke here? (Am I allowed to smoke here?)	1. Sub+V+al+aam+aa ndaanpukaipiTikkalaamaa?
I.Possibility = it is possible but / to= theoretical possibility may = factual possibility	1.Sub+can + V1 He can make mistakes. 2. Sub+can + be + V3 The road can be blocked.	1.Sub+ V-al + aam avan tavaRu ceyyalaam 2. Sub+V + infinitive + paTal + aam caalai aTaikkappaTalaam.
Ability	Sub+Could + V1 I could play the chess.	Sub+V + infinitive + muTiyum / iyalum enaal caturangkam aaTa muTiyum.
II. Permission	Sub+Could + V1	Sub+V-al + aam + aa
II. Possibility (theoretical or factual, cf : might)	Could I smoke here?	ndaan pukai piTikkalaamaa?
II. Possibility (theoretical or factual, cf : might)	1.Sub+ could be + C That could be my train. 2.Sub+ could be + V3 The road could be blocked.	1.Sub+irukkkal + aam atu ennuTaiya toTarvaNTiyaay 2a.Sub+V+infinitive + paTTu + irukkal + aam caalai aTaikkap paTTu irukkalaam 2b.Sub+ V + infinitive + paTTu 2b.Sub+ V + infinitive + paTTu + irukka + kuuTum caalai aTaikkap paTTirukkakkuuTum irukkalaam.
Future time with modal auxiliaries. In many contexts, modal auxiliaries have inherent future reference, both in their present and past tense form.	Sub+may + V1 He might leave tomorrow.	Sub+V-al+aam avan ndaalai pookalaam.
III. Permission = be allowed to = be permitted to In this sense may is more formal than can. Instead of may not or mayn't, mustn't is often used in the negative to express prohibition	1. Sub+may + V1 You may borrow my car if you like. 2. Sub+may not + V1 You may not borrow my car. (=You are not allowed to borrow my car.)	1.Sub+V-al + aam e.g. ndii ennuTaiya kaarai kaTanaakap peRalaam. 2. Sub+.V + infinitive + maaTTu+ PNG e.g.. ndii ennuTaiya kaarai kaTanaakap peRamaaTTaay.
III. Possibility = it is possible that /to may = factual possibility (cf: can = theoretical possibility)	1. Sub+ may + V1 e.g. He may never succeed. ('It is possible that he will never succeed') 2. Sub+may + be + V3 e.g. The road may be	1a.Sub+V-al + aam (for positive meaning) 1b. Sub+ V + infinitive + maaTTu + PNG e.g. avan veRRi peRamaaTTaan 2. Sub+V + infinitive + paTal +

	blocked 'It is possible that the road may be blocked'.	aam e.g. caalai aTaikkappaTalaam.
Future time with modal auxiliaries. In many contexts, modal auxiliaries have inherent future reference, both in their present and past tense form.	Sub+might + V1 e.g.He might leave tomorrow	Sub+V-al + aam e.g. avan ndaaLai pookalaam.
IV. Permission	Might +sub+V1 e.g. might I smoke here?	Sub+V-al + aam + aa e.g ndaan pukai piTikkalaamaa?
IV. Possibility	Sub+might + V1 e.g. He might succeed.	Sub+V-al + aam e.g. avan veRRi peRalaam.
II. Willingness on the part of the speaker in 2 <sup>nd</sup> person and 3 <sup>rd</sup> person('weak volition') restricted use.	Sub+Shall + V1 e.g..1.He shall get the money. 2.You shall do exactly as you wish.	Sub+ V-al + aam 1. avan paNam peRalaam. 2. ndii virumpuvatu pool ceyyalaam.
I. Intention on the part of the speaker only in 1stperson ('intermediate volition').	1a. Sub +Shall + V1 We shall let you know our decision. We shall overcome. 1b. Sub+shan't + V1 e.g. It shan't be long for me to meet the minister.	1a. Sub+V + future tense + PNG ndaangkaL ungkaLiTam engkaL tiirmaanattait terivippoom. 1b. aakaatu enakku mandtiriyai paarkka ndiiNTa ndeeram aakaatu.
Ia. Insistence ('strong volition'). Restricted use. b. Legal and quasi-legal.	Sub+Shall + V1 1. You shall do as I say. 2.He shall be punished. 3.The vendor shall maintain the equipment in good repair.	Sub+V-al+aam e.g 1.ndaan collukiRa paTi ndii ceyyalaam. 2.avan taNTikkappaTalaam. 3.teru viyaapaari tannuTaiya karuviyai ceppam ceytu vaittirukkalaam.
I. Obligation and logical necessity (= ought to)	Sub+should + V1 1.You should do as he says. 2.They should be home by now.	Sub+V + infinitive + veeNTum e.g 1.ndii avan colvatu pool ceyya veeNTum. 2.avarkaL ippootu viiTtil irukka veeNTum.
Future Tense	Sub+will/shall + V1 1. He will write. 2. I shall write.	Sub+V + future + PNG e.g.1. avan ezhutuvan. 2.ndaan ezhutuveen.
I. Willingness ('weak volition') unstressed, especially 2 <sup>nd</sup> person. 'Down toners' like please may be used to soften the tone in requests.	Sub+will + V1 1.I'll write as soon as I can. 2.Will you have another cup of tea?	Sub+V + future tense + PNG 1.epootu muTikiRatoo apootu ndaan ezhutuveen. 2.innoru kooppai teenier kuTikkiRaayaa?

II. Intention (intermediate volition). Usually contracted 'll. Mainly 1st person.	Sub+will + V1 1. I'll write as soon as I can. 2. We won't stay longer than two hours.	Sub+V+future tense+PNG 1. muTiyumpootu uTanee ezhutuveen. 2. ndaangkaL iraNTu maNi ndeerattiRku meel tangka maaTToom.
II. Insistence ('strong volition' = insist on). Stressed, hence on 'll contraction. An uncommon meaning.	Sub+will + V1 1. He 'will' do it, whatever you say ('He insists on doing it...') (cf He 'shall' do it, whatever you say = 'I insist on his doing it')	Sub+V + future tense + PNG ndiingkaL colvatai avan ceyvaan.
III. Willingness ('weak volition')	Would.+Sub+V1 Would you excuse me?	Sub+V + future tense + PNG + aa? e.g ndii ennai mannippaayaa?
III. Insistence ('strong volition')	Sub+would have+ V3 eg. It's your own fault, you would have taken the baby with you.	Sub+V + past participle form + iru + infinitive + veeNTum. atu un tavaRu. ndii kuzhandtaiyai unnuTan eTuttuc cenRirukka veeNTum.
II. Obligation or compulsion in the present tense (= be obliged to, have to); except in reported speech. Only had to (not must) is used in the past. In the negative sentence needn't, don't have to, not be obliged to are used (but not must not, mustn't which = 'not be allowed to').	1. Sub+must +V1 You must be back by 10 o'clock. 2. Sub+had to +V1 e.g.1. Yesterday you had to be back by 10 o'clock. 2. Yesterday you said you had to / must be back by 10 o'clock.	1. Sub+V+infinitive+veeNTum e.g. ndii pattu maNikku tirumpa veeNTum. 2. Sub+V+pastParticiple +iru+infinitive+veeNTum+enRu e.g..1. ndeeRRu pattu maNikku ndaan tirumpiyirukka veeNTum enRu ndii connaay.
Meaning [Prediction of the similar meanings of other expressions for logical necessity and habitual present. The contracted form 'll is common]. Specific prediction.	Sub+will, must, should + V1 e.g. The game will/must/should be finished by now.	Sub+V + infinitive + veeNTum e.g. viLaiyaaTTu indndeeram muTindtirukka veeNTum.
Timeless Prediction	Sub+will + V1, V1 e.g. Oil will float / floats on water	Sub+V + future + PNG eNNai taNNiiril mitakkum.
Habitual prediction	Sub+will, 'll +V1 He'll (always) talk for hours if you give him the chance.	Sub+V + future +PNG avanukkuc candtarppam koTuttaal avan (epozhutum) maNikkaNakkaakap peecuvaan.
Logical necessity	1. Sub+ must, has to +V1	1. Sub+irundtirukka + veeNTum e.g. There must / has to be a mistake. (must is not used in sentences with negative or interrogative meanings, can is being used instead.

		<p>2.Sub+ cannot +V1 e.g. There cannot be a mistake. e.g. tavaRu irundtirukka veeNTum. 2.Sub+irundtirukka + muTiyaatu e.g tavaRu irundtirukka muTiyaatu.</p>
Obligation and logical necessity	<p>TAM forms in English with examples Sub+ought to + V1 e.g 1.You ought to start at once. 2.They ought to be here by now.</p>	<p>Sub+V + infinitive + veeNTum e.g 1.ndii uTanee puRappaTa veeNTum. 2.avarkaL ipootu ingkee irukka veeNTum.</p>
Meaning A state of habit that existed in the past but has ceased. (cf: would, and formerly or once + past)	<p>Sub + used to + V1 e.g 1.He used to fish for hours. 2.He used to be an excellent cricketer.</p>	<p>Sub+V-atu + vazhakkam + aay + iru + past + PNG e.g 1.maNikkaNakkil miin piTippatu avan vazhakkamaay irundtatu. 2.avan oru arumaiyaana kirikketaaTTakaaranaaka irundtaan.</p>