

Comparative Constructions II



2ND SEM. 1433/1434 - SPRING 2013
#3 - MODALS



- Modals are helping or auxiliary verbs that occur with main verbs to show different shades of meaning or attitude.
- Can - could - may - might - will - would - used to - shall - should - must - ought to
- Their form does not change with different subjects (no third person singular -s, -ing, or -ed)



- They are followed by the infinitive without *to*
- They use inversion in questions

Can



- Ability →

She can speak French, but she can't write very well.

- Permission (less formal) →

Can I speak to you about this?

- Possibility →

The company can produce more cars this year.

Could



- Ability (past) →

We could always stay up all night when we were younger.

- Permission (past/future) →

Could I stop by to pick up the papers tonight?

- Possibility (present) →

Children could always spend their days playing in the backyard.

If they paid more attention, they could understand the course.

May/Might



- Permission →
May I come in?

- Possibility →
She might teach us this course next semester.
He may visit his brother in the US next year.
Sara might have advised me not to come to the party.
They may have decided to go to the appointment.

Will



- Willingness →

I will clean the living room, if you help me.

- Intention →

I will go to the conference in July.

- Prediction →

The driver will be here soon.

Would



- Willingness →

Would you please take off your shoes before coming in?

- Hypothetical meaning →

My brother would be in 8th grade now if he passed his final exams.

Used to



- An action that took place in the past customarily →
We used to go to the seaside every summer when we were children.
- Being accustomed to or familiar with something →
We are used to waking up at 6:00 every morning.
- Note:
I didn't use to be like this.
Didn't you use to go study in the library?

Should



- Advice →

You should see a doctor.

You should stop smoking.

Must



- Obligation →

You must do your homework everyday.

They must come to class on time.

- Necessity →

You must pay the fees before you are allowed to enter.

- Conclusion →

You look exhausted. You must have been working all night.

Ought to



- Advice →

You ought to take your medicine on time.

- Expectation →

Their flight ought to arrive at 6:00.

English vs. Arabic



- In English, modals are a closed, well defined set.
- In Arabic, modal meanings are expressed differently.
- Some of the words/phrases used in Arabic to express modal meanings are:

قد - لابد - ينبغي - يلزم - ربما - على - يستطيع - يجب - يمكن - من الواجب
- من الضروري - من المفترض/المفروض

References



- <http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/auxiliary.htm>
- <http://www.perfect-english-grammar.com/modal-verbs.html>
- Khalil, A. (1999). *A contrastive grammar of English and Arabic*. Jordon: Jordon Book Centre.
- Vince, M. & j, P. (2003). *Intermediate language practice: English grammar and vocabulary*. Oxford, UK: Macmillan.