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The use of modals in ESL academic writing

Natsuki Yamamoto

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THE USE OF MODALS IN ESL ACADEMIC WRITING

A Thesis
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
in
English Composition

by
Natsuki Yamamoto
September 1999
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Approved by:

Rong Chen, Chair, English
09/12/99

Sunny Hyon
ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to analyze how English as a second language (ESL) students use modal auxiliaries (e.g., can, could, will, and would) and periphrastic modals (e.g., have to, need to, and be going to) and how their usage differs from that of native speakers of English (NSs). It is hoped that the results of the study will be applied to develop ESL modal teaching. To examine ESL students’ (also referred to as non-native speakers, or NNSs) usage of modals, NS and NNS usage of modals in academic writing is examined and compared along two dimensions: the grammatical functions and forms (syntax and morphology) and the meanings and uses (semantics and pragmatics).

The analysis of the grammatical functions and forms of modals in NS and NNS academic writing reveals that NNSs who are advanced ESL students still have difficulty with the grammatical structure of modals. In terms of meaning and use, modals did not pose a serious problem for NNSs. However, the NNSs did use modals in places where NSs would not use them, and these differences are possibly due to the sociocultural influences from NNSs’ respective linguistic and social backgrounds. As a result, I suggest that emphasis be placed on the forms of modals, although their meanings and uses can be given due attention as well in the ESL classroom.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to acknowledge to my family. Without their support, understanding, encouragement, and love, I would never have completed my M.A. study. My appreciation would also go out to my extended families in the U.S.

I would also like to express my appreciation to the instructors and students in the Expository Writing courses. Their participation in my study would be greatly appreciated.

I am indebted to my committee members, Dr. Rong Chen, Associate Professor of English and Dr. Sunny Hyon, Associate Professor of English and my former committee members, Dr. Wendy Smith, Associate Professor of English and Ms. Christine Holten, Lecturer and Composition Coordinator of Department of TESL/Applied Linguistics, UCLA. I don't know how I would have completed this thesis without their valuable insights and comments.
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CHAPTER ONE
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

English modals generally express a speaker's attitudes and subjective perspectives such as in obligation, probability, and necessity. Each modal has more than one use or meaning, which is not usually conveyed by lexical verbs. In English, modal auxiliaries (e.g., can, will, may, and must) have their phrasal modal counterparts called periphrastic modals, semi-auxiliaries, or quasi-modals (e.g., be able to, be going to, have to, and need to). Periphrastic modals are like modal auxiliaries semantically, but they behave like lexical verbs syntactically. For instance, the modal auxiliary can and the periphrastic modal be able to often express ability and possibility. The modal auxiliary can, however, does not take the 3rd person singular present tense "-s," while the periphrastic modal be able to does.

English modals, which include modal auxiliaries and periphrastic modals, can be one of the most difficult obstacles for English as a second language (ESL) students (or non-native speakers, NNSs). The reason for this is that not only that some languages have different modal systems or do not have modals at all, but also that the forms, meanings, and uses of modals are unique and often different from lexical verbs.
As far as research on modals is concerned, many linguists have focused closely on the grammatical functions and forms and the meanings and uses of modals. Some researchers have focused on NSs’ modal usage (Boyd & Thorne, 1969; Hermeren, 1978; Huddleston, 1977; Johannesson, 1976; Klinge, 1993; Palmer, 1978; Perkins, 1983 & 1982; Riviere, 1981), while others have focused on the different uses of modals by NSs and NNSs (Bowen & McCreary, 1977; Cook, 1978; DeCarrico, 1986; Hinkel, 1995; Suwatthigul, 1973).

The purpose of the current study was to investigate possible differences between NSs and NNSs in their uses of modals in their expository writing. The results of this study suggest that the grammatical functions and forms (syntax and morphology) of modals need to be focused on while the meanings and uses (semantics and pragmatics) of modals are also important and should not be ignored in the classroom.

In this chapter, I will discuss the syntactic, morphological, semantic, and pragmatic properties of modals. This will provide background for analyzing ESL students’ modal use in their academic writing.

**The Grammatical Functions and Forms of Modals**

In this study, grammatical functions and forms of modals in this study refer to the syntactic and morphological
aspects of modals and include not only the grammatical forms of modals, but also how these modals influence and interact with other verbs in the same sentence. For instance, in a sentence like "I must went there" the word went will also be included when I talk about the forms of modals.

In general, the forms of modals, especially modal auxiliaries, often differ from those of lexical verbs' such as "speak," "play," and "let." In addition, although periphrastic modals function semantically like modal auxiliaries, most periphrastic modals function syntactically differently from modal auxiliaries. Therefore, some rules for lexical verbs and periphrastic modals may not apply to modal auxiliaries (and some periphrastic modals such as ought to). For this reason, ESL students often have difficulty with adjusting to such differences and overgeneralize the rules for lexical verbs and periphrastic modals to modal auxiliaries.

There are some significant differences in the forms between modal auxiliaries and lexical verbs. Modals, for example, are not marked for tense and do not agree in number or person with the subjects of the sentence (*wills, *mays). Neither can they have the present participial forms (*willing, *maying) or be used with prepositions (*will of, *may on). Moreover, the verbs following them are always in their infinitive forms without the infinitive marker "to"
Some authors maintain that modals are tenseless (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1999: Palmer, 1987). However, since modals used to be able to mark for tense (e.g., could as the past tense of can) and many ESL grammar books treat modals as either present or past (Azar, 1989: Frank, 1972), I have chosen to adopt the latter perspective as seen in Table 1.

Table 1. Historical Present and Past Tense Forms of Modal Auxiliaries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Historical present tense</th>
<th>Historical past tense</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>will</td>
<td>would</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>can</td>
<td>could</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>may</td>
<td>might</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shall</td>
<td>should</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>must</td>
<td>0/(had to)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the matter of terminology, I have also chosen to call historical present and past tense simply as present and past tense forms of modals, for example:

1.a. *When we were kids we will go to camp every year.

1.b. *She said that she can go.

Sentence 1.a is incorrect because of the present tense form of the modal will. This utterance intends to express the past habitual action, "going to camp every year." Thus the modal will has to be changed into its past tense form would.

Sentence 1.b is indirect reported speech which reports the content of the original utterance without repeating the original. Therefore, the modal can has to be changed into its past tense form could because of the rule for indirect
speech: if the verb of reporting is in the past tense, any present tense form in the original utterance will be reported in the past tense (Palmer, 1983).

Although these different modal auxiliaries may often mark different time frames, there is a significantly different function between past tense forms of lexical verbs and modal auxiliaries. The past tense forms of modals do not always mean past tense, but rather sometimes express politeness or tentativeness in present tense instead in certain circumstances (Hermeren, 1978). Consider the following sentences:

2.a. Could you open the window for me?
   b. This would be a perfect gift for her.
   c. You should see a dentist tomorrow.

Even though could, would, and should in the above sentences are the past tense forms of can, will, and shall respectively, these modals do not mark the past tense frame. They rather express the speakers' politeness or tentativeness or commitment in present. Thus the tense system of modal auxiliaries often functions differently from lexical verbs under certain circumstances, which closely relate to the modal user's intention and purpose of modal usage in making a request and expressing politeness or tentativeness.

Another way of conveying the past tense meanings of modals is using modal perfect (modal + have + past
participle) (DeCarrico 1986; Huddleston, 1977). For instance, the modal must, which expresses probability, precedes “have + past participle” in the past tense frame of the sentence “Bryan must have been sick yesterday.” The speaker of this utterance assumed that it had to be true that Bryan was sick yesterday. However, this past tense may not be the only meaning conveyed with the modal perfect because it sometimes changes the meanings of the entire sentence, for example:

3.a. Joe should have let her go to the party.

b. Joe should let her go to the party.

Sentences 3.a and b both contain the modal should, but have totally different meanings because of the modal perfect (modal + have + past participle) construction in 3.a. Both sentences basically mean that Joe is obliged or advised to let her go to the party. However, sentence 3.a means that in fact he did not let her go to the party.

Indeed, the grammatical structure of this past tense marking, modal perfect (modal + have + past participle) is more complicated than simple past tense forms of modals and easily confuses ESL students. DeCarrico (1986), for example, discusses the need for understanding and care in teaching the modal perfects and tense system:

Without this clarification [of modals’ past time relationships], [ESL] students presented with hypothetical past or past conditional forms (modal + have + past participle) are likely to infer (from
the form) the past time frame associated with present perfect aspect (i.e., I have seen that movie = unspecified past, with current relevance).

...[U]nless a clear distinction is made between the semantic time reference of the modal “perfect” and that of the present perfect aspect these forms will remain a major source of confusion for ESL students (p. 665).

She argues that grammar texts and ESL instruction often fail to give clear explanations on modals’ past tense system. As a result, not only novice ESL students, but also many advanced ESL students tend to write incorrect past time sentences with modals, for example:

"I would had gone to a special school for boys."

"It’s not possible for me to tell how many changes I would had in my way of growing up."

"(In a past time context) Sometimes, my mother might tell me to help cook the dinner" (p. 666).

Since these sentences intend to express hypothetical past, modal perfects (modal + have + past participle) are required. However, there is incomplete or lack of modal perfect form in these sentences. The first sentence, which begins with "I would had," for instance, has the wrong form of modal perfect in "would had gone." The word "had" needs to be changed into "have." Thus these examples above clearly illustrate how ESL students easily get confused about the relationship between tense and the modal perfects.

In the same way, Bowen and McCreary (1977) strongly argue for the necessity of teaching the English modal
perfects more effectively to ESL students because:

Each modal can appear not only as a simple form (alone with a verb stem), but also in the perfect aspect — in a construction with HAVE plus -EN. But the structural forms and the semantic coverage do not correlate perfectly, and students often assume that each meaning of the simple modals can be matched by a perfect construction which adds only perfectiveness to the meaning (p. 283).

As a result, these researchers insist that such uses of modals should be taught to ESL students: "when the various functions of the perfect modals are isolated and presented in the highly precise contexts in which the native speaker regularly uses them, the student will learn" (p. 290).

Another main difference between modals and lexical verbs is that modals, especially modal auxiliaries, cannot be followed by the "to" infinitive, prepositions, or imperatives while lexical verbs can or have to (Coates, 1983; Palmer, 1987). In addition, modal auxiliaries and some periphrastic modals take no subject-verb agreement markers such as inflectional suffix "-s" (3rd person singular present). Consider the following examples:

4.a. *I might to go to movies tomorrow.
   b. *It should on the table.
   c. *Will eat it!
   d. *She cans watch TV now.
   e. *Everybody oughts to help.

5.a. I want to go to movies tomorrow.
b. It is on the table.

c. Eat it!

d. He writes a letter.

e. Shelly needs to clean her room.

Since modals are perceived as verbs by many grammarians and linguists, the mistakes above in 4 a-e often occur when non-native speakers overgeneralize the rules for other verbs. Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (1999) explain why this phenomenon occurs:

Some of your students, who have been told time and time again that present-tense verbs with third person singular subjects require an -s ending, overgeneralize this rule to modals [modal auxiliaries and some periphrastic modals]... (p. 137).

Another notable characteristic of modals is their negation system. Modals, especially modal auxiliaries, take negation directly as seen in mustn’t, can’t, and shouldn’t. Negation of modals can also often change the meanings of modals in terms of the degrees of certainty that they convey. For example, in terms of probability, the modal could expresses a low degree of possibility in the affirmative, while its negative form expresses absolute certainty:

6.a. It could be mine.

b. It couldn’t be mine.

Sentence 6.a means that it is perhaps possible that it is mine. However, in the negative, sentence 6.b means that it
is impossible that it is mine.

**The Meanings and Uses of Modals**

In this study, the meanings and uses of modal refer to the semantic and pragmatic aspects of modals. Modals in English are primarily used to carry semantic information that is not conveyed by the main verbs of the sentences. Modals often express obligation, probability, advisability, and permission (Azar, 1989; Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1999; Greenbaum, 1996) For instance:

7.a. I must go to Seattle today.

b. I go to Seattle today.

Since the modal must often expresses in its root meaning, obligation, sentence 7.a indicates that the speaker is obliged to go to Seattle today. On the other hand, in sentence 7.b, the speaker is not obliged to go to Seattle today, but she does anyway. Although the main idea of both sentences are the same, “going to Seattle today,” the modal must, adds semantic information, namely obligation in 7.a.

Each of the modals has two distinctive meanings: epistemic meanings (or logical probability) and root (or deontic or social interactional) meanings (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1999; Cook, 1978; Croefsema, 1995; Greenbaum, 1996; Palmer, 1983). The epistemic meanings of the modals are normally concerned with the modal user making
a prediction or inference; the root meanings of the modals are normally concerned with social interaction which takes place between the speaker and the hearer. For instance, the modal should often express probability in its epistemic meaning and advisability in its root meaning.

8. It should snow tomorrow. (epistemic)
9. You should call her back. (root)

In sentence 8, which contains the modal should in epistemic meaning, the speaker makes a logical predication about weather and selects the modal should with little influence from social interaction with the hearer. In sentence 9 containing the same modal but in its root meaning, the speaker of the sentence gives the hearer advice. There is "some kind of human control over the situation" (Greenbaum, 1996) in which social interaction takes place between the speaker and the hearer. In this sentence, the speaker should have authority over the hearer because the speaker selects the modal should over the modals might or could, which express less authority.

Whether the modal is used in its epistemic or root meaning can normally be determined through the context of the sentence, the meaning of the utterance, and the circumstances of the interaction. The meanings of modals are very often influenced by the context. Consider the following examples:

10. You may have the book tomorrow.
11. The librarian is searching for the book that you wanted for you now. You may have the book tomorrow.

12. I need my book in order to finish my term paper tonight. You may have the book tomorrow.

In sentence 10, the modal *may* can be interpreted either as the expression of probability (epistemic meaning) or as the expression of permission (root meaning). Without a context it is difficult to determine which meaning of the modal the speaker intends. The modal *may* in sentence 11, on the other hand, expresses probability in its epistemic meaning. The cluster of sentences in 11 can be paraphrased into "the librarian is searching for the book now, so there is a possibility that you will have it tomorrow." The modal *may* in sentence 12, on the other hand, expresses permission in its root meaning as the sentence can be paraphrased into "the book belongs to me, and I permit you to have it tomorrow when I finish my term paper tonight."

Another important characteristic of modals is that the modals *would, can, could, may, might, and should* in their epistemic or root meaning express hypothetical meanings, called irrealis. Irrealis applies to these modals in their epistemic meanings (prediction, probability, and necessity) "which do not typically involve human judgement about what is or is not likely to happen" (Quirk et al., 1972). Gaik (1992) further explains irrealis in the following:

Utterances in which irrealis appears (also called
"irreal" or irrealized utterances") are typically considered by grammarians to be non-factive; that is, they commit the speaker neither to the truth or the falsity of the proposition (p. 277).

Therefore, the utterance, "Jerry could go to New York yesterday" can be either a simple past tense sentence or an unreal utterance. If the former, it would mean that Jerry was able to and did go to New York yesterday. If the latter, it would mean that Jerry was able to but did not go to New York yesterday.

Another function of the hypothetical meaning of modals can be seen in conditional sentences marked with or without "if," for example:

13. If you cook the dinner, he should do dishes.
14. If I had had time, I would have watched the TV program.
15. I wouldn't do that. ('If I were you,')
16. It could be nice. ('If it were so,')

Conditional sentences normally consist of multiple clauses like sentences 13 and 14, although there are some which consist of only one clause with the condition, such as "if I were you" and "if it were so" implied, as is seen in sentences 15 and 16 above.

As we have seen, modals can carry semantic information not conveyed by lexical verbs. In the following, I will examine epistemic and root meanings of modals in detail and discuss what kinds of problems ESL students might face when
they learn the meanings and uses of modals.

Epistemic Meanings of Modals

The modals in their epistemic meaning are largely known for the expression of probability, necessity, and prediction. Although each of the epistemic modals share similar meanings, these modals are slightly different from each other in the degree of certainty or possibility that they convey. Table 2 below shows the degree of certainty and possibility of each modal.

Table 2. Scale of the Degree of Certainty and Possibility

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>must/have to</th>
<th>will/would</th>
<th>should</th>
<th>may</th>
<th>could/might</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High certainty/possibility</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Low certainty/possibility</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to Coates (1983), this is an indication of the modal user’s confidence.

It [epistemic modality] is concerned with the speakers’ assumptions or assessment of possibilities and, in most cases, it indicates the speaker’s confidence (or lack of confidence) in the truth of the proposition expressed. (p. 18)

Therefore, the modals must, have to, will, would, and should can illustrate that the modal user is confident about what she is saying while the modals, may, might, and could express a lack of confidence.

Some of the modals expressing similar degrees of
certainty and possibility are interchangeable with each other. However, the interchangeabilities between one modal and another often require certain environments. For instance, Riviere (1981) explains that the modals should and must can be compatible with a slight change of meaning, but certain circumstances such as the time of the event can restrict their compatibilities sometimes. The following sentences illustrate Riviere's explanations:

17. You live in L.A., you must/should know Jay then.

18. He is smart, he *must/should pass the exam.

In sentence 17, the modals should and must are acceptable and interchangeable with a slight change of meaning (less or more certain). The modal, must, in sentence 18, on the other hand, is not acceptable while the modal, should is acceptable. Must here is "impossible, apparently because the time of the event is posterior to the time of speaking" (Riviere, 1981, p. 183).

Root Meanings of Modals

In contrast to the epistemic functions of modals, root functions relate agents to activities and social functions. In other words, root functions of modals deal with permission, obligation, request, and advisability (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1999; Greenbaum, 1996; Palmer,
1983). Table 3 summarizes root functions of modals.

Table 3. Root Modals and Their Meanings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>permission</th>
<th>request</th>
<th>obligation/advice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>may/might</td>
<td>will/would</td>
<td>will/be going to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>can/could</td>
<td>can/could</td>
<td>must/have to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>should</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>could/might</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

19. You may leave the room now.

20. Would you help me?

21. You must finish this project by Monday.

22. You might finish this project by Monday.

Sentence 19 expresses permission and could be paraphrased as "you are permitted to leave the room now." Sentence 20, on the other hand, expresses a request with particular politeness or tentativeness in the present tense frame.

Like the modals in their epistemic meanings, the modals in their root meanings are interchangeable with slight changes of meaning. Moreover, there is no obvious semantic differences among these modals. For instance, the modals must and might in sentences 21 and 22 express advisability and are interchangeable with a slight change of the meaning: the modal must expresses the speaker's strong authority or urgency of the utterance, while the modal might expresses the speaker's weak authority or urgency. Each of sentences 21 and 22 could thus be paraphrased as "you are strongly advised to finish the project by Monday" and "you are advised to finish the project by Monday," respectively.
Problems with the Meanings and Uses of Modals

Since each of the modals can express more than one meaning in terms of epistemic and root functions, ESL students need to be aware of the multiple meanings of each modal and its proper use. However, the semantic differences among the modals sharing similar meanings are very often difficult to grasp. Thus the choice of one modal over another closely relates to the social situations and the user's intention and attitude, namely pragmatic factors (Haegeman, 1989; Hinkel, 1995; Shirono, 1994; Stafford, 1975). Klinge (1993) explains the pragmatic factors of modals thus:

The pragmatic component of language meaning is here understood as all the elements chosen by an addressee from a context of utterance to process a linguistic semantic input in order to arrive at the particular communicative significance intended by the speaker in making his utterance (p. 315).

In addition, Cook (1978) points out that "the problem lies not in the surface positioning of the modals nor in their wide range of meanings, but in associating the right modal with the right meaning" (p. 5).

In one investigation of pragmatic factors affecting the choice of modals, Stafford (1975) analyzes the difference between will and be going to, which both express the meaning of futurity. Her reason for this investigation is:

While reviewing the future tense in the thirty-three classes I taught last year, I found myself
Stafford examines how NSs use two modals in written and spoken sources and choose one modal over another. In her research, she finds that will is used "in all situations except for actions almost in process, and for yes/no questions where information is being sought rather than a request being made" (p. 15). She also finds that will is used more frequently in formal contexts and can be interchangeable with be going to while having little or no change in meaning.

Like Stafford, Haegeman (1989) insists that there is no semantic difference, but rather a pragmatic difference, between will and be going to. She states:

It has often been pointed out that the use of be going to/will in English offers major problems to foreign language learners. An interesting aspect of this problem is that an inappropriate use of be going to/will cannot usually be said to lead to ungrammaticality, rather, as is suggested by most authors, it leads to a certain un-Englishness, and this is often seen as illustrating a lack of idiomaticity (p. 292).

Haegeman points out that be going to and will are equivalent, but they function differently in certain circumstances. For instance, she finds that "be going to orients the utterance
towards a present context or places it in present perspective, while will is future-oriented" (p. 305). To illustrate Haegeman’s point, consider the following examples:

23. I am going to fall asleep.

24. I will fall asleep.

In sentence 23, the action “fall asleep” already begins in the present or is immediately imminent, while the action in sentence 24 does not seem to begin already in the present or be immediately imminent.

Both Stafford’s and Haegeman’s studies explain why many ESL students often do not understand why NSs choose one modal versus another when they are taught that both forms are acceptable. Shirono (1994), for instance, supports this idea by introducing a common confusion which many Japanese ESL students share:

When I was in a junior high school in Japan, I learned that there were two ways to express future in English, “will” and “be going to”. I asked my teacher the differences between “will” and “be going to.” I, however, could not get any clear answers or legitimate explanations from the teacher. Therefore, when a telephone rings, I sometime say, “I’ll get it” but the other time, “I’m going to get it” with total confusion and hesitation. But is that really ok? (p. 1)¹

Because of the unique grammatical structures, meanings, and uses of modals, it is understandable that ESL students’ modal use may often differ from NSs’. However, these distinctive modal characteristics are not the only influence on ESL
students' modal use. ESL students' modal use often reflects their first language (L1) environment including their cultural values and conventions. This is particularly clear when ESL students use modals in social interactions.

Hinkel (1995), for instance, examines how "the usage of the root modals must, have to, should, ought to, and need to in NS and NNS writing appears to be culture and context dependent" (p. 325). In her analysis of NSs' and NNSs' essays, Hinkel finds that ESL students from Confucian, Taoist, and Buddhist cultures frequently use the modals must, have to, and should when they are referring to family and friendships because they associate strong obligation with the family and group. NSs, on the other hand, hardly ever use these modals in terms of the same topics because of different social values. To illustrate, Hinkel gives examples taken from student essays. An Indonesian student, for example, wrote, "If your friend loses his wallet, you have to give him money until his father sends him some. When they don’t have a driver’s license, you have to teach them to drive" (p. 331). A Chinese student wrote, "If your friend is sick, you must visit him and cook for him and take care of him. You have to talk to him about gossip to give him amusement" (p. 331). As a result of her study, Hinkel concludes:

NNS usage of modal verbs reflects the pragmatic frameworks and norms specific to the learner's L1 environment, which may be different from those expected in L2 conceptual structures (p. 325).
Since the research reviewed above has shown that the grammatical functions and forms (syntax and morphology) and the meanings and uses (semantics and pragmatic) of modals are important, these aspects of English modals should be recognized and focused on in ESL modal teaching. In the remainder of this study, I will examine and analyze how NSs and NNSs differently and similarly deal with the grammatical functions and forms (syntax and morphology) and the meanings and uses (semantics and pragmatic) of modals in their academic writing.
CHAPTER TWO
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

Methodology

In light of the literature reviewed above, it seems that the grammatical functions and forms (syntax and morphology) and the meanings and uses (semantics and pragmatics) of modals are equally important and should be recognized and treated fairly in second language classrooms. Therefore, the present study focuses on the analysis of the grammatical functions and forms and the meanings and uses of modals in NSs’ and NNSs’ academic writing. Comparing NSs’ and NNSs’ modal use may be useful for identifying significant differences and similarities between the groups. Hinkel (1995), for instance, points out:

Contrasting examples from NNS student and NS writing on similar topics and speech in formal and informal registers can also prove very helpful in addressing differences between NS and NNS pragmatic presuppositions (p. 338).

Thus the present study examines the forms and grammaticality of modals in NSs and NNSs writing. Attention is paid to the frequency of different modals in these two groups’ writing samples as well as to the number and types of grammatical modal errors which occur in the sample writing. The meanings and uses of modals in the students’ academic writing are also discussed in the analysis of the
relationships between students' modal use and their sociocultural backgrounds in various contexts. Thus, the analysis of the meanings and uses of modals closely investigates how human relationships affect students' modal choice and what their modal choice implies when the students share different sociocultural backgrounds.

As data for this study, I collected essays written by NSs and NNSs as well as biographical data on the students. I will only analyze the following modals in detail: can, could, will, would, may, might, shall, should, must, be able to, be going to, have to, need to, and would like to. I have chosen to exclude the influences of negation upon modal meanings.

The Data

The data for this study came from the upper-division 306 required expository writing courses, which students could take in many departments (Education, English, Humanities, Management, Natural Science, and Social Science) at California State University, San Bernardino (CSUSB) in the Summer and Fall, 1998.

The 306 expository writing courses are one of the general education requirements for undergraduate study at CSUSB. Students, who must have passed ENG 101-Freshman Composition, normally take the course by the end of the junior or the senior year. Students can choose which course
they will take according to their major or interests. For instance, Management 306 is intended for the students who are interested in business and finance while Natural Sciences 306 is designed for the students who are interested in science and experiments. Despite such differences, the principle goal of all courses is to focus on the process of writing and improve students' writing skills. Therefore, the design of the 306's is similar across disciplines. Each course normally requires 2 to 5 writing assignments, some in-class essays, peer/group editing in class, a midterm or a term paper and one final exam.

As data for this study, the essays and biodata of those students who wrote the essays were collected from the following courses as shown in Table 4 below.

Table 4. Number of Expository Writing Courses Which Essays and Biodata Came from

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Number of Course</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humanity</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Sciences</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Sciences</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>20</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The essays collected and closely examined in this study were unedited essays, such as first or rough drafts without any proofreading by others or in-class essays. There were altogether 178 essays written by 99 ESL students and 94
essays written by 66 NSs. Although this study focuses on the NNSs' unedited essays in order to examine modal use in natural situations, over 200 NNSs' edited essays by NSs were also collected in order to compare them with the unedited essays to investigate how NNSs' use of modals had changed in their writing process.

Essays

The essays were written on various topics such as personal experiences, writing & education, racism, sexism, society, and morality as seen in Table 5 below.

Table 5. Writing Topics and Number of NNS and NS Essays

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Writing topics</th>
<th>NNS</th>
<th>NS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal experiences</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing &amp; Education</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racism</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexism</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Society</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morality</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Questionnaire

The purpose of collecting biodata from the students was to identify their linguistic, cultural, and educational backgrounds. The questionnaire which elicited this information also included questions about general grammar instruction (see Appendix). These questions were used to
gather information about ESL students’ ideas about modal usage.

**Subjects**

Of the 165 students who participated in this research, 66 were NSs, and the remaining, 99 were ESL students. Since the expository writing courses are upper-division, most of the students who participated in the research were in their senior or junior year.

Table 6. Student Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>NS</th>
<th>ESL</th>
<th>NS &amp; ESL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophomore</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**First/Native Language and Social/Cultural Groups**

According to the biodata, the students’ native languages varied as shown in Table 7 below.
Table 1. First/Native Languages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Numbers of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thai</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arabic</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korean</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rumanian</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telugu</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armenian</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dutch</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farsi</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filipino-Tagalog</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greek</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hindi</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesian</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singhala</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tegriza*</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yoruba</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A (but ESL)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>165</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* This might be a dialect of some language. I researched this language but was unable to find any information on this language.

Due to the lack of numbers of students necessary to examine each L1 group separately, the students were categorized into four groups according to their L1 and region of their country of origin. The four social/cultural groups are North America, South America, Asia, and Misc. (Europe, Africa, and other). Since all students in the North American group were native speakers of English and from the United States, the students in the North American group are referred to as NSs in the rest of this study.
Table 8. Social/Cultural Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social/ cultural groups</th>
<th>North America (NSs)</th>
<th>South America</th>
<th>Asia (Eastern Country)</th>
<th>Misc.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>L1</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>Arabic, Armenian, Chinese, Farsi, Filipino-, Tagalog, Hindi, Indonesian, Japanese, Korean, Singhala, Telugu, Thai, Vietnamese</td>
<td>Arabic, Dutch, German, Greek, Rumanian, Tegriza, Yoruba, other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>Mexico, Peru, Nicaragua, Argentina, Cuba, Colombia, El Salvador</td>
<td>China, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Iran, Japan, Jordan, Korea, Philippines, SriLanka, Taiwan, Thailand, Vietnam</td>
<td>Nigeria, Romania, Netherlands, Greece, Egypt, Austria, other</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| students | 66 | 35 | 55 | 9 |

ESL Students and Their English Proficiency

Most of the ESL students in this study had received some formal education in English. Of the 99 ESL students, 47 students had learned English in NS mainstream classes while 32 students had learned English in ESL or Bilingual classes. As shown in Table 9, the ESL students' lengths of stay in the
United States varied, falling between 0.5 to 41 years.

Table 9. Lengths of Stay in the U.S.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>numbers of students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.5-3.0</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1-5.0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1-9.9</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 and more</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On the questionnaire, the students were asked about how they felt about their English proficiency and whether they had any difficulty with English. The scale for English proficiency was 1 through 5, with 5 being the most satisfied. Of the 99 ESL students, 49 were very much satisfied with their English proficiency while 17 felt very unsatisfied. Twenty-one ESL students thought their English proficiency was fair, and the data for the rest was not available due to no response from the participants.

Although many ESL students were satisfied with their English proficiency, many have also reported difficulty with English in the areas of writing, speaking, reading, and listening as shown in Table 10.

Table 10. ESL Students’ Perception of the Difficulty with English (1-5: "1" being the most difficult)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The majority of the ESL students reported having difficulty
with speaking, reading, and writing. In addition, as shown in Table 11 below, the students also seemed to feel more comfortable with using their L1 when they talk, read, and write.

Table 11. Language with Which ESL Students Felt Most Comfortable (L1 = native language; L2 = second language (English))

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Speaking</th>
<th>Reading &amp; Writing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>L1</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L2</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L1 &amp; L2</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although some ESL students felt uncomfortable with and had difficulty in English, they seemed to have achieved a relatively high level of English proficiency since most of them were Juniors or Seniors who were satisfied with their English proficiency. In addition, the expository writing courses are intended for the students who have passed Freshman Composition. Thus, the ESL students in this research were advanced ESL students.

**The Procedure of Data Analysis**

The data analysis began with identifying and examining the frequency of modals in NSs' and NNSs' essays. The data analysis then examined the details of NS and NNS modal use in the following two parts. The first part of the data analysis was the error analysis which investigated the grammatical functions and forms of modals in NSs' and NNSs' essays. For
this investigation, the essays were categorized into NS and NNS groups, and the types of grammatical errors made by each group were compared.

The second part of the data analysis, on the other hand, focused on the meanings and uses of modals to investigate sociocultural implications of the modals. This part of the analysis started with obtaining percentages of students who employed certain modals in their essays. The modals and the words of each essay were counted and calculated to obtain a percentage through the following formula:

\[
\text{number of students who use the modal / number of students in the group} \times 100
\]

For example, in the personal experience topic group, there were 25 NSs, and 5 of them used the modal must. The percentage of the students who use the modal must is thus \( \frac{5}{25} \times 100 = 20\% \).

All essays were categorized into three writing topic groups: Personal Experiences, Writing & Education, and Social Issues. Social Issues included the topics of society, morality, sexism, and racism. The essays were then categorized into four social/cultural groups (North America (NSs), South America, Asia, and Misc.). In the analysis, Misc. was excluded due to the small number of students in this category.

In the essays on each topic and in each social/cultural
group, the modals were identified and examined for their epistemic or root meanings. Once the percentage of the students who employed each of the modals in their epistemic and root meanings was calculated, each topic and social/cultural group was compared with others to determine which modals were most frequently used and which social/cultural group used more modals than others on certain writing topics. The study then examined whether there were any pragmatic modal errors and awkward or different usage of certain modals in certain contexts across various social/cultural groups. The influences of students' sociocultural backgrounds on the use of modals by each group were also examined.
CHAPTER THREE
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of the data analysis indicate that NNSs' modal use differed from that of NSs in a number of ways. It should be noted, however, that in general, both NSs and NNSs frequently used modals when they composed. Only one essay, of the 272 essays (the total of 94 NSs' and 178 NNSs' essays), did not contain any modals. The first part of this chapter focuses on the error analysis and shows that NNSs made more errors related to modals with tense and aspect, infinitive "to," 3rd person singular present tense "-s," modal perfects, and other structures. The second part of this chapter indicates that NNSs' usage of certain modals for certain writing topics often differs from that of NSs. In this study, NNSs' modal use often revealed their strong sense of politeness and obligation towards their family, morality, and education while NSs' modal use did not.

The Grammatical Functions and Forms of Modals: NSs vs. NNSs

On close examination of modal use in NSs' and NNSs' essays, some grammatical errors which related to modals were discovered in NNS writing, while only a few grammatical errors were found in NS writing. The comparisons of NSs' and
NNSs' modal use in certain environments clearly indicate that NNS have some difficulties with the grammatical functions and forms of modals. Table 12 below indicates the numbers of errors which occurred in 178 NNS essays and 94 NS essays. In this analysis of the grammatical functions and forms of modals, the essays were first categorized into NS or NNS essay groups and were then examined for what kinds of grammatical errors could be found in each group. Table 12 below indicates that NNSs tended to make the most number of errors when tense and aspect were involved.

Table 12. Number of Error Occurrences Related to Modals and Number of Students Who Made the Errors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Error Patterns</th>
<th>NNS</th>
<th>NS</th>
<th>NNS</th>
<th>NS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>modal tense</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>main verb tense</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>modal perfect</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>infinitive &quot;to&quot;</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd person singular</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>present tense &quot;-s&quot;</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prepositions</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lack of main verb</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>extra verb</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>frozen form</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>modal + modal*</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>if- + modal</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>100</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*no co-occurrence of modal auxiliaries, but "modal auxiliaries + periphrastic modal" or "periphrastic modal + periphrastic modal"

It thus seems that many NNSs who are advanced ESL
students still have difficulties with the forms of modals and their influences to other words in sentence level. One reasonable explanation for this phenomenon would be that the grammatical functions and forms of English modals might differ from those of modal counterparts in ESL students' L1s. In other words, the modal systems in different languages might share the similar meaning of modals, but not the same forms. Suwatthigul (1973), for instance, examined Thai students' usage of modals in English and found that:

With regard to Thai students' errors in general, their difficulties were due to syntactic reasons rather than from the semantics ones. This may be due to the fact that there is some semantic similarity between English and Thai modals, although the syntactic structures very considerably (p. 71).

As Table 12 and Suwatthigul (1973) indicate above, the forms of modals can be difficult for many ESL students. Tense and aspect of modals appear to be particularly confusing for many NNSs in this study. The following section examines the error patterns on the forms of modals and discusses possible explanations for the errors on tense and aspect of modals.

Tense and Aspect: Modals and Main Verbs in Sentences

Some NNSs in this study still appeared to have difficulty in dealing with the relationship between modals and tense, especially past tense. Of the 99 ESL students, 12
of them tended to neglect changing modal forms in subordinate clauses, relative clauses, or indirect reported speech in past tense frame when the change was needed. For instance:

1. My parents didn’t have any chance to go to school so that they can’t find a better job.

2. I told them I will bring a stick tomorrow.

According to the context of the text, the student who wrote sentence 1 was trying to say that his parents could not find a job in the past, however they now have jobs. In sentence 1, past tense is marked with “didn’t” in the main clause, while the modal can’t (can) in the subordinate clause beginning with “so that,” does not carry past tense aspect. In sentence 2 which is indirect reported speech, the main verb of the sentence, “told” is marked for past tense but the modal will is left unchanged. It seems that ESL students often leave the modal forms in subordinate clauses or indirect reported speech unchanged perhaps because the other verbs in the sentences are already marked for past tense.

Fifteen ESL students, on the other hand, used the wrong tense for main verbs in sentences with modals. For example:

3. I really enjoyed this class because I could learned a lot of things.

4. I could clearly felt that the dog was very cold.

5. He would always got punished.

6. They will followed me.

7. I cannot changed it.
There are two error patterns illustrated above. The first error pattern, reflected in sentences 3, 4, and 5, is that the students marked both the modals and the main verbs of the sentences for past tense frame. One reason for this may be that ESL students who make these errors may pay too much attention to the tense and mark both the modal and the main verb for past tense. This double-making of tense may occur particularly when there is distance between the modal and the main verb in the sentence. In sentences 4 and 5 above, for instance, the adverbs, "clearly" and "always" are between the modals (could and would) and the main verbs ("feel" and "get"). When there is a distance between modals and main verbs in the sentences, the students may forget that the modals are already marked for past tense and that there is no need to change the main verbs into the past tense forms.

The second error pattern differs from the first because the modals in this error pattern take their present tense forms, while the main verbs of the sentences take their past tense or past participle forms. In sentences 6 and 7, for instance, the students seem to treat the modals will and can as the verb "be" and might be treating the modal and main verb structure as a passive construction and therefore apply the past participle ending onto the main verb. Thus, the main verbs in the sentences, "follow" and "change" take their past participle forms "followed" and "changed." However,
although the modals will and can and the main verbs "follow" and "change" in these sentences are formed like passive voice form, the students who wrote these sentences may not have intended to express passive voice meanings, but meant instead "they will follow me" and "I cannot change it." Thus the students may understand the meanings of modals, but not the forms of modals or how modals can influence the forms of other verbs in the sentence.

Modal Perfect

Another type of modal error in the NNSs' essays is modal perfect error. In fact, both NSs and NNSs frequently used modal perfect (modal + have + past participle) in their essays. About 23% of 66 NSs and 26% of 99 NNSs used modal perfect in their essays. Table 13, below, shows numbers of modal perfects and modal perfect errors in 94 NS and 178 NNS essays. It also indicates how frequently modal perfect error occurred when the students used modal perfects in their essays.

Table 13. Occurrences and Errors of Modal Perfects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>occurrence</th>
<th>error</th>
<th>occurrence of error (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NNS</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NS</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One modal perfect error which is seen in both groups is the replacement of "have" by "of." For instance, one ESL student wrote, "On the other hand Hersey sees that war as something
the was very tragic, and could of been avoided." One NS similarly wrote, "We must of been there awhile and we must of been loud enough for the people outside to hear." This kind of error may relate to spoken language where the form, "modal + have" often takes its contracted form as could've and must've, which are often pronounced like "could of" and "must of."

Another error in modal perfects NNSs made which no NS made is the incorrect or incomplete forms of "have" or lack of "have" and/or "-en (-ed)" (past participle). For example:

8. They would had been poets.
9. That a woman should has not been deprived of such talents.
10. A fiction should been written like a show to the reader.
11. I would have automatically stop the experiment.

Sentences 8 and 9 contain the wrong forms of "have" while sentence 10 is missing "have." Sentence 11, on the other hand, does not have the right past participle form of "stop."

Other Form Errors

In this study, NNSs made several other form errors in their modal constructions, including violation of modal characteristics such as the lack of infinitive "to," prepositions, and 3rd person singular present tense "-s."

NNSs also made errors in frozen forms of modals and a lack or
extra main verb in the sentences. This section, therefore, discusses those errors in detail.

Those form errors related to modals in NNSs' essays appear to be caused by the ESL students' overgeneralization of the rules for ordinary verbs. This led ESL students to apply unnecessary forms such as infinitive "to," prepositions, and 3rd person singular present "-s" to modals or main verbs of the sentences preceded by modals. Some students also omitted obligatory 3rd person singular present "-s" on periphrastic modals. For example:

12. I would to do it.
13. People can easily to follow.
14. She could of took it after her father.
15. The write(r) have to know who your audience are.
16. It need to be single and the writers of these stories need to write more descriptive.
17. It will gets less profit.

Although modal auxiliaries do not take infinitive "to", in sentences 12 and 13, the students have incorrectly placed "to" right after would and can.

Sentence 14, which contains "could of," can be interpreted as a modal perfect error instead of modal preposition error. However, this error should be interpreted as a modal preposition error because the student who wrote the sentence meant "she could take it from her father."

Moreover, the student made modal perfect errors in the same
essay which sentence 14 was found, but her modal perfect error pattern was different from “modal + of (as “have”).” Her modal perfect error pattern was “modal + have + present tense form” as in “the way she was raised could have affect her” and “could have build some kind of a psychological problem.” Thus “could of” here is interpreted as an example of modal preposition error.

No ESL student applied 3rd person singular present, “-s” to modal auxiliaries, even when it was required on the periphrastic modals as sentences 15 and 16 indicate. The students who wrote sentences 15 and 16 may have overgeneralized the fact that modal auxiliaries take no 3rd person singular present tense “-s.” These students in fact did not make any errors on subject-verb agreement in the sentences which contained no modals. Some students, however, incorrectly applied “-s” to the main verb of the sentence with modal auxiliaries such as in “will gets” in sentence 17.

The other error which was often seen in NNSs’ essays was a lack or extra occurrence of verbs in the sentences with modals. For example:

18. The situation will always the same.
19. This would not only me.
20. It may also totally different from the writer’s.
21. He could not think ahead what would be happen.
22. It must be have some signs.
23. It **might be bring** to other.

The main verbs are missing in sentences 18, 19, and 20 while the extra verb "be" appears in sentences 21, 22, and 23. In the first three sentences, the modals are followed by an adverb and/or negative. In other words, there is a distance between the modals and the places where main verbs are supposed to be. For instance, sentence 18 is supposed to have a main verb, "be," after the adverb, "always."

Interestingly, the same students who wrote sentences 18, 19, and 20 did not make the same errors in their essays when there was no distance between the modals and main verbs of the sentences. Therefore, it is possible to say that the main verb of the sentence is often overlooked and omitted when there is any distance between the modals and the main verb.

All modals in sentences 21, 22, and 23, on the other hand, are followed by the extra verb, "be." Unlike sentences 18, 19, and 20, the verb, "be" is unnecessary in these sentences. Moreover, these sentences are not passive voice sentences which require "be + past participle" (verb + verb). Since "modal + be" is frequently used as if it were one phrase (e.g., "It would be..." and "may be" like the word "maybe"), the ESL students may unconsciously put "be" right after modals even though "be" is ungrammatical in these sentences.
Another kind of common error the ESL students made was violation of modal frozen forms and modal + modal rules. For example:

24. Anybody will like to save money.
25. King will like to call it.
26. I can able to swim now.
27. At that time I thought I gonna find something to eat since it was a long class.
28. This letter was gonna to talk about the racial issues.
29. If the university close the commons, I think I feel bad about it.

Sentences 24 and 25 demonstrate that the ESL students violated the frozen formula of would like to when it occurred in present tense sentences. The students who wrote sentences 24 and 25 might understand would as past tense form of will and think it needed to be changed into present tense form. Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (1999) have pointed this out by saying:

One could argue that would like (to) and would prefer (to) are simply sequences describable as: modal + verb + infinitive. For pedagogical purposes, however we advise teaching these as frozen modal-like lexical chunks to emphasize the unchanging nature of would in these expressions to avoid ESL/EFL errors such as: "*I will prefer to stay here," and "*Will you like some cake?" (p. 147)

In sentence 26 can and be able to are used to express the ability. However, this combination of can and be able to
is incomplete because of a lack of "be." Moreover, this sentence should not have a double modal whose components express almost the same meaning, in this case, ability. Only 3% of ESL students made double modal errors, while 17% of ESL students used double modals with no error in their essays. About 14% of NSs used double modals without any errors.

Sentences 27 and 28 are possibly influenced by spoken language in which the periphrastic modal be going to can be changed into be gonna. However, this change of modal form is incorrect and inappropriate here. For instance, gonna in sentence 27 is missing a verb, "be," right before the modal, while gonna in sentence 28 contains infinitive "to" when gonna already includes "to" in it (going + to = gonna). In addition, using spoken language in writing, especially academic writing, is generally informal and inappropriate unless it is in dialogue.

Sentence 29 is a conditional statement and needs the modal, would between "I" and "feel" in the main clause. There were very few errors with "if- modal" constructions discovered in either the NS or NNS essays in this study. There were 41 "if- modal" construction occurrences by 27 NNSs of which two contained errors. There were 33 "if- modal" construction occurrences by 18 NSs and none contained errors.
The Meanings and Uses of Modals and Social/Cultural Groups

In analyzing the modal use of the two student groups, few clear pragmatic errors were found. However, there were some noteworthy patterns in the semantic/pragmatic areas of the NNSs' modal use. In this section, I will first examine some awkward uses by NNSs of certain modals such as shall and would like to. The second part of the analysis focuses on differences in the use of the modals can, could, must, have to, need to, and should across social/cultural groups and topics.

As indicated earlier, the 272 essays were categorized into three writing topic groups: Personal Experiences, Writing & Education, and Social Issues and three social/cultural groups: Asia (A), South America (S), and North America (NSs). Table 14 below shows how many students in each social/cultural group employed various modals in their epistemic and root meanings on the writing topics of Personal Experiences, Writing & Education, and Social Issues.
Table 14. Percentage of Students Who Used the Modals can, could, will, would, may, might, must, shall, should, have to, need to, be able to, be going to, and would like to in Epistemic (ep) and Root (rt) Meanings (P = Personal Experiences; W & E = Writing & Education; SI = Social Issues)

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According to Table 14 above, the modals can, could, will, would, and have to were used more often than the other modals by students in all social/cultural groups across the various writing topics. In terms of the meanings of modals, in general, all social/cultural groups commonly used the modals can, could, have to, need to, and be able to in their root meanings and the modals will, would, may, and might in their epistemic meanings across the various writing topics. The modal must was normally used by all social/cultural groups in its root meaning except on the topic of Personal Experiences. The modal be going to was used in its root meaning on the topics of Personal Experiences and Writing & Education and in its epistemic meaning on Social Issues. No students employed the modals might and may in their root meaning and the modal
need to in its epistemic meaning. The figures in Table 14, however, do not represent how various factors, including the writing topic and students’ sociocultural backgrounds, influenced students’ modal choices in certain contexts. Thus, the following section closely examines some of the choices, focusing on modals, shall, would like to, can, could, must, have to, need to, and should and discusses how each social/cultural group selected and employed certain modals in certain contexts.

**Shall**

It is noteworthy that no student in NS or South American groups employed the modal shall on any topic while some Asian group students used it in essays written on Social Issues, for example:

30. The preparation of shooting the elephant now turns into a condition of his rule that he shall spend his life trying to impress the “natives,” and so in every situation he has got to do what the natives expect of him.

31. Therefore, she should have the means and the knowledge to say how many children she shall give, and to what purpose she shall give them, and be able to choose under what kind of conditions to have the baby.

One possible explanation for the use of this modal which may seem awkward or old-fashioned to native American English speakers is that many grammar textbooks, especially traditional grammar textbooks intended for ESL/EFL students,
tend to explain that shall functions like will. For instance, Frank (1972) explains “shall and will are used for the future tenses” (p. 94). Moreover, in many Asian countries, ESL/EFL teaching uses grammar books by British grammarians, which generally treat shall as synonymous to will.

In Japan, for example, British English is commonly taught as the formal and “pure” English while American English is presented as informal and irregular. Therefore, many English grammar textbooks in Japan explain the usage of the modal shall and encourage EFL students to use it. In fact, one grammar textbook for high school students contains the modal shall very often in the stories and exercises and says that the modal shall functions like the modal will in its future meaning (New Current in English I, p. 32). Another grammar textbook in Japan also introduces the modal shall to express the future just like the modal will. This textbook, however, explains that the modal shall is used uncommonly in American English (Brush Up Your English, p. 95).

Therefore, there is a great possibility that ESL students who learned English in their native Asian countries tend to use shall in their written and even spoken language because of their prior English instruction. On the other hand, since shall “is used infrequently in North American
English" (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1999, p. 149), it is understandable that no NSs in this research used shall in their essays.

Would Like to

Another intriguing pattern in the data is the Asian group students' misuse of would like to on certain writing topics. Would like to often expresses the speaker's desire (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1999) which might also imply the speaker's politeness (Johannesson, 1976; New Current in English I, p. 79). For instance, Johannesson (1976) says that "a more 'polite' alternative to want as a realization of the element of 'volition'... is would like" (p. 20).

In the essays written about Personal Experiences, particularly those involving family and friends, some of the Asian students used would like to when another construction might have been more appropriate:

32. Sometime I would like to revolt (resist) my parents but I didn't do it.

33. Sometimes I asked my mother that I would like to bring the lunch.

34. When my mother would like to leave, I grabbed the clothes of my mother and cried loudly.

35. My classmates would like to exchange the lunch with me when I used the admirable insight on their lunch.

Asian students' uses of would like to seemed to reveal their strong politeness and respect towards their family, friends,
and group harmony. In sentences 32, 33, and 34, for instance, the students who wrote these sentences might have intended to express their politeness towards their parent(s) by using would like to. Sentences 32 and 33, however, would sound more native-like if the modal would like to was replaced with "wanted to."

Would like to in sentences 34 and 35 also seems misused. These sentences would sound more native-like and make clearer sense if each would like to was replaced with "was about/ready to" and "did/were kind enough to," respectively. In fact, although only the unedited essays have been examined in this study, the essays edited and proofread by NSs were also collected and briefly compared with the unedited essays. According to the comparisons of the unedited and edited essays, NSs who were NS writing tutors or classmates also suggested changing would like to to other words such as the ones listed above. Thus it seems that these would like to's were used where NSs would not use them. A possible cause for this is that many ESL students have been told that would like to is a polite form of "want to."

On the same topic, no NS or South American student employed would like to like the Asian students did, that is, in discussing topics related to family. One South American student, however, used would like to in a way that suggested his desire and politeness towards his audience.
36. Trackton, reminded me a lot about the way stories were told during my childhood, and although not all the details were similar, it brought back a lot of memories, memories that I would like to share with you.

*Can and Could*

In this study, many students in all social/cultural groups frequently used the modals *can* and *could* in their root meaning, which often expresses ability. However, the use of these modals with certain verbs differed across social/cultural groups. In general, the modal *can* (and *could* as a past tense form of *can*) is very often used with stative verbs which express sensations (e.g., "see," "hear," "feel," "understand," and "remember") (Coates, 1983; Johannesson, 1976; Palmer, 1987). In this study, the Asian students used the modals *can* and *could* with stative verbs more frequently than the students in other social/cultural groups.

Of the 55 Asian group students, 20 students, for instance, used the modals *can* and/or *could* with stative verbs. Of 35 South America group students, on the other hand, only 7 students used the modals *can* and/or *could* with stative verbs, and only 6 NSs out of 66 used these modals with stative verbs. Thus, most of the students in these social/cultural groups tended to use the modals *can* and *could* without stative verbs or use stative verbs without the modals. Consider the following examples of the Asian
students' use of the modals *can* and *could* with stative verbs.

37. I can feel their’s well-intentioned but little understood.

38. In my childhood, I did not share all of my parents’ time, but I could feel their love.

39. I can see the sadness in her both eyes.

40. I can understand the characters of the boy.

41. Repeatedly in his story, I could feel the strong message that he doesn’t want to shoot the elephant.

One possible reason for the Asian students' substantial use of *can/could* + stative verb constructions is that in many Asian countries which highly respect harmony, people tend to get involved and relate to others through experiences with others’ pain, thoughts, and feelings when they speak or write to communicate with others. Thus the students who share this cultural background may express their strong sense of solidarity and involvement when they speak or write, and the use of *can* and *could* in their “ability” sense may help to emphasize the feelings and perceptions expressed in the sentences above.

**Must, Have to, Need to, and Should**

More students in the Asian group repeatedly used the modals *must, have to, and should* in their root meaning in the essays written on the topic of Personal Experiences. This finding may be related to the values found in many Asian
cultures.

The modals must, have to, need to, and should in their root meaning often express obligation and necessity, which might reflect the modal user's sociocultural values as well. In general, the modals must and have to indicate the modal user's strong sense of obligation since these modals are described as "an external imposition," (Hinkel, 1995) while the modal should expresses necessity and advisability which implies social expectation. The modal need to expresses an internal obligation and/or necessity and requirement. The Asian students may thus tend to use these modals in order to express their strong obligation to their families, relationship to others, and responsibilities as a group member. For instance, many Asian students used the modal have to as shown in the examples below.

42. Because of I am the only girl in my family, I had to learn lots of things besides the normal classes. I had to learn the piano, ballet and English. When other kids were playing, I had to work hard.

43. After school, some students had to go to cram school, which was located in the central city. The reason students study so hard before age thirteen is because they have to pass the intelligence test in order to study in the first level class in junior high school.

44. Until then I always thought that families have to stay together no matter what. And that there is almost nothing that can break up a family.

45. Because my friend had to take care of her new-born sister at home, she had to study on her own.

46. I had to go help my parents straight from school to clean the table, sweep the floor, and help my dad wash
vegetable in the kitchen. During the weekend, I had to get up early and go to the restaurant help my dad to prepare everything for the day and then go back home taking care of my sisters and brother.

Sentences 42 and 43 above suggest the different social expectations for students in Asian cultures from those in other cultures, including mainstream American culture. Sentence 42 may explain that in many Asian cultures, female figures are strongly expected to be perfect and well-educated. Sentence 43 demonstrates that in many Asian cultures, students face great expectations and pressures to go to special kinds of school after daily curriculum at regular school in order to enter prestige schools.

Sentences 44, 45, and 46 can illustrate the strong sense of responsibility and obligation to family that exists in many Asian cultures. The students who share these cultural backgrounds tend to use the modal have to (had to) to express their strong obligations to kinship and responsibilities as a family member.

In the essays written on Writing & Education and Social Issues, on the other hand, fewer students in the Asian group used the modals must and have to and instead tended to employ the modals should and need to. On those topics, the Asian students tended to emphasize advisability and necessity using the modals should and need to instead of imposing external obligation using the modals must and have to, for example:
47. These are some of the recommended questions all writers should ask themselves when it comes to the use of modern language.

48. An essay the writer need[s] to describe as explain more clearly and use more detail to give an audience to understand and feedback what the writer want to said.

49. It is an important thing to think about because the writers need to think where they could find the most attention of the audience for his writing.

Although fewer students in the Asian group employed the modals must and have to on the topic of Writing & Education, more South American group students employed these modals with this topic, for example:

50. People have to think less if they use vague or state language.

51. Like many other writers, I write because I have to. We must continue writing.

This finding may suggest that when some students in the South American group described their views on academics, they might feel compelled to express their external obligations they feel about learning English. As support for this point, according to the biodata, many South American group students, especially those who were from Mexico, reported their strong feelings towards education because they were forced to forget their L1, Spanish, completely when they learned English. Thus when writing on topics associated with academics and education, the South American students’ use of the modals must and have to may imply their sense of external imposition.
as seen in sentences 50 and 51 above.

NSs, on the other hand, frequently used the modals must and have to on the topic of Social Issues, for instance:

52. When reaching out to attain something as freedom or success, one has to go through struggles to get what they want.

53. One must only focus harder to find the roots of creativity.

54. It does not have to be released in paintings, sculpture, or poetry, it can be anything that is in your spirit, and in your heart.

55. A creative Black women of that period had to be a resourceful person.

56. The taxpayer should not have to pick up the tab for a facility that is not self supporting when so few students would be making use of it.

Since the topic of Social Issues in this study is about social issues in the U.S. such as racism (African-American’s civil rights), NSs might feel stronger obligations about dealing with these as they face them in their every day lives. Thus it is understandable that more NSs employed the modals must and have to as seen in sentences 52 to 56 above when these modals express an external imposition and strong obligation. Fewer NSs, on the other hand, used the modals should and need to, which express less strong obligation or necessity, on social issues or other topics.

In contrast with NSs, the students in the Asian group repeatedly employed the modal should on the topic of Social Issues. Since the modal should expresses necessity and
advisability with "an implication of social expectation" (Hinkel, 1995), Asian students' uses of this modal seemed to imply their own social expectation on the topic of Social Issues. This makes sense since they may see themselves as observers of U.S. culture and often unable to relate completely to such social issues in the U.S. They perhaps view racial fairness in the U.S. society as internal obligation rather than external imposition, which seems in line with group harmony and morality that they may value. For instance, one Asian student wrote, "We always think that the words of those wise men must be heaven and right." Thus, they tended to choose the modal should over must or have to.

In the essays written on the topic of Writing & Education, many NSs employed the modal must on the topic of Writing & Education, which included English composition and the educational matters in the U.S. Consider the following examples:

57. Audience and purpose are two fundamental concerns that any writer in any writing situation must take into consideration.

58. Getting the attention of the reader is fundamental because this how the author must first attract their audience.

59. It's important to think about purpose and audience because a writer must be understood and have logic to why he/she is writing.

60. As a writer, whether it be of a postcard, resume, or narrative essay, the goal of your writing must always be kept in mind.
61. A person must think about this greatly for they have to know what kind of audience they are writing for, whether it is a speech in front of a class, an essay on the homeless, or a short story about a childhood experience.

In sentences 57 to 61, NSs' use of the modal must seemed to express NSs' confidence about what they were saying about writing and education (Coates, 1983; Palmer, 1987). Moreover, NSs' use of the modal must may be slightly different from that of the students in the South American group on the same topic. As described earlier, the students in the South American group often employed the modals must and have to for educational issues, but their use might imply the students' frustration and sense of external imposition as well as their confidence about their views on writing and education.

In sum, the analysis of students errors with the forms of modals revealed that the NNSs in this study had difficulty with tense and aspects of modals, modal perfects, the relationship between modals and main verbs of sentences, and other restrictions on modals, including the lack of infinitive markers and prepositions. The analysis of the meanings and uses of modals, on the other hand, revealed few clear semantic and pragmatic errors among the student groups, outside of some awkward uses of shall and would like to by the Asian students. However, interesting differences were found in the ways the modals must, have to, need to, and
should were used in the different ways in each of the social/cultural groups. The modals must and have to were often used by many Asian students when describing family and friends on the topic of Personal Experiences but by NS when expressing their thoughts and views on Writing & Education and Social Issues. South American students also often used the modals must and have to on the topic of Writing & Education, which seemed to suggest their feelings of external imposition with writing and education matters.
CHAPTER FOUR

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Conclusions

The results of this study indicate that NS' and NNS' usage of modals in academic writing significantly differs in the grammatical functions and forms (syntax and morphology) and the meanings and uses (semantics and pragmatics). This study also suggests that many NNSs had difficulty with the syntactical and morphological forms of modals, but they did not appear to have major problems with them semantic and pragmatic. However, there were some differences between the two groups in their views about what constitute obligation, whether a particular necessity is internally motivated or externally imposed, and when to appear polite. Therefore, pragmatic and semantic aspects of modals are still important in ESL leaning because understanding how NSs select and use modals in certain contexts may help NNSs learn native-like modal use.

Thus, the results of this study suggest that the grammatical functions and forms (syntax and morphology) need to be emphasized in the classroom and at the same time, the meanings and uses (semantics and pragmatics) of modals are also important and should not be ignored in teaching English modals. In light of the analyses of the grammatical
functions and forms and the meanings and uses of modals in the previous chapters, this chapter offers several implications for teaching English modals.

The analysis of the grammatical functions and forms (syntax and morphology) of modals in NS' and NNS' academic writing revealed that many NNSs, who are even advanced ESL students, still have difficulty with the grammatical functions and forms of modals. Of the 99 ESL students in this study, 64 committed errors in the grammatical functions and forms of modals such as in tense and aspect, additional forms (e.g., infinitive “to”), lack/extra main verb, and frozen forms of periphrastic modals. The results of the analysis of the grammatical functions and forms of modals suggest four implications for both teaching and learning the grammatical functions and forms of English modals.

The first implication is the necessity for students to recognize the right tense forms of modal and main verb of the sentence, especially where there is distance between the modal and the main verb of the sentence and in subordinate clauses, relative clauses, indirect reported speech, and modal perfect. The second implication is that ESL students may need help with in recognizing the main verb of sentences which contain adverbs and/or negatives right after modal. To help students understand these points, instructors need to provide them with clear explanations and useful exercises.
which have students use modals in various types of sentences such as past tense, main and subordinate clauses, and indirect reported speech.

The third implication is that students need to understand that modals, especially modal auxiliaries, do not take infinitive "to," third person singular present "-s," or prepositions. To help students understand these characteristics, instructors could show examples of each error pattern and have students explain the nature of the error and discuss what activities could be provided to correct it.

Lastly, students should be helped with the frozen forms of modals such as conditional structures ("if" + modal), modal perfects (modal + have + past participle), and would like to. Instructors need to provide students clear explanations about those frozen forms of modals.

In the analysis of the meanings and uses of modals, there were not any significant semantic or pragmatic errors across social/cultural groups. However, each of the social/cultural groups often demonstrated and revealed their different sociocultural values in the essays written about Personal Experiences, Writing & Education, and Social Issues.

The findings of the analysis of the meanings and uses of modals indicate that Asian students' uses of shall, would like to, and can/could with stative verbs were unique and
often different from those of NSs and South American students. Not only the Asian students but also NSs and South American students occasionally revealed their sociocultural influences when they selected and employed the modals must, have to, need to and should in their root meanings. The Asian students frequently used these root modals to indicate their strong obligation to their family values. The South American students used more root modals must and have to on the topic of Writing & Education because they might feel compelled to meet their strong obligations and external imposition towards English education. NSs used more root modals must and have to in the essays describing their opinions and views on social responsibilities and issues since they might feel more obligations to their society today.

These findings have some pedagogical implications for teaching the meanings and uses of modals in the ESL classroom. Instructors need to teach their students native-like modal use by explaining that certain modals are uncommon in American English. Understanding how NSs use and select modals in certain contexts may help NNSs learn English modals more effectively. It could also be beneficial for instructors to have students analyze essays written on various writing topics by students from different sociocultural backgrounds in order to experience and
understand how different social backgrounds influence modal choices and uses. Students may discuss their modal choices and uses in the classroom so that they may begin to become aware of the different uses of modals.

The findings of the study are also valuable not only for NNSs but also for NS instructors and writing tutors to understand why NNSs use particular modals over others and what their modal use indicates. Although only the unedited essays have been closely examined in this study, the essays edited and proofread by NSs were also collected in the data collection. A comparison of the unedited and edited essays reveals that many NS writing tutors replaced or eliminated modals in ESL students’ essays. In the following pairs of sentences, for example, sentences a in each pair, written by NNSs, were changed into sentences b by NSs:

1.a. Overall, thought, I do not think this is some thing I should regret but rather something I should think my parents for it.

1.b. Overall, I do not think this is something I regret but rather something I thank my parents for.

2.a. Social love makes that people have to go with the traditional culture ethics and they live on their minds.

2.b. Social love makes people go with the traditional culture ethics and they live on their minds.

3.a. When my mother would like to leave, I grabbed the clothes of my mother and cried loudly.

3.b. When my mother left, I grabbed her clothes and cried loudly.

4.a. Sometimes I asked my mother that I would like to
bring the lunch.

4.b. "I want to bring the lunch box," I asked.

5.a. It's unfair that such a nice guy should die and bad guys never die.

5.b. It's unfair that such a nice guy would die and bad guys would never die.

6.a. I lied to my mother that I went to the theatre with my friends instead of telling her that I was going to the beach because I knew that she must not let me to go to there by myself.

6.b. I lied to my mother...I knew that she would not let me go there by myself.

In the first three pairs of the sentences, the modals were eliminated as seen in sentences b in the each pair. In the fourth pair of the sentences, sentence 4.b seemed to take out the modal user's intention, which was an expression of her politeness towards her mother from sentence 4.a. In the last two pairs of sentences, the modals should and must were replaced by the modal would. These changes might ignore the modal users' real intentions. For instance, in sentence 5.a, the student seemed to choose the modal should in order to express her anger towards the unfairness. In sentence 6.a, the student seemed to select the modal must in order to express her mother's strong authority over her, which is very often seen in many Asian cultures.

If NS instructors and writing tutors could understand how sociocultural factors influence NNSs' modal use, NSs would be able to have better ideas to deal with NNSs'
writing. For instance, if NS instructors and writing tutors can understand NNSs’ modal use, they may leave certain modals in NNSs’ writing unchanged. Moreover, NSs may be in a better position to explain to NNSs the reasons for their editing so that the NNSs would have a deeper understanding of modals and be able to use them correctly in the future.

The results of the analyses of the grammatical functions and forms (syntax and morphology) and the meanings and uses (semantics and pragmatics) of modals in this study illustrate how NSs and NNSs deal differently with modals in their academic writing. Thus, it appears that the teaching of English modals can be made more effective in the ESL classroom if students are particularly taught the grammatical functions and forms of modals as well as the meanings and uses of modals which should not be ignored.

Suggestions for Further Research

In the light of the results of this study, there are several suggestions for further research on NS’ and NNS’ usage of modals:

1. More research is needed examining NNS’ usage of modals in various L1 communities and more specific writing topic categories. One approach would be to examine how L1 influences affect NNS usage of English modals.

2. Research is also needed on NNS modal use at different
English proficiency levels. One could compare novice and advanced ESL students in their usage of English modals in order to identify how proficiency influences students' knowledge and use of modals. An interview with the students might help identify why the students choose one modal over others when they have choices.

3. Some modals change meanings when they take negation. Since this current study has not fully addressed the negation system, the relationship between NNS modal use and negation would be interesting to investigate.

4. Research is needed on NS' and NNS' usage of modals in spoken languages. Since spoken and written languages differ in significant ways, it would be interesting to see how NNSs differ from NSs in their use of modals in speech. One could also compare NNSs' use of modals in speech with that in writing.
The purpose of this study is to examine the use of modals (e.g., will, would, can, could, be going to, be able to, and have to) in the academic writing of students whose first language is not English. This study is conducted by Natsuki Yamamoto, under the supervision of Dr. Wendy Smith, Associate Professor of English, Dr. Sunny Hyon, Assistant Professor of English, and Ms. Christine Holten, Lecturer and Composition coordinator of Department of TESL/Applied Linguistic, UCLA. This study has been approved by the Institutional Review Board of California State University, San Bernardino.

In this study, two or three of your unedited essays (in-class essays and/or rough drafts) will be collected and analyzed for the types of grammatical structure and vocabulary you use. You will also be asked to fill out a questionnaire which will ask you to provide information about the languages you speak and the amount types of English instruction you have had.

Please be assured that any information you provide in this study will be totally confidential. You will be asked to provide your name in the questionnaire, but only for the purpose of making sure the correct essay is attached to the correct questionnaire. At no time will your name be reported along with your responses. All data will be reported in group form only. At the conclusion of this study, you will receive a debriefing statement describing the study in more detail and may receive a report of the results by contacting the researcher, Natsuki Yamamoto at (909) 424-0325 or via e-mail, nyamamot@acme.csusb.edu.

Please understand that your participation in this study is completely voluntary and you are free to withdraw or remove your work at any time in this study. If you have any concerns or questions about this study, please feel free to contact the researcher, Natsuki Yamamoto.

I acknowledge that I have been informed of, and understand, the nature and purpose of this study, and I freely consent to participate. I acknowledge that I am at least 18 years of age.

Participant’s Signature  Date

Researcher’s Signature  Date
Term: __________ Course: __________ Instructor: ____________

1. Name: __________________  2. Male  Female  3. Age: ___

4. Major/concentration: ____________________________________________

5. Circle: Freshman  Sophomore  Junior  Senior  Graduate
   Other ______________

6. Address (optional): ______________________________________________

7. Telephone number (optional): _____________________________________

8. E-mail address (if available): _____________________________________

   If the US. is NOT your country of origin, length of stay in the US.: ________

10. Did you attend high school in the US.?: Yes  No

11. Native language: _______________
    Second/Third language: _______________

   **If you speak another language in addition to English, make sure to answer the following questions:**

12. TOEFL score, if available (optional): ______________________________

13. Which language do you speak most frequently?: __________

14. In which language do you feel most comfortable speaking?: __________
    In which language do you feel most comfortable reading and writing?: __________

15. What percentage do you use your native language?:
    (1) with your friends: ___%  (2) at home: ___%  
    (3) at school: _____%

   What percentage do you use English?:
    (1) with your friends: ___%  (2) at home: ___%  
    (3) at school: _____%

16. How do you feel about your English proficiency? (Circle one; "1" being the least satisfied):
   Unsatisfied  1  2  3  4  5  Very satisfied

17. Were most of your English classes (Circle one):
   (a) Native speaker mainstream  (b) ESL  (c) Bilingual
   (4) Other (be specific) _______________
18. What did the majority of your English classes emphasize?:
   Literature ____% Composition (writing) ____% Grammar ____% 
   Reading ____% Listening ____% Conversation (speaking) ____% 
   Other (be specific) ________________________________________ ____%

19. How did your English teachers deal with grammar? (For example, separate grammar books/lessons, grammar based on your writing, etc.):

20. Which areas of English do you have the most difficulty with? (1-5: "1" being the most difficult):
   Writing ________ Speaking ________ Reading ________
   Listening ________

21. When you write essays in English, do you first think and plan essays...(Circle all that apply.):
   (a). in English, (b). in your native language, 
   (c). both (a) and (b) depending on __________________________
   (d). Neither (a) nor (b)/other language(s) __________________

Thank you very much for your cooperation!
Debriefing statement

I would like to thank you for your participation in this study. The study is designed to investigate how non-native speakers of English use modals (e.g., will, would, can, could, be going to, be able to, and have to) differently from native English speakers in writing. In this study, two or three your unedited essays (in-class essays and/or rough drafts) will be analyzed. The questionnaire you have just completed will help identify any variables which may be collated with how you use particular modals. The information you provide in this study will be useful information about non-native speakers' ideas of grammatical usage.

All information you provide in this study will be treated confidentially, and your names will not be reported along with your responses. Since you have a right to be debriefed and to have any questions or concerns as a result of your participation, please feel free to contact the researcher, Natsuki Yamamoto at (909) 424-0325 or via e-mail nyamamot@acme.csusb.edu.

Due to the nature of the study, I would like to ask you not to reveal details about this study to anyone who may be a potential participant, as I will be collecting data throughout Summer and Fall 1998. Thank you again for your participation.
ENDNOTES

1 I translated this citation from Japanese into English.

2 Due to changes of their schedules Dr. Smith and Ms. Holten were replaced with Dr. Rong Chen.


Brush Up Your English. (Date unknown). Nagoya: The Organization of Education and Culture in Middle Japan.


