

# **The Transfer of Modal Content in Translation**

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Abstract

The present thesis seeks to examine the grammatico-pragmatic\* problem of translating modality from English into Arabic (two formally and genetically different languages) and vice versa, with the aim of suggesting tentative ways that would tackle such a problem for the Arab translator who finds himself / herself in a situation where only specific choices of TL modal expressions would make the translations acceptable.

Translating is regarded, here, as an overall operation performed on two languages - an operation based on a systematic comparison of two linguistic systems and the functions they each perform at a higher level. It is taken to mean a code-switching operation, which implies that a sequence of symbols from one language is substituted for a sequence of symbols in another. This code-switching always operates as a chain with an intervening time occupied by a segment of interpretation during which the intended content is transferred into the target language by the translator. In this study, use is made of concepts and terminology provided by linguistics and translation theory, both of which deal with language as a communicative activity. The research conducted here deals with translation between Arabic and English, with special focus on modality as a linguistic as well as a

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\* *Pragmatics* is included, here, to refer to the non-linguistic aspect of the modal use on the assumption that grammar includes the semantics because words represent cognition. Sound and meaning come together in them.

## (II)

cultural strategy of communication. Therefore, modality can be constructed in the TL only through overall translation by interpretation where equivalence becomes the translator's memory rather than his/her dictionary. Here, the overall process of translating the modal content thrives best by freeing itself from surface constraints, i.e. constraints imposed by the surface structure of the source text. The interest in the cultural divergence between the two languages above, and in how to modulate (adjust) cultural concepts in the target language stems from the observation that scientific and also journalistic terms can be equated even between languages like Arabic and English, regardless of their external structures. This can be ascribed to the fact that science and current affairs belong, on the whole to one contemporary culture with an ever-improving communication. The study falls into four chapters:

Chapter (I) deals with two important theoretical issues :

- (a) A re-examination of the notion *Equivalence* and a discussion of the causes that led to the different definitions given to that concept ( mental fact ).
- (b) The limits of translatability relevant to the translating of modality.

Chapter (II) is devoted to reviewing and critically assessing the present published work on modality in Arabic and English. Due consideration has been given to the modal categories relevant to these languages. It is argued, here, that contrary to current theories of linguistic equivalence the notion does not present a

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viable solution to the problem of translating modal texts because there is always a difference, or rather a number of differences, between SL and TL messages, particularly in the case of Arabic and English, arising from the fact that the two languages are culturally distant from each other. Further, as their subtleties such as styles, forms, and viewpoints reside not solely in the linguistic meaning, their content cannot be fully captured solely by translation.

Chapter (III) is devoted to the discussion of some written Arabic texts, sometimes decontextualised texts, stretches very often drawn from larger authentic texts. The size of such translation units may vary, bearing in mind that text is a continuous thing and that every thing in it has a context \* with a situation.

The examples are systematically presented under the semantic category they each express, and are used throughout as a basis of linguistic/stylistic analysis.

Chapter (VI) discusses the merits of setting up interpretative procedures based on well-defined modal functions that can be used as an aid to the translation/interpreting or, perhaps, to translators in a translator training course where the central focus is on establishing TL modal approximations.

The data used in the thesis are of two types. The first type

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\* *A situational context* is one where meaning is determined by a referent (i.e. by the situational element referred to).



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consists of constructed or de-contextualised examples illustrating theories of meaning and translation. The second type comprises linguistic data involving modal expressions which have cultural implications, mainly comprising visual texts ( written sentences ) used as illustrative examples suitable for analysis and discussion. Most of the second type data are extracted from selected written Arabic and English texts . Mention of the source texts is made whenever necessary. The results hoped to achieve from this research may be summed up as follows:

The principal problems of translating modality are problems of how to convey the relevant content. To reconstruct the source language content in a target text adequately , translators need to consider, besides the undertaking of the non-creative task of translating linguistic units, the question of modulating the source language content into culturally neutral expressions by making use of interpretation. This position evolves from the fact that we can easily identify the lexical or the grammatical meaning through our knowledge of the language. However, in many cases, especially where some form of modality is expressed, the structure of the formulation very often does not contain the content ; it merely triggers it off.

## Introduction

It would seem reasonable to say that the published literature on the studies conducted specifically with the aim of identifying in the written texts the linguistic and potentially non-linguistic problems relevant to modality in translation are scanty and inconclusive. There have been, however, studies like that of Mitchell and El-Hassan (1981), and Meziani (1983) which attempt to contrast Arabic and English modals. Important though such attempts are, they are often conducted within the context of a framework where a non-standard dialect of Arabic is compared with a standard variety of English and as our study is concerned mainly with the written form of MSA, \*it is felt that a study of the kind envisaged here would benefit from comparing two dialects of an equal status.

The approach I will be describing or advocating is the direct result of a personal experience in teaching translation theory and literary translation in a department of Literature and Linguistics.

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\*MSA may be defined as that variety of Arabic which is found in literary books, newspapers, magazines and writing style of the everyday educated people. It resides, in a sense, half way between formal written prose and conversation. In a sense, it is a blend of the formal and the informal literary style of Arabic. It still uses to a very large extent the vocabulary of medieval prose and poetry but its main function is to bridge the gaps between colloquial (more or less, the same except for such everyday words and expressions as 'bread' 'how are you?' etc.), and written standard Arabic. However, it should not be taken to mean something like the language used in faxes and E-mail messages, which also happens to lie between prose and conversation. MSA is now the universal language form of the Arab World, used and understood by all speakers and readers.

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It, therefore, reflects my own experience in teaching both Arabic as a foreign language and translation theory and practice. However, I am not attempting to present my approach as the only or the best method to be used in teaching translation nor do I feel that I have achieved the ultimate solution to translation theory and pedagogy by advocating, say, a complete theory of translation. I am, indeed, of the conviction that researchers have a long way to go in all fields of translation.

The general shape of this study is as follows :

The first chapter examines in great detail the history and the various aspects of the concept of 'equivalence' and suggests a redefinition of the related concept 'approximation'. The second provides a general survey of some major works done on modality in both English and Arabic. The third sets forth the analyses and comments as clearly as possible. The last chapter is devoted to the discussion of theoretical and practical solutions to the problem of accommodating modality in translation. The present work is, to the best of my knowledge, the first detailed treatment of modality from a translational point of view, focusing on MSA and standard English as the SL and TL in translation.

The study of translation has become increasingly significant in the Arab World since the Second World War. With the growing demand for promoting understanding of, and co-operation with, the West in international affairs, there is a pressing need for well-qualified translators and interpreters who are able to transfer SL content into the TL. While it is realised that meaning in the wider sense depends on a complex of interrelated contextual factors, it is legitimate to suggest that in on-going texts, it is difficult to isolate every factor, and analysis becomes a mere interpretation. It is, indeed, vital first of all to



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focus on the principal factors one by one, which is why the author of this work, who is a native speaker of MSA, will begin with invented examples. Thus, the focus will be on modality as one circumscribed area, and on its transfer \* (translating), which poses many traps that every translator needs to be aware of. Because of the immediate practical aim of our work to use texts as a self-teaching aid, examples are always used with a classroom-like limitations in mind. But to fully illustrate certain occurrences, larger texts (chunks) may, sometimes, have to be used mainly to focus upon a point and to remind translators that single decontextualised sentences may be used only as an artificial exercise — a starting point in the process. The work, here, will basically aim at highlighting the acute problem of translating modality by giving special attention to sample texts of modality with the aim of demonstrating its different uses. Many inexperienced translators appeal to the theory of equivalence in its rigid sense for help, but eventually find it impossible to establish such a sought for degree of correspondence. What happens, here, is a substitution of a sequence of symbols (words) from one language for a sequence of symbols (words) in another, at the expense of the intended ideas at the time of utterance. Therefore, to envisage transferring the content conveyed

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\* *Transfer* is used in the sense of 'translating', the original meaning of the process (consider Latin *transfero* ). The use of 'transfer' is preferred by the present author because it can be used in a figurative sense which may point to the literary and creative aspect of translation. It is also felt that it can be employed in conjunction with the word '*content*' in the sense of substance as opposed to physical form.

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by modality between two unrelated languages, the need for a workable theory is essential. It will, therefore, be argued that it is the approximation of messages rather than the equivalence of content which needs to be reached. This is due, of course, to the fact that anyone who understands translation as a code switching operation will inevitably have been confronted with such limitations. Thus, it will be more essential to focus on ideas as well, particularly, in the case of modality. At this point, interpretation takes over where all attempts at finding linguistic equivalents are ignored. Indeed, attempts are concentrated on finding the appropriate wording that would convey meaning by transcending mere code-switching of isolated language units. As the linguistic message is delivered in a cultural mould, one, therefore, cannot ignore the cultural dimension if one wishes to remain objective in the translation. Attempts that focus on the linguistic text as the sole locus of equivalence in translation, without due regard to what it will mean to the reader of the target language, will overlook and, indeed, fail to point out the areas of untranslatability between the two languages involved.

To take into account both levels of the message, one has to make a distinction between what is *translation proper* and what is *overall translation*. While the former, in our opinion, is a mere literal semantic translation, the latter goes beyond that level to include the stylistic and cultural aspects. And since translation is a form of communication, a translation theory should aim to account for and clarify all sub-forms of communication. One such sub-form is *modality*

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It is a strategy of communication where the aim is to get , via a rule governed text, a message across to others (and sometimes to ourselves). The success of this operation is determined by the ability of the translator to handle a combination of:

- (a) a body of linguistic knowledge (*grammar*).
- (b) a body of non-linguistic knowledge (*encyclopedia*).
- (c) a body of inferring skills (*overtone interpreting*)

Therefore, because texts are governed by rules, translators need not concern themselves too much with ' *equivalence* '. Rather, they should concern themselves with identifying recurrent patterns on which rules of interpretation may be based:

To alleviate the orthographic differences between Arabic and English that are likely to be encountered by the reader of the Arabic texts employed in this work, Arabic examples appear throughout in a consistent and simplified form of transliteration, in the widely accepted modified form of Roman alphabet, in order to give a closer indication of correct pronunciation. Brief notational conventions pertaining to Arabic sounds are presented for this purpose in two successive tables, These tables are followed by notes and some abbreviating devices used in the thesis.

Phonetic Symbols and Description

A. Consonants

<i>Symbol</i>	<i>Description</i>
ʔ	audible glottal stop, as in accents where between vowels the -t- " is swallowed ".
b	voiced ,bilabial plosive
d	voiced, dental plosive
<u>d</u>	voiced, denti-alveolar, fricative
k	voiceless, velar, plosive
q	voiceless, emphatic uvular plosive
f	voiceless, labio-dental fricative
t	voiceless, dental plosive
<u>t</u>	voiceless, labio-dental fricative
D	voiced, denti-alveolar, emphatic plosive
<u>Z</u>	voiced, denti-labial, plosive



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T	voiceless, denti-alveolar, emphatic plosive
s	voiceless, alveolar fricative
S	voiceless, denti-alveolar, emphatic fricative
z	voiced, alveolar, fricative
<sup>v</sup> s	voiceless, palato-alveolar fricative
x	strong, rasping, uvular fricative
E	voiced, pharyngeal fricative
ḡ	voiced, uvular fricative
h	voiceless, glottal fricative
H	sharp, voiceless, pharyngeal fricative
n	alveolar nasal
m	bilabial nasal
l	alveolar lateral
j	voiced, palato-alveolar affricate

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w bilabial semi-vowel

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y palatal semi-vowel

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Notes

1. Doubled letters are geminate and, hence, to pronounced longer than their single counterparts. e.g. / jiddan / "very"
2. /E/ (the Eayn) is asound typical of the semitic languages and gives them an expressive character different from most other languages. The sound is made by the contraction of the throat muscles

B. Vowels

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<i>Symbol</i>	<i>Description</i>
i	front, close, spread between primary cardinals 'one' and 'two' of IPA.
ī	the longer version of the above vowel
a	open, neutral, varying from primary cardinals 'three' and 'four' of the IPA to cardinal 'five'.

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ā	The longer version of the above vowel
u	back, closed, rounded between primary cardinals 'six' and half way to 'seven'
ū	The longer version of the above vowel, near primary cardinal 'eight'

Other notes and reading conventions used are :

1. Top bar as in /nār/ "fire", indicating longer sounding vowel.
2. ( ) parenthesis, enclosing option, or what it stands for.
3. " " double quotation marks, indicating direct quotation.
4. / / parallel slashes enclose what is known as phonological surface or near surface representations, e.g. /kitāb/ "book".
5. \* an asterisk, indicating a footnote.

Abbreviatory Notations

def.	definite
fem.	feminine
gr.trans.	grammatical translation
imper.	imperfective
inf.	infinitive
IPA	International Phonetic Association/Alphabet
MSA	Modern Standard Arabic

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L1	The source language (the language translated from)
L2	The Target language (the language translated into or the Receptor language)
Lit.	Literally translated.
mas.	Masculine
NP	Noun phrase
obj.	object
perf.	Perfective ( or perfective form )
pers.	Person
plur.	Plural
prep.phr.	Prepositional phrase
pron.	Pronominal
sing.	Singular
SL	Source language
TL	Target language
trans.	Translation
v.	verb
v.phr.	verb(al) phrase



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## Chapter One

### 1.0 Translation Theory : The concept of *translation equivalence*.

There seems to be a unanimous agreement among theorists of translation that a translation can match its source text\* in relevant aspects. Such theorists disagree on one thing: that is, the terminology to define the phenomenon. Equivalence, however, has turned out to be a favourite term. The problem of translating SL texts or expressions, into their corresponding TL texts or expressions, thus, presents theoretical as well as practical difficulties. Theoretical, because the very definition of the process of translation is based on speculative terminology. The term *equivalence*, for instance, has been borrowed from mathematics ( or economics ? ), apparently to serve as a measure against which what is believed to be the most approximate translation is evaluated.

Equivalence is primarily linked to the old concept of faithfulness to the source text whatever it is. Consequently the translated text or expression that falls short of this measure tends to be looked at as, more or less, some kind of deviant formulation of the text.

According to such a view, translations are potential equivalence hazards. The lack of reliable verifiable criteria, therefore, has clearly been the source of a long history of subjective judgements, often taking the form of criteria, telling

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\* *Text* is taken, as opposed to expression, to be comprising more than one linguistic element. It will be used, henceforth, in the sense of a minimally single sentence. A wider context will be a large stretch of words. An expression ( element in Catford's terminology ) will be treated as part of a text.

translators what good or bad translations look like. Moreover, translators find it hard to agree on the issue of which criterion deserves to be called better or worse, more correct or less faithful. The majority of them appear to agree with linguists and theorists of translation that the principal problems of translation are problems of meaning. There is, for instance, the question of how and how much of that meaning ought to be preserved in the translation. Saying the same thing, on which the equivalence of meaning is based, seems to hide criteria of identity whose precise formulation has proved to be elusive. Bolinger (1966:131) is quite right in his conviction that texts are

*" equivalent in the sense that chien and dog are equivalent. "*

This chapter is concerned with the notion of translation equivalence as a correlative semantico-cultural approximation, and has the aim of focusing on the problem it raises for translation theory in general and the translating of modality from Arabic into English in particular, to be illustrated in a later chapter.

### 1.1 The history of the term

The first use of the term '*translation equivalence*' in translation cannot be determined. The most plausible explanation is that it is taken over from mathematics, apparently in the course of translation scholars' desperate desire to make equivalence as rigorous as descriptive as mathematics, physics or chemistry, and to build up an autonomous terminology with, perhaps, some

scientific flavour. However, it may be that it was Jakobson (1966) who first introduced the term 'equivalence' in his classic article "*On the Linguistic Aspect of Translation*"

The concept of *equivalence*, like all terms in the history of translation, is vague and defies precise definition. Failure to explicate this concept can be ascribed to failure to develop clear-cut criteria for circumscribing it.

In Catford's formulation of 'total translation' (1974:49) ,

*" SL and TL items are translation equivalents when they are interchangeable in a given situation "*

Here, a total translation is taken to mean interchangeability ( i.e members of each community will understand an equivalent message within the same physical location, psychological setting etc. ). Of course, that leaves the problem of being explicit about what counts as relevant in a particular situation ( physical setting, belief, ? or other mental entities ? ) unexplained. Despite the fact that Catford's theory of translation is primarily linguistic and basically deals with surface structure equivalences, it does move in the direction of the context of communication in its emphasis on differences of dialects and registers ( see his chapter on ' Meaning and Total Translation ' )

On the question of interchangeability in a given situation, it is easy to see the area which Catford left unaccounted for. It is, indeed, arguable whether the following situation could be considered the same for both the Arabic text and its translation in (1) below :

(1) sa 'ujazika 'in sa'allah.

Trans. I will repay you if God wills.

(God willing)



From a native Arabic speaker's point of view, the translation in (1) fails to represent exactly the same situation and give the same religious connotation (see page 141). This is particularly due to the fact that translation proper actually deals with messages conveyed by the very utterance of the sentence in a particular situation \_ something that is not dealt with by the grammar. Grammar is basically understood as a semantic interpretation of a sequence of sounds. At this point, it may be concluded that Catford's concept of *situation* is too broad and would include cases like the one (1), which in most people's view of translation, would not be adequate as translations. Catford's definition of translation equivalence, thus, provides us with a basic conclusion : one cannot begin defining *equivalence* by using descriptive terms like *interchangeable* which are themselves ill-defined. Indeed, for two texts or expressions to be interchangeable, in any given situation, a host of factors need to be considered : the time of utterance, the mode of utterance, the cultural elements associated with it, the attitude of the speaker etc. Such a situation, though theoretically valid, is further complicated in the translating between two unrelated languages, like Arabic and English, expressing two *sui generis* implications as shown earlier in (1) above.

However, there might be cases where translators can, in a situation where the text conveys a situational feature typical of a specific culture common to both source and target languages, achieve a highly satisfactory degree of equivalence.

Dixon (1965:155) cites an interesting example where the same traffic instruction is conveyed by three texts representing French and two varieties of English. Despite his claim that the example displays an identical situation, it



seems to us, to provide a very close picture of how interchangeable texts might be conceived of. In fact, what makes his claim fairly reasonable is the fact that the SL texts and the TL texts derive from a form of culture common to both : i.e. ' *technological culture* '. Dixon gave the following example which is, in our opinion, an exceptionally good case to support Catford's claim above ( i.e. cultural facts being identical and giving rise to the same situation ) :

*" Pedestrian street-crossing lights in New York bear the legends : Walk and Don't Walk ; in London Cross now and Stop; and in Paris Passez and Attendez ( Pass and wait, correspondingly ) "*

Different and often contradictory criteria are also a source of conceptual difficulties in translation: that is, the impossibility of using the same terminology ( e.g. translation equivalence ) in the discussion of a single phenomenon. That may be attributed to the fact that translation covers such a wide spectrum of interlingual operations ranging from literal to free translating. Soll (1968:161) seems to sum this up when he says that

*" The history of translation theory can be thought of as a discussion of the polysemy of the word translation and its possibilities and limits. "*

However, it seems doubtful whether proponents of any type of translation actually posit absolute identity, precluding any need for translation. We must also remember that human translation has its own limits and possibilities. The possibilities and limits of translation are revealed in three basic translation operations:

(1) *Substitution*, which is based on a sign-to-sign- relationship. It is a formal translation procedure that presupposes semantic equivalence of SL/TL words and phrases (groups) on the basis of grammar.

(2) *Paraphrase*, which is based on semantic equivalence between SL text and TL text without any regard for lexical correspondence as an essential transfer (translation) procedure.

(3) *Interpretation*, Which is a target language oriented process where a translator does his/her best to show that meaning which is perceived to be intended by the speaker in the SL. The process focuses on idea-switching. Thus, it is a practical device particularly indispensable to the formulation of approximation in the target language. It is held by some scholars to be the ultimate operation. Some even go to the extent of considering any operation in translation, regardless of its genre, a form of interpretation ( cf. Bennani, 1981:135 ).

As the most ambitious contention of translation theory, equivalence has, despite the claims of its proponents, remained a prisoner of remarkable contradictions and rather confused statements made in the attempts to define it. No one of such statements seems, so far, to be making a successful bid for dominance in the field of translation. Generalisations about the concept have never been in short supply. Following are some of the propositions which have been maintained or sometimes implied by the competent scholars. They appear in works on translation theory in the form of a set of prescriptive principles as the ones often proposed by proponents of what is called *literary translation*.

Such a set, adopted here from Jumpselt (1961), shows exactly why translators, the majority of whom have very little confidence in the theoretical models of translation quality assessment, turn to their own translational experience for guidance when translating interlingually. Practical experience has been responsible for the various criteria which individual translators often follow as a guideline in their attempts to achieve the closest translation.

## 1.2 The prevalent criteria

- (a) A *translation* must reproduce the words of the source language text.
- (b) A *translation* must reproduce the ideas (meaning) of the SL text.
- (c) A *translation* should read like an original.
- (d) A *translation* should read like a translation.
- (e) A *translation* should retain the style of SL text.
- (f) A *translation* should mirror the style of the SL text.
- (g) A *translation* should retain the SL historical stylistic dimension.
- (h) A *translation* should read as a contemporary piece of literature.
- (i) In a *translation*, translator may, if need be, add or leave out something.

The first criterion above fails simply because, by proposing a structural type of equivalence, it overlooks the uniqueness of linguistic signs, their cognitive, cultural and socially determined meaning, by suggesting translating on the basis of word-for-word rendering. Thus, if pressed further, it may include the correlation of the surface forms of entire sentences by reference to some



ad hoc measure of formal similarity.

The second criterion, (b), is clearly in favour of a free type of translation aimed at by the first criterion.

Criterion (c) is ambiguous between two possible interpretations, a call for literal translation and another for free translation. Further, it is vague owing to the fact that there is an implied suggestion that it would sound *foreign*.

The proponents of (d) seem to implicitly acknowledge the superiority of the original and hence the impossibility of achieving adequate translation.

Criterion (e) is hard to implement on the grounds that there are cases where the style is idiosyncratic or, at best, representative of a culture no longer existent.

The sixth criterion (f) proposes that the translator recreates in the TL the idiosyncrasies of the source language author. The argument against this proposal lies in the fact that there is no way by which the translator can find out what constitutes an author's idiosyncrasy from a short text.

Criterion (g) runs the risk of making the translation hard to understand and possibly quite unreadable.

The eighth, (h), moves toward adaptation, and by implication, away from equivalence.

Criterion (1) proposes a free type of translation that eventually moves toward adaptation.

To our mind, the weakness underlying the above principles is the lack of norms against which the result of any translation achieved, on ideal compliance with such conditions, may be assessed. Moreover, failure to develop clear-cut criteria for measuring translation equivalence led in its turn to further failure to explicate the concept itself. Such norms would safely be dismissed as a myth. Neubert (1984:61) is, therefore, absolutely correct in saying that:

*" ... bringing about equivalence, i.e. trying to make sure that L2 signs can stand for what was there in L1, has always to cope with a fundamental dilemma, viz., the uniqueness of linguistic signs in L1 and L2. Grammatical structures rarely co-incide. Even dictionaries and grammars believed by the layman to be a reliable source of synonyms very often feign identities, where, at best, overlap prevails. "*

### 1.3 Equivalence versus translation

It is commonly accepted that some degree of translatability may be achieved at different levels. These are the levels referred to by Catford (1969:94): namely, the level where the adjustment of the form of the message is made in accordance with the requirements of TL text,



the level of semantically equivalent structures, the level of stylistic-registerial appropriateness and the level where communicative (pragmatic) load, sometimes referred to as the non-linguistic, illocutinary aspect can be approximated. The first two levels ( see 1.3.6 ) may be subsumed under what is known as *linguistic relevance*; the second two under *functional relevance* (see 1.3.7 ). The first two levels represent what might be called *translation proper*. The last two together represent the *overall translation*. Strangely enough, many theorists of translation nowadays appear to equate, though unjustifiably, equivalence with translation. Whatever *equivalence* may be, here is a brief discussion of the main types of equivalence that one often comes across in the discussion of translation :

#### 1.3.1 Phonological equivalence

The term refers to the assumed identity of phonic substance between SL and TL. There seems almost no chance of success in establishing this type of equivalence especially between two unrelated phonological systems, particularly when form and expression of that substance is taken into account.

An English sub-system of phonemes, i.e. 'labial stops' is one of two terms /p/ and /b/, while in Arabic it is a one term sub-system, i.e. a /b/ sub-system. Formally, needless to say, there is no ground that correspond between English and Arabic items either. Generally speaking, phonological equivalence is difficult to establish even if one sometimes

excludes such relevant but verbally hard-to-realise features like intonation, tone, and stress, etc. Exclusion of such features, despite their central relevance to modality, is often made on the grounds that intonation, tone and stress :

*" ...only rarely interacts in a semantic way with grammatical systems of modality. "*

Also, prosodic information is often lacking in the case of written texts, in particular, as orthography rarely indicates tone. Similarly, stress, rising or high pitch for suspense, and falling or lower pitch for conclusion, for instance, are not amenable to translation in conventional orthography either. Thus, they are literally neglected, even though, they may form an essential part of the message.

### 1.3.2 Formal equivalence

This is one of the most difficult to establish as units are supposed to look alike in print and in uttering, match in sound. Proponents of this type assume the possibility that both word-order and syntactic structures can be preserved. The type basically claims correspondence between SL and TL units, independently of any idea of meaning.

It would seem that the success of establishing formal correspondence is tied up with the assumption that equivalence is possible between SL and TL texts. However, as achieving both total lexical and phonological

correspondence is impossible, it follows then that formal equivalence is likewise inconceivable.

What makes formal equivalence hard to achieve may also be put down to the difference in the number of ranks of grammatical units ( e.g. bound and unbound morphemes etc. ) and the fact that certain formal features like those of the alphabet, much of the phonology and the syntax, are obligatory in all languages. They are obligatory in the sense that they are dictated by convention within the ethnic groups speaking and writing these languages. Other formal features may be optional, e.g. the choice of a particular form like a *rhetorical question*, *word order* ( e.g. position of adverbs ), *parallelism*, *double negation*, etc., as will be demonstrated in chapter three. Thus, formal equivalence may only be partial as in our transliteration of Arabic examples in Roman letters, or as in A. Burgess's unusual from-right-to-left English transliteration (1992:82 ) :

Text:	<i>Sir Arthur Conan Doyle</i>
Transliteration:	<i>liod nnok rhtaars</i>

Burgess advised the English reader to read the example from right to left in accordance with the Arabic writing convention. Yet, it will be interesting to note that in exceptionally remote cases as indicated by Catford (1974:32):



*" It can most easily be established at relatively high levels of abstraction. "*

This implies that such equivalence may be established provided that the SL and TL, each in a hierarchy, have the same number of ranks ( e.g. sentence, clause, group, word, morpheme and indeed the same realisation, representation or manifestation of each and every lexeme and phoneme. In other words, it may be established when such a fact is realised in the form of a language universal applying to both the source and the target languages as perhaps in a logical formulation. In addition to its being a theoretical impossibility, a formal correspondence, therefore, can easily be seen as a far fetched model suffering from a serious deficiency. It is the effect on the reader which is, to say the least, unnatural and tiring, because the fresh impact of the original has been lost in favour of more formal elements.

### 1.3.3 Lexical equivalence

This is a restricted type of equivalence where the number, the order, and the grammatical class of the SL text are retained, provided that the situational substance in Catford's terminology (1974) is the same for both the source and target language. The nearest one can get is a type which sometimes seems to colour the speech of Arab students abroad, very often jocularly. A fitting example would be:

(2)        hādā l-*book* lladī *borrowed*-tuhu. [hādā l-kitābu lladī staEartuhu]

L.trans. This is the book which I borrowed.

This type of equivalence may be understandably intelligible to the Arabic speaking bi-lingual reader who is familiar with such an intimate register and, in this sense, it does appear to come closer to what might qualify as a restrictive translation equivalence. Such equivalence, one may venture and suggest, is established in accordance with Chomsky's deep structure, in that equivalence between the two languages, here, is established at that very level. It may also be legitimately regarded as an equivalence since the student in the example above seems to be working within the same conceptual framework which is newly acquired for this unique situation. A translator working within the framework of literal translation procedures also tends to experiment with possible lexical translations, but in a different manner. However, it is to be noted that literal translation, in general, according to Catford, is a phenomenon of syntax. He generally assumes the existence of interdependence between syntactic and lexical literalness. Such a correlating assumption does not, however, stand up to empirical testing, as literal translation, like all translation types, has a stylistic aspect which goes beyond literal semantic translation that is provided by the grammar. Unawareness of this fact typifies translations carried out by the inexperienced translators. A sign in a railway station bearing the following warning in German and English shows how difficult it is, in practice, to establish *literalness* :

(3) Es ist verboten, die Gleise zu überschreiten.

Trans. It is forbidden to cross the lines.



Difficulties are very likely to arise when translating (3) or even its translation back into the source language as the dummy, meaningless German ( *Es* ) and English ( *It* ) have syntactic but no semantic function.

#### 1.3.4 Grammatical equivalence

Another important type of equivalence that yet seems too ambiguous is *grammatical equivalence* where SL grammatical items are replaced by equivalent though artificially structured grammatical items. It is thus restricted in the sense that some of the SL lexicon are held constant ( i.e. without replacement in the TL ), the situation substance being maintained. It is basically, though not often, limited to the level of a sentence. Note the following :

(4) I am writing.

Fr. Trans. je suis en train d'écrire.

or as in :

(5) .... des Vaters.

Ger.Trans. .... of the father.

Complications may easily arise , sometimes in the course of attempting to establish this type of equivalence. This is in certain examples due to the fact that an emphatic (marked) SL construction may well be regarded by the unwary translator as a natural one (unmarked) and vice versa. Note the following examples :

(6) al fiqratu l-ūlā tarjammtuha. [ marked text ]

Trans. I translated the first paragraph. [ if, unmarked ]

It was the first paragraph I translated. [ if, marked ]

Similar trouble may be caused by culture when translating from Arabic into English. Culturally based stock constructions can hardly be made grammatically equivalent ( see Chapter Three for more examples on the optative use of modals in Arabic and English ). The following example clearly shows the type and degree of such difficulty :

(7) raHimahu llāh.

Trans. May God have mercy upon his soul.

However, equivalence established at the semantic level of a given sentence can be achieved without structural identity at the grammatical level. Further, the translation in (2) above where the use of relative conjunction which is optional, points to another area of difficulty that stands in the way of grammatical equivalence.

Grammatical ambiguity presents, yet, another challenge to attempts made in the hope of establishing this type of equivalence. According to Newmark (1981:24), grammatical ambiguity may be confined to one language.

Consider, for instance, the following English example :

(6) Considering his health, he decided not to go on foot.

In Arabic, the separate senses would understandably be translated differently, according to context :

Trans. (a) Eindamā fakkara maliyyan biSiHHatihi, qarrara allā yadhaba māsiyan.

Trans. (b) bisababi Zurūfihi lSiHiyya, qarrara allā yadhaba māsiyan.

Grammatical ambiguity may sometimes amount to being a language universal, especially in instances involving quite common prepositions which Newmark rightly believes to

*" ... have multiple functions in most languages. "*

To illustrate this, he cited the French text " le livre de Jean "

He was referring, of course, to such possible translations as [of],

[from] and [with] which may all be possible in the case of the preposition

( de ) in the above phrase.

It would appear from the discussion of such examples and also many of the texts that will be treated in chapter III that one cannot hope to achieve a satisfactory lexical or even grammatical equivalence especially because the structures of the two languages treated here have a different word order and a distinctive lexis.

#### 1.3.5 Morphological equivalence

This type entails formal equivalence of all the hierarchies of conventional grammatical units ( i.e. *sentence, clause, phrase, word, morpheme* ). As every language is formally *sui generis*, translation problems multiply when translation is carried out between two unrelated languages like Arabic and English. Further, while it is true to say that there are morphological systems ( e.g. singular-dual-plural ) whose meanings are found in different systems in the TL, one has also to remember that it is possible to have an obligatory marking in one language, which is optional in the other. Consider the following examples :

(7) (kīlā) lwaladayn.

Trans. Both the boys

It is, thus, obvious from the translation that English has the dual morpheme ( *both* ) as an obligatory marker while the equivalent Arabic



version does not place such a constraint on the dual morpheme ( *kilā* ).

### 1.3.6 Semantic equivalence

Regarding the translation process as an application of linguistics, proponents of semantic equivalence assume the position of creating a text of equivalent meaning where the object of the theory of translation is to describe and validate both the lexical and grammatical manipulations meant to attain such a meaning. They seem to claim that *sameness of meaning* can be established between two unrelated texts and expressions representing two languages as widely and typologically distant as Arabic and English. It would, however, be clear from the examples below that such '*sameness*' would seem difficult to realise across different languages which are expected to convey the same meaning. Note, for instance, the following old Arabic saying :

(8)     *albalāgatu l'ījāz.*

Trans. Brevity is eloquence.

Undoubtedly the translation in (8) is grammatically sound though not quite matching semantically. Yet, while most Arabic translators take 'brevity' as an adequate translation of '*albalāga*', many would argue that the whole Arabic text in (8) consists of two words, thus enforcing the claim made by



the very Arabic saying ( i.e. the uttermost brevity ). This semantic feature, a product of Arabic life pattern, seems to be missing in the translation in (8) and in (9), despite the fact that the latter is a more adequate translation :

(9) Brevity is the soul of wit.

The principle of semantic equivalence breaks down here. Quasi-literal \* translation in (8) will clearly show just that, though it does not provide the linguistic meaning which some linguists like to call translation equivalence. Equivalence of meaning, nevertheless, as we have seen earlier in the chapter is based on the premise that the same thing can be said in different languages. Examples (8) and (9) above prove that such a claim is arguable. Thus, it may be that (9) is a semantically better translation in one respect, on the one hand, by virtue of its being a ' saying ' - fairly close idiomatically to the Arabic version with regard to the the semantic concept of 'brevity', and also in being a saying itself. On the other hand it is further from the Arabic because it does not deal with ' eloquence '.

Theoretically, equivalence of meaning may have more weight, according to current views of the concept in semantics provided that it is based on two text having the same truth value. In a sense, they lead, by inference, to

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\* Literal translation is basically word-for-word rendering of the SL in the TL. The aim is to see both constructions immediately for what they are.

the same logical conclusion. Thus, in order for us to achieve the ideal equivalence, at least theoretically, we have to consider using, perhaps, a neutral meta-language.

### 1.2.3 Stylistic and affective equivalence

The aim, here, is to produce equivalence to the meaning conveyed by the style of the text. A number of questions need to be considered to achieve this : Is that meaning formal ? informal ? personal ? impersonal ? Is the author or speaker serious ? humorous ? sarcastic ? emphatic ? Is his/her expression subtle ? overt ?

As establishing equivalence or compatibility of style between the original and target language is essential, translators need, whenever possible, to translate prose to prose, poetry to poetry, archaic into archaic diction, colloquial into colloquial, and slang into slang, with the aim of projecting an equivalent situational context. Also, when one talks about affective and stylistic/registeral equivalence, one must consider several problematic aspects which a study of equivalence in its broader sense fails to account for satisfactorily. One such aspect would be the rhetorical quality of the source text which is, at least from the point of view of a native speaker of the source language, very often missed. Indeed this particular quality is overlooked by translators, translating from Arabic into English as in (8) above. They often take it, as a mere device of

ornamental intensification, though not so in examples like (10), borrowed from M.J.L. Young's translation of ' *The Plague and the Flood* ' (1977:87) :

(10) innahā awbi'atun fattakatun, mudammiratun, qātīla.

Trans. They are deadly, destructive, lethal epidemics.

The importance of such devices is emphasised by Koch (1983:47) who rightly suggests that they are

*"...the key to the linguistic cohesion of the texts and to their rhetorical effectiveness*

If the translator had chosen to translate the text (10) above into,

(11) They are lethal epidemics.

in the belief of taking the right step in avoiding unnecessary repetition of adjectives expressing a seemingly same concept, he/she would be steering away from the original text since the appearance of new synonyms in succession as post modifiers in the Arabic text above has a rhetorical force. Therefore, for that force to produce a comparable total effect and to produce a text as persuasive as the original, none of those modifiers should have been considered redundant ; otherwise, the total content conveyed by the text will inadequately be transferred. However, literal translation, very often, runs the risk of being stylistically inappropriate



in English

Thus, most complications surrounding the issue of translation equivalence appear on the semantic and the pragmatic levels. This is manifest in other applications of linguistics like machine translation, (MT) for short. In order to be successful, then, translations in this field must produce outputs that are good enough to need little or no human post-editing. This is in line with the fact reflected by Steiner's argument (1975:240) that all human speech consists of arbitrarily selected but quite intensely conventionalised signals and that meaning can never be wholly separated from expressive form. This very characteristic seems to present a real challenge even to human translators. Steiner believes that English, for instance,

*"...can reproduce the Hungarian discrimination between the older and the younger brother, batya and occss, but it cannot find an equivalent for the ingrained valuations which are generated and even reinforced by the two Hungarian words."*

Similar reservations have been echoed by Duff (1981:111) who says that,

*"...in mother tongue, words have a suggestive power which goes beyond the dictionary value. "*

This language characteristic makes translators take different approaches to the same text or expression. Such approaches, for their part, further complicate the process of establishing equivalence. A translator, for example, may well tend to ignore the speaker ( the author ), and focus on



What the text or expression means for him/her. If he/she does so, the result will be an interpreted meaning approach of the sort very often adopted by literary translators who claim that:

*"... a translation, whatever the genre may be, is always an interpretation."*

( Bennani, 1981:135 )

The translator may even choose to be writer-oriented by attempting to reconstruct a text as it was understood at the time it was written. Again, what we have is a representation - almost mind reading - of a highly of subjective interpretation despite the translator's genuine quest for retaining the suggestive power of the SL text. In translating modal expressions from one language into another, problems tend to appear on different levels of meaning - conceptual, affective ...etc. This is manifested by texts involving modals that may express, for example, a permission, a request...etc. The basic aim of the translator when he/she is faced with such problems is to envisage and understand what is being communicated. To understand the type of content being actually communicated ( transferred ), one is bound, in effect, to interpret with the aim to translate. When the process of translating starts, the translator's task will be to tackle and determine for himself/herself whether such stylistic problems actually arise as a result of the behaviour of certain modal qualifiers in the text. Due attention must be given to the affective meaning displayed through the strategies of *strengthening* or *weakening* the illocutionary force of an utterance in some socially determined contexts:

(12) *I think, you wrong.*

Trans. *aḤtaqīdu*, 'annaka muxTi'un. ( Ealā xaTa' )

(13) *Really*, you are wrong.

Trans. *Haqqan*, innaka muxTi'un.

(14) You are, *kind of*, wrong... in a way.

Trans. anta muxTi'un (Ealã XaTa')...*nawBan mā*.

The translator will need to decide in the target language on expressions that would adequately translate the affective (modal) qualifier. Hence, in (12), the speaker expresses his extent of commitment to the truth of the proposition. Therefore, the opinion - prefacing expression *I think* is best translated by the Arabic lexical verb / *aEtqidu* / which is used as a modal marker, as in the Arabic translation in (12).

An important point that needs to be given careful attention is the role of prosodic markers like 'tone', 'stress',... etc., in shaping up the intended content. A system of tone/accent marking would certainly be helpful in the case of immediate interpretation. But as the main concern of this work is the written form, the translator should be on the look-out for such expressions that might tacitly mark the presence of such prosodic features. For instance, there is a difference between, say the assertion in (13) and that in (15) below :

(15) You are wrong.

and,

(16) You are wrong, I think.

where the probability expression *I think*, used here as a hedge, in the sense of 'I'd say', receives more weight, putting emphasis on the speaker's judgement and leaving room for doubt. Examples (13) and (14), in contrast to (12), where the speaker's attitudes towards the content of the proposition is clearly indicated, have their focus on the speaker's attitudes towards the addressee in the context of utterance. The kind of meaning expressed in (13) and (14) by modifying the expressions in bold type is, therefore affective.

Thus, it is not only the concrete linguistic phrasing of assumptions, but also the expressing of epistemic knowledge by the theory of features like tone and stress which are responsible for shaping up the very modality of texts. By careful choice of target language expressions, we may approximate the modal content but not the syntactic level of the source language text, as languages have their own way of manipulating the grammar and syntax in circumstances like those in (13) and (14) above. Further, since equivalence in translation involves, in theory, the total correspondence of SL and TL messages, it is not the form of the message only that needs to be matched but its content. It is, then, worthwhile to consider at the same time what is regarded as pragmatic equivalence which is content biased. The principle of primacy of content, here, focuses on the reproduction of information, and displaying expressiveness or, perhaps,



persuasiveness in a simple and clear manner. Also, it also takes into consideration the degree of emphasis laid. This is what we get, for instance, in the translation of advertising and propaganda material which makes an intensive use of modal expressions. This does not necessarily mean those traditionally known as modal auxiliaries but also expressions like the ones used in (13) and (14). Thus, it appears that it is the dimension of content which causes most of the problems. The state of affairs is further complicated by the definition of the word content itself. For instance, would it be permissible to include *attitude*, factors of situation or meanings expressed by contextual variables like *voice quality*, *pitch* and *tone...etc.*, as components of the concept ? Would *rhyme*, *rhythm*, *emphasis* or *style* ( i.e. politeness ) qualify as legitimate components ?

Geoffrey Leech (1974 :81), commenting on the ability of factors of situation to convey conceptual meanings, to converge and diverge , cited a relevant example where politeness qualifies as a pragmatic component of the content conveyed by the conventional reply very often found in invitation letters in English. The trend has also found its way into MSA. Consider example (17) and its translation:

- (17) I am willing to accept your invitation.  
I am unable

Trans. argabu fī talbiyatī ( qubūlī ) Talabikum .

lā astaTīEu



Should the principle of pragmatic equivalence be adhered to, then the word *unable* may be translated as though it were *unwilling*, since it is a fact that *unwilling* is an antonym of *willing*. However, according to Leech, in the context of a reply to an invitation, the opposition *willing/unable*

*" is a pragmatic opposition cutting conceptual boundaries. "*

It is, he concludes, a

*" set up for reasons of politeness ( actually in order to anticipate politeness of the person's reply. "*

As a conclusion, bearing in mind what factors a situation may have, it is fair to maintain that in actual translation, particularly when modality is involved, to achieve any type of equivalence or near equivalence, a translator is bound, on account of the difficulties discussed above, to work on different linguistic and non-linguistic levels at a time. Here, one tends to accept Newman's claim that,

*" In his search for equivalence, the translator is, in fact, working on four levels. They are in ascending order of importance, the phonological, the syntactic, the semantic and the pragmatic levels. "*  
(Newman, 1980: 30)

To achieve equivalence at one of these levels in isolation from the other levels is as ambitious as realising a justifiable definition for the concept itself. Indeed, in order to answer the question of at what

level one should set up the equivalences, one has to agree with Jakobson (1966) that most frequently translators in practice substitute messages in a target language not for separate source language code units but for entire messages of the latter. At this point, it becomes evident that the translator has no choice but to settle for what is linguistically possible, i.e. *approximation*.

#### 1.4      *Aproximation : equivalence with a difference*

It is quite possible that much of the suspicion about the validity of the concept *equivalence* as used in translation is justified. We all know that when *equivalence* is used in mathematics, the highest degree of precision and rigidity is described and indeed is expected. This criterion, therefore, does not apply to natural languages which are uniquely human. In translation, many concepts like *equivalence* and *congruence* are degrees rather absolute measures., as their use is contingent on the existence of an ad hoc criterion against which their degree is measured. In mathematics, *equivalence* stands for a relation that is symmetric, tentative and reflexive. It is a relation of proportion or absolute identity. It is also a relation that exists between two volumes, or in formal logic language, two sets, provided that the latter contains the same number of elements. However, one is forced to acknowledge the problem that both in mathematical language and everyday natural language the relations of equivalence are often relations of equality. In English, for instance, the text ' he speaks '

is turned into a question by saying ' Does he speak ? ' . In Spanish, one says the equivalent of ' Speaks he ? ' *habla el ?*, where the word "Does" is not translated. Although the Spanish text is clearly not exactly the equivalent of ' Does he speak ? ' , it is perfectly possible to say that it is its overall translational equivalence. One can surmise, therefore, that the precise definition of equivalence in mathematics \_ deeply rooted in our system of perceiving relations \_ is largely responsible for validating its use by us in translation theory. It is also responsible for its implicit advocacy by those working in the intricate legal profession where the unfortunate interpreter, for quite understandable reasons, is legally bound to immediately provide a semi-mathematical equivalence through , oral translation:

*" Cantona, 28, the Manchester United and former Leeds striker, who had the sentence translated by the interpreter, gave a wry half smile."*  
( Yorkshire Evening Post, 23.3.1995 )

The interpreter is instructed not to include an interpretation, despite his/her professional title, and although what he/she performs is effectively a complex task involving both translating and synchronising ( i.e rendering legal English into everyday English , followed by a translation based on interpretation into everyday French. ) It is not only in the legal profession that ' mathematical ' equivalence is deperately sought after but also in practical situations where public safety and responsibility are entwined in the dependence on the



exactitude of the rendering . An extract from the Times Newspaper about German learner-drivers taking advantage of a European Union law that allows them to take the exam option of gaining a driving licence in England testifies to this :

*" Driving test examiners in Wigan are having to endure six extra seconds of white-knuckle anxiety as they wait for the phrase ' Do an emergency stop now ! ' to be translated into German by an interpreter in the back seat." The Times Newspaper, Monday, May 15 1995.*

To our mind, equivalence is best abandoned as a strict identity relationship and regarded instead as an identity relationship (with a difference) up to a point. Ideally, one should not define translation in terms of equivalence. Indeed, according to Roy Harris (1968:221)

*" For...the linguistic analysis of translation....we need no guarantee that texts are equivalent, merely that they match and that the pattern of matching it is , within certain limits, consistent " and that "...not all kinds of matching are equivalence and where there are equivalences, translation analysis must discover them, not assume them."*

It is precisely a matter of degree where the similarity resides. One may ask, does it reside in the linguistic or the metalinguistic aspects which are peculiar to the cultures behind both languages ? What actually happens in real translation provides the answer. The message, any message, goes into a mental series of screens until it finally emerges as a language text. That very message is transferred from one language



culture into another and from one medium into another. The accompanying process of adaptation, of which translation in the strict sense of the concept is only one component, plays a very important part in approximating SL texts in the TL. Besides, since modality, which is the main concern of this work is essentially a human strategy of functional communication, the translator's approach to translation almost always assumes a sociolinguistic dimension. Here, the approach enjoys the benefit of considering the functional, in other words, the pragmatic similarity which subsumes the stylistic, registerial, affective, and the illocutionary aspects of such similarity. It also stresses the benefit of using the technique of combining both the linguistic and the cultural adaptations or in Kelly's words "*modulation*" ( Kelly, 1970:170 ), in a serious effort to project in the TL a message that would qualify as an overall translation.

Despite what has been said so far against the use of *equivalence* and particularly about the demerits of its application in translation, it seems fair to note with Burkhudarov (1981:289) that it is certainly not without merits. He observes that the normative or prescriptive aspect underlying its promotion in the field is largely responsible for the questionable status it has acquired in the field of translation. Burkhudarov rightly thinks that it aims at eliminating or at least minimising those existing deviations from the SL text. He, however, cautions that norms implied by the notion *equivalence* should not be taken by translators as rigid prescriptions or commands but merely as precautionary measures for ensuring that overstepping the limits, beyond which the process ceases to be translation as such, does not occur. To us, this view represents a realistic attitude towards the use of the

concept in translation. To us, views like these provide an insight into some of the problems encountered at points beyond the linguistic level when translation is carried out between two different cultures. It would appear, therefore, that another degree word, *approximation*, would be theoretically more convenient to describe what actually happens in translation - indeed what can actually be done in translation. Evidence suggests that even linguists, speak of *equivalence* as *equivalence with a difference* - something that is comparable to another in a drawn analogy. John Gribbin (1994), in his review of The Language Instinct, written by Steven Pinker concluded in the Sunday Times Newspaper ( April 4, 1994 ) that The Language Instinct is

***"...the kind of book that doesn't come along very often \_ the most recent equivalent, would be the writings of Richard Dawkins and Richard Feynman. "***

The term has lately become convenient because it implies that a translation may be viewed as one that need not be exact, but should be as near as possible to the original message, but still stops short of declaring itself as *approximation*. The text and its translation may be looked at as two synonymous texts which, by implication, means that there is a disregard for syntactic and phonological form. Consider the following texts which convey the same proposition :

(18) intahati llaEba.

Trans. (a) The game is over.

Trans. (b) The game has finished.

Trans. (c) The game has ended.

The phenomenon points to the fact that the human translator, unlike machines, has the ability to combine his/her knowledge of translation and interpretation procedures to achieve a translation approximation. This is made possible through his/her ability to focus on and consequently prioritise his/her choices of near equivalents in the target language. What is more significant is the fact that the term approximation can serve as a constant reminder to them that the process of translating has its own limitations as will be seen from the discussion of the modal category in the next chapter.

## Chapter Two

### 2.0            *Modality : Discussion of the categories                  relevant to English and Arabic*

In the previous chapter, we suggested the use of the degree word *approximation* as a reminder of the limitations of the translation process particularly in the case of modal expressions. Here, we shall examine modality in English and Arabic, and later show that what modal expressions are employed to express in the two language can adequately be approximated despite the inevitable difficulties caused by the culture-specific shades of meaning ; namely, the cultural content inherent in the life patterns of the two cultures responsible for projecting certain meaning on to the selected linguistic expressions.

#### 2.1            *Modality*

Modality is a grammatical/pragmatic strategy employed to fulfil the need to express *moods* or *modes of action* ( i.e being - conditional, hypothetical, wishful) ...mainly, though not exclusively, through one of a small group of English verbs known as **modal auxiliaries**. However, the broader category of *modality* is of special interest to translators because a modal expression, depending on the content may admit more than



one possible translation, and thus, it may need either the linguistic or the situational context or both to determine in what way the original is to be understood, interpreted and translated. The elusive phenomenon of *modality* is variously defined in the literature. This state of affairs is due to the lack of an adequate working definition for it. It is, sometimes, associated with such familiar forms as *shall*, *should*, *can*, *could*, *may*, *might* etc., which occur in the first position of the VP ( the verb phrase ) as in, for instance:

(1) He must go.

(2) You must be joking.

In this way, they are believed to trigger the base form of the verb that follows them. The aim, is apparently, to refer to a syntactic category and, at other times, to distinguish it from the syntactic category of *mood*, as being a semantic category subsuming such forms as those above but this time with semantic characteristics that enable them to express attitudes concerning ability, compulsion, insistence, intention, obligation, permission, possibility, willingness, etc. More specifically, the intention is to enable them to express a pragmatic one. ( see Lyons, 1968:21 , and Palmer, 1986:3 ) This state calls for an overall translation.

As a linguistic category, and more specifically, in grammatical terms, it is of both the mood of the verb and of the particle. It is often discussed, however, in terms of its basic functions, i.e establishing

realities or simply getting a message across to others or to ourselves \_ a quality that renders it problematic ; yet challenging from a translational point of view. In English, as shown in the published literature, it is often discussed with the modal auxiliaries in mind; more specifically in terms of a semantically based distinction between two types, i.e. *factual*, or better still, *basic* in the sense that they express a straightforward fact, and *non-factual* ( or hypothetical ). again, semantically, they may be classified according to the notions of 'necessity and possibility which were regarded as the central notions in general and in philosophical discussion of modality in particular ( cf. Lyons, 1977 )

A further distinction is often encountered in the literature: linguists distinguish between *epistemic* ( or referential ) and *deontic* ( or binding ) modality.\* In other words, the distinction they show is essentially between making a judgement about the truth value of a given proposition on the basis of one's episteme ( the Greek word for knowledge of the state of affairs ) and expressing moral responsibility. Moral responsibility implies, in degrees, *obligation* which is not necessarily predicted of the (surface) subject of *must*. It indicates the speaker's preference towards an action by the subject and generally involves besides *must* the use of *should*, *may*, *have to*, *ought to*, etc. The *deontic* type of modality is regarded as an area lying between *epistemic* and *basic* meaning. It has to do with unfulfilled

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\* Deontologists are concerned first and foremost with the notion of *moral obligation* and of 'right',

expectations. It is, as it were, to do with the illocutionary force of *mild obligation*.

It is interesting to note, as it will be seen from the examples in chapter III, particularly those displaying instances of deontic modality, that such modality is always tied up with events expected to take place at a future timepoint posterior to the issuing of a *command* or *permission* by a source of authority, as shown in the examples below. Indeed, this observation seems to confirm that the expression of ' *futurity* ' is not confined to ' *will* ' or ' *shall* '. In this regard, the translator should take note of Palmer's remark that *shall* and *will* are not the only ways of referring to future time. ( see Palmer, 1965:36 )

*Deontic modality* differs from the epistemic type in that it does not express the degree of the speaker's commitment to what he is saying. Here, we believe with Palmer ( 1986:106 ) that a speaker is not only capable of expressing his/her own attitude or of resorting to the use of deontic modality but he/she may also ask the addressee as to whether he/she considers an action deontically possible or necessary :

(3) May I come in ?

(4) Must I go now ?

Palmer asserts that the use of the interrogative form with the possibility modal *may* in (3) does not usually request information. It is only a request for permission in contrast to (4) which appears to be



specifically seeking information. In isolated written texts, where among other things, prosodic features are understandably absent, the deontic source can be present either as an assertion or a directive whether a text like (5),

(5) You must not tell lies.

is uttered as a '*command*' with the underlying meaning of ( I order you not to tell lies ) or an '*assertion*' meaning ( moral honesty requires you not to tell lies ). In both cases, it remains deontically modal. Therefore, Lyons is probably right in believing that it is deontic modality that has an intrinsic connection with futurity since even possible interpretations emerging from examples like (5) seem to express either the necessity or possibility of an implied future process. Therefore, in the light of the above, a working definition of modality can be summed up as a cluster-like category that is both linguistic ( grammatical/semantic) and pragmatic ( stylistic/registerial/functional). Thus, it is to do not only with linguistic facts but also with cultural ones, which explains why a purely linguistic approach to translation always falls short of the translator's needs when modal expressions are involved.

## 2.2                    Review of selected works on *modality*.

Modality in English is variously defined by many scholars in the broad



field of language studies. Yet, there does not seem to be a unanimous agreement on a single definition for it. It is, perhaps, due to the way different authors look at it as in the case of the previously discussed concept of *equivalence* in translation, reviewed in chapter I. For this reason, it would be useful to start off with some brief reviews of the main treatments given to the system of modality in English, and the major proposals regarding the nature of modality as demonstrated through them. And since the number of authors who have investigated modality in English, in particular, is so great, only prominent ones are selected for review, and attention is given to the main issues of interest raised in each one, and later in the review, the question of relevance of translation to modality in Arabic and English is looked at.

#### 2.2.1 Diver, W (1964)

Diver bases his discussion of modality, or in his own words, the' *modal system*, on three interrelated areas :

- A. The chronological characteristics of the modal system.
- B. The hypothetical sub-system within the modal system.
- C. The inevitable effect of different contexts on the modals

He starts off by pointing out that the opposition existing between the modal system and what he calls the *chronological or indicative system* is twofold. This he sums up (p.322) as :

*"...a difference in the number of chronological distinctions in the two systems, and a difference in the attitude toward the event indicated by the verb. "*

Thus, the modal system is claimed to be characterised by fewer temporal oppositions than the chronological system. While the event is expressed as a possibility in,

*" the loosest sense of the term ( cf,p.322), the event of the chronological system is often expressed as a fact."*

A. Diver's chronological system of the modals is characterised by four distinctions:

1- The opposition of 'past' to 'non-past', where 'past' means *before the moment of speaking*.

2- The opposition of 'priority' which consists of two terms; namely, *unmarked* and *before*.

To illustrate, the modal auxiliary *may* in example (6) below is *unmarked* in relation to the dimension *before*. It is also regarded as a *non-past* according to the first of the four distinctions. Note the following :

(6) He may do it now.

In (6), reference is, obviously, made to the present. While in ,

(7) She may do it tomorrow.

reference is made to the future.

The verbal group ' *might have* ' has the feature before and non-past. The secondary modal ' *might* ' is considered unmarked in relation to before and past. The following text illustrates the point :

(8) They told me yesterday he might have been there last week.

3- The third distinction is the ' *definiteness* ' which characterises an event that is said to be localised about a particular point, or stretch of time, in apposition to a vaguer extent of time outside the sphere of localisation. The absolute length of localised time is not relevant; it is only necessary that there be a demarcation (p.324). Consider the following example :

(9) He may be working today. [ as opposed to the other days ]

4- The last distinction identified by Diver is the ' *indefiniteness* ' where reference is not tied up with any specific time as in (10) :

(10) Even when he leaves late, he may arrive in time.

In addition to the foregoing distinctions, he suggests the possibility of adding another opposition, i.e the ' *meaning extended*'. He sees it as consisting of ( *modal + have + kept + -ing* ), or ( *modal + keep + -ing* )

(11) He may have kept ringing their bell for half the night.

The ' *extended event* ' is either punctual or durative.

Diver's last distinction does not seem to be quite reasonable. Indeed, it appears to have nothing to do with modals used in his examples above. Rather, it has to do with the type of adverbial used , as in (10) for example. Again, the same applies to (11) where the *extended meaning* is due to ( *keep + -ing* ) and is present even without the verbal group 'may have'

B. In Diver's hypothetical system, the event reported by his system is not actually taking place ; hence, hypothetical. It comprises three divisions :

a- The first division or the *scale of likelihood* which consists of five elements: ' certain ' , ' likely ' , ' very likely ' , ' more than likely ' , and ' possible ' .

These five elements represent degrees normally realised by *do* or perhaps a simple main verb, *must*, *should*, *may*, and *can* respectively. Thus, in an



example like (12),

(12) If he left yesterday, he should ( ought to) arrive today.

the degree of likelihood, i.e. ' *more than likely*', Diver believes, is shown through the speaker's apparent surprise at learning subsequently that the event had not actually occurred as predicted (p.330-1).

It is important to note , however, that *should* and *ought to* do not seem to indicate the same degree of likelihood. G. Leech ( 1971;94-5 ) for instance, is of the opinion that the latter indicates a weaker degree of likelihood as in :

(13) This is where the treasure ought to be.

The speaker in (13) acknowledges that :

*"...there might well be something wrong with his assumptions or calculations. "*

It is also important to mention a different opinion regarding the degrees of likelihood denoted by both *may* and *can*. While Palmer (1965:118) equates *may* and *can* in their ability to express ' *possibility*', hence their being interchangeable, Diver is seen to disagree with that conclusion.

b- Another division believed by Diver to be emerging from the

naturalisation of the opposition of the scale of likelihood is what he called the *archi modal* which he left undefined. However, he identified two uses within this division :

1. The use of the modal in place of another member of the scale ( i.e. *might* instead of *may* ) as shown in (14) below :

(14) He *might* leave tomorrow.

Here, the past time form *might* occurs in a non-past context that might have been occupied by *may*. The idea is that *might* indicates a remote possibility \_ a lesser degree of likelihood than in the case of *may*. The state of affairs is termed by Diver as the ' device of incompatibility '.  
( See Diver, 1964:335 )

2. The use of hypothetical *should* ( not replaceable by *ought to* ) in a conditional clause, be it a protatis conditional clause or an apodosis cosequent clause as in (15) :

(15) Should they arrive tomorrow, the situation *might* still remain unsolved.

c- The last division, the third, which he terms the *imperative* is described as the ' *unintegrated member* ' of the hypothetical system. The hypothetical nature of the event expressed by the imperative, he claims, rests upon the fact that the speaker :

*"...urgently recommends that the action take place, but does not state that it will. "*

However, it appears that the division is not well accounted for. That the ' *unwillingness of the performer* ' is at least strongly implied in examples like,

(16) Close the door.

is not convincing, as it may be equally valid to say that many addressees would indeed be willing to carry out orders of this kind.

To sum up then, Diver's third area owes its existence to the influence of the context in which the modal occurs, The first type, sometimes described as *recommendation*, appears to convey the approval of the event by the speaker :

(17) You must go to see that movie. It's very good. ( *ibid.*, p.343 )

The second type is in the main expressed as some unlikelihood of the modals ( *necessity or obligation* ) as in (18) :

(18) He must get that book read before tomorrow. ( *ibid.*, pp343-4 )

And while Diver's first division can be accepted, his third division seems unreasonably asking us to take the unwillingness of the performer

in (18) for granted. Or, perhaps he thinks that the unwillingness lies in the mind of the speaker. If the former is implied, then Diver is overlooking the possibility of the performer's being quite willing to read it.

2.2.3

Ehrman, M.E. ( 1966 )

Ehrman's volume The meanings of the modals in Present-day American English is a corpus-based work on modality. It is primarily devoted to the semantics of the English modals. Her main concern is :

*"...the discovery of the most general meaning(s) for each modal auxiliary that would apply to as many occurrences as possible. " ( see p. 10 )*

Her treatment covers not only present-day modals like can, could, may, might, will, would, shall, should, must, ought (to), dare, need, but also modals used in Shakespeare and Dryden.

In her work, the discussion is centred upon three semantic distinctions of the modals :

A. Basic meaning.

B. Use.



C. Overtone.

Her first distinction basically refers to :

*"...the most general meaning of the modal in question, the meaning that applies to all its occurrences. " ( see, p.10 )*

The second type refers to any meaning provided that it is

*"... conditioned by specific sentence elements and features of non-semantic interest. "*

In her third distinction, she claims that the overtones are but

*"...subsidiary meanings which derive from the basic meaning but which add something of their own. "*

To illustrate how these distinctions apply to English modals, it is sufficient to look at what she has to say about the modal can, for instance. She maintains that the basic meaning is paraphrased as :

*" There is no obstruction to the action of the lexical verb of which 'can' is an auxiliary. "*

example (19) explains this :

(19) You can get your money back.

Her second type, i.e., 'Use', seems to have a situational sense. She provides an extended text in which she seemed to be of the conviction that 'can', can convey a permissible meaning :

(20) Stop that ! You will wake up the whole building. You can't go anywhere at this hour.

The third type, *overtone* signifies an added semantic shade, so to speak, to the basic content of can as in :

(21) I can't conceive of her having had a deadly enemy.

The *overtone* expressed in the speaker's choice of can above indicates that something within the subject seems to participate in the establishment or prevention of freedom of the action of the verb.

Despite Ehrman's claim that all modals investigated by her have a basic meaning, no reason is given as to why no such meaning is established for should, ought (to), dare and need. Further, her second distinction; namely, use remains vague owing to insufficient explanation. She claims for instance, that what she calls 'use' is :

*" conditioned by specific sentence elements. "* ( p.10)

She does not, indeed, explain what elements in, say, example (20) are referred to.

2.2.3

Leech, G.N. (1971)

Leech's treatment of the modals is unmistakably pedagogical. His main tool of analysis is paraphrase. His treatment of the semantics of modal usages is restricted to three axes :

1. *Permission.....Obligation.*
2. *(logical) necessity.....Possibility.*
3. *Willingness.....Insistence.*

Each of these three axes is governed by the rules of inversion which he sums up in the following formula :

***" Change the place of the negation and the term of the inversion system, and the meaning remains the same . "***

a look at the following example illustrating the first axis will show how meaning remains fundamentally the same :

(22) Students may not earn money in the vacation.

This text can be paraphrased into :

Either .....*Students are not obliged to...*  
Or.....*Students are not permitted to...*

The three axes may be represented as follows :  
On the first axis (23) and (24) may be good examples :

(23) May I open the door ?

This can be paraphrased as :

Will you permit me to ...?

and

(24) You must be back by now,

which may be paraphrased as

You are obliged to be ... .

On the second axis, examples like (25), (26), and (27) are illustrations of  
of this distinction :

(25) There must be some mistake,

which may be paraphrased into :



It is necessarily the case that .....

while in the case of

(26) He may recover ,

the text may be paraphrased into the formula :

It is possible that he will....

In (27), however, where may is replaced by can ,

(27) Electricity can kill ,

the text will be glossed as :

It is possible for electricity to kill.

Examples like (28), (29), (30) are the sort of texts that are likely to represent Leech's third axis :

(28) who will lend me a cigarette ?

This is paraphrased into :

Who is willing to ...?

(29) He shall get a polite answer if he is patient.

This example may be paraphrased into :

I am willing to give him.....

(30) You will obey my orders,

which is paraphrased into :

I insist that you obey....

Leech's treatment of modality in terms of axes is not quite convincing when it comes to modal questions like (23) because it may be argued that the implication in (23) is something like " *Shall I open the door ?* " which is a future action that is part *suggestion*, part *question*.

To Leech, *negation* is an important aspect of modality in English. He distinguishes two types of negation used with the modals. They could, he argues, be illustrated by *may* which has two senses, *possibility* and *permission*. Leech calls the first type ' *internal negation* ', actually his terminology for a negated verb that has been embedded. This type is internal to the clause in the paraphrase which expresses the non-modal part of the content. Note example (31) :

(31) He *may not be* serious.

This would be paraphrased into :

It is possible (that he is not) .....

The second type, which he calls the ' *external modal* ', occurs when the modal verb itself is negated :

(32) You may not go.

Here the paragraph is paraphrased into :

I do not permit you (to go).

Later in the analysis, he makes the generalisation that the ' *internal negation* ' applies to negative forms of the following modals :

may, expressing ' *possibility* ' .

must, expressing ' *obligation* ' .

will and shall, expressing ' *volition* ' .

As far as the other modals, they all, according to his claim, have ' *external negation* ' where the verb expressing the event is negated along with the modal. The weakness in Leech's argument above, it seems to us, lies in the fact that an interpretation of *possibility* may equally be valid

in the case of example (32).

#### 2.2.4 Palmer, F (1974)

The book under review is *The English Verb*, where Palmer says that the material employed represents the language actually used by the author, that is, Palmer himself. He proposes in this work the method of *introspection* which he justifies by saying that it is better than a corpus in that the author can ascertain that ' *possible forms* ' are represented. But, this does not sound quite convincing as Palmer himself, in fact, could not exhaust all potential texts. However, the best reason ( not mentioned by Palmer) for having his study on made-up texts could well be that of pedagogy. To put it more clearly, a text used to exemplify one grammatical feature, in this sense, is not complicated by adding further grammatical features. Palmer identifies three major types of modals '*auxiliary modals*'. They are :

- a. *Subject oriented modals.*
- b. *Discourse oriented modals.*
- c. *Epistemic modals.*



The 'subject-oriented' modals are characterised by certain criteria :

1. They " relate semantically to some kind of actuality, quality, status, etc., of the subject of the sentence. " ( p. 100)
2. They have a past tense form for past tense as in :

(33) He could not be there yesterday.

3. The modal, itself, is negated with the 'subject-oriented modal' as in (34) and (35) :

(34) John won't come again.,

which may be paraphrased into

He is not willing to ....

(35) He wouldn't stop fooling about.,

which may well be paraphrased into

He showed no sign of changing his behaviour. He was not willing to .....

The 'discourse-oriented modal' is distinguished from other types of modals because it

*" relates rather to the part played by one of the participants in the discourse (i.e. speaker in statements, hearer in questions) "*  
( cf. P. 100 )

Such modals, he claims, do not have past tense forms for past time. The reason is that one cannot guarantee or permit an action to take place in the past. Some of these modals, he adds, allow *passivisation* as in (36):

(36) He shall meet Mary.

( *Mary shall be met by him.* )

Palmer's claim above does not seem to hold when such examples are negated as it is possible, for instance, to say

(37) He would not touch it.

and still guarantee an action ( e.g. *restraint* ). Also, despite Palmer's claim, one can, in fact, report on another person's giving a guarantee in the past :

(38) He would find a solution.

( *A solution would be found.* )

The ' epistemic modals' (or *modal uses*) are those modals expressing 'certainty', 'possibility', and 'probability'. But the term epistemic modal itself ( and this is overlooked by Palmer ) is not necessarily an auxiliary verb since *epistemic modality* is generally used to express the

types of qualification a basic statement like

(39) She is a nurse.

undergoes in expressions like :

(40) I think she is a nurse.

(41) She must be a nurse.

(42) Perhaps, she is a nurse.

In terms of functions, the notion ' *epistemic*' is basically concerned with the expression of ' degrees of certainty ' and also covers the points of ' uncertainty ', ' degrees of probability ' and ' mere speculations about possibility ' in the past, present and future.

In *Modality and the English Modals* (1979), Palmer speaks about the basis of a semantically based distinction between three types of modality :

a. *epistemic*

b. *deontic*

c. *dynamic* \*

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\* The category *dynamic modality*, is a type concerned with 'ability' and 'disposition' as in : *Mini can speak Arabic*. It was first used by Von Wright (1951:28)

He called the first ' *the modality of the proposition* ' ( P.35 ) where *may* is shown, for example, to express 'necessity'.

In order to see what Palmer meant by *proposition*, one has to accept that the two utterances :

(43) I am hungry.

and its French approximation

(44) J'ai faim.

express the same *proposition*.

Palmer's study of modality, it should always be borne in mind, was mainly on the *English modal auxiliaries*. Again, his treatment of the type epistemic comes under the *English Verb* without mentioning the likelihood of other types of verbal phrasing being capable of conveying epistemic meaning ( e.g. modal qualifiers such as '*perhaps*', '*certainly*', etc. ). He, thus, overlooks the fact that linguistic (verbal) phrasing of assumption and of knowledge may, quite rightly, be counted in English and other languages as belonging to *epistemic modality* :

(45) I *know* that Aladdin has gone.

(46) Aladdin has *actually* gone.

(47) Aladdin *Has* gone.



What applies to lexical items like 'know', 'actually' , may equally apply to the phonological aspects of expression like tone, stress, etc., as in (47) above, where such features have, for convenience, been graphically represented, as it is often done in children's magazines and in what is called the tabloid newspapers.

The two other types, i.e. *deontic* and *dynamic* come under what he has called ' *the modality of the event* '. *Deontic modality* is discourse oriented, where *must* denotes 'obligation' or 'moral responsibility' in the 'you-ought-to' sense and *may* the content of 'permission'. Here, a speaker expresses not only his/her own attitude but also asks the addressee about his/hers \_ whether he/she considers an action deontically permissible or necessary. It is, therefore, largely based on *inference* as in :

(48) You ought to talk like that.

The above example is borrowed from a newspaper article entitled ' How people ought to talk ', written on the language of black ghettos of Chicago. The modal ' ought to ', here, merges into the meaningful whole of the article which suggests that the way people speak is tied up with rules and that speakers are morally responsible for compliance with them. As for the *dynamic* type of modality, he used it in a sense similar to that of Von Wright ( see footnote, p.58 ). Palmer, however, divided it into three sub-types in accordance with their deontic source:

(A) The "neutral type" \*, where *can* is used in the sense of 'possible for' and *must* in the sense of 'necessary for'. Examples are :

(49) Electricity can be dangerous.

(50) You must be the headmaster. (as in allocation of roles in a play)

It is also fair, perhaps, to think of (49) as an example of 'double speak' with the intention of concealing rather than revealing information, depending on the context. At this point, we may note, but not necessarily agree with the claim made by Boyd and Thorne ( 1969;72 ) that *can* in the sense of 'possible for' is non-modal and, in such examples as (49), it actually represents what they see as a 'sporadic aspect'. Also, their argument appears to be questionable as it is generally understood that all modal verbs fail to exhibit clearly past/non-past in the same way as other verbs in English. Consider, for instance, the following :

(51) He may do it tomorrow.

(52) He might do it tomorrow.

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\* Quirk et al ( 1990;53 ) have sub-divided the *neutrality* in the expressing of possibility into a rhetoric type as in : *Money donated can save lives,( A fact )*  
*Money donated may save lives,( A type )*

Boyd and Thorne's term 'neutral' is far from being a happy one. Examples with can of the type shown in (49) show beyond all doubt that the message can either be 'implicit' or 'explicit', which leaves no room for neutrality. The way it is applied to the use of warnings on cigarettes packets, for instance, is a case in point :

(53) Smoking can seriously damage your health.

Linguists like Todd and Hancock (1990:66) believe that can in the example above may well imply that smoking 'might not'. They rightly suggested that a more explicit warning would be :

*{Smoking has been shown to contribute to cancer, heart and lung disease.}*

(B) "The subject oriented type". With modals of this kind, the speaker can express 'ability' as well as 'volition' :

(54) I can swim. ( ability )

(55) I will help you. ( volition )

(C) "The circumstantial type". With this kind of modality, it is obvious that the speaker is a deontic source. Consider (56) :

(56) I have to buy a new one.

Palmer's second major work on modality (1979) seems to be a repetition of his former work (1974), both cited above. Indeed, the latter does not present a better scheme. His elaboration on Von Wright's 'Dynamic type' is not particularly satisfactory. What Palmer employed in his work as a 'circumstantial type' is, however, more satisfactorily treated in an earlier work by Lakoff, though Lakoff uses the term 'neutral' instead. Lakoff's example was :

(57) My girl has to be here by midnight.

She contrasts this with (54) which shows another type, the 'obligatory type' :

(58) My girl must be here by midnight.

She contends, that by uttering (57), the speaker takes responsibility for the 'obligation'. But in (58), he may only be reporting an 'obligation'. But in (58), he may only be reporting an 'obligation' he does not necessarily approve of.

#### 2.2.5

#### Perkins, M. (1982)

Another important work on the semantics of modals in English is that of Michael Perkins. Perkins takes a broad conception of modality, exploring



it without the syntactic constraints typical of major works on the category. Perkins adopts a monosemantic approach for each of the modals. In other words, he tries to isolate what he calls a single *core meaning* for each of the modals. A *core meaning* to him is a meaning assigned to a word

"... *in isolation from a specific context of use.* "

However, he cautions us that his method is not appropriate for all linguistic expressions, and that the success of such an approach rests upon ensuring that *core meanings* isolated by such a method are not counter-intuitive. ( cf.p.246 )

Perkins does this by means of such formulas as, for instance, the one he uses in representing the *core meaning* of can :

$K ( c \text{ does not preclude } x )$

where  $k$  represents ' *rational principles* ' ( e.g. *inference, deduction* ) and  $c$  represents evidence which, in this case, is not such as to preclude the truth of a proposition '. The third variable in the formula is  $x$  which he employs to represent the occurrence of an event under a *dynamic* or *deontic* interpretation. On the other hand, he also uses the variable  $x$  to refer to ' the truth of the proposition of the sentence '. ( cf. p.253 ) Note ,for example, the following categorical assertion (A) and its modalised version (B) :

(A) Rashad types.

(B) Rashad *can* type.

The speaker in (B) asserts that the circumstances are such that they do not preclude the truth of the proposition, i.e., " Rashad types ". Perkins' aim is to establish a framework which can be used in a comparative analysis of the meanings of the English modals.

While the first part of of his analysis deals with the *core meaning* or the *primary meaning* of the modals, the second part is devoted to what he calls the *secondary modals* ( e.g would, should, could, might, etc. ) or in other words,, their secondary meanings. He puts forward a plausible claim that

***"...all secondary modals have a common semantic feature...not present, at least in the same degree in the primary modals. "***

When a particular condition or conditioning environment exists, a secondary modal is called for. Perkins claims that

***" sometimes the condition will be realised formally as a conditional clause, and sometimes will merely be left implicit in the context of utterance. " ( pp. 265-6 )***

He maintains that, in spite of the fact of being common to all secondary modals, that feature appears in different guises, depending on the

context of utterance in which they happen to occur. One such guise may assume the form of ' an expression of hypothesis, another may find expression in the temporal reference, in formality, in politeness, or perhaps tentativeness. Consider the likelihood of an implicit hypothetical expression being present in the context of utterance of a text incorporating a secondary modal like :

(59) *I would mow the lawn, (.....if you paid me.)*

The notion of contradictory environment proposed by Perkins in this work is especially thought provoking. Since it is expressed through a feeling of uncertainty ( tentativeness ) on the part of the speaker, it might be useful to assume that it is only expressed in an utterance like (60) when a special environment exists, while in an example like (61), it has clearly become an embeded component :

(60) She said she would go with us *if we came*.

*as opposed to*

(61) *She would go with us.*

*In addition to the secondary meaning expressed in both (60) and (61), it appears that 'would' essentially expresses an event denoting a basic notion of 'futurity'. However, this does not sound quite convincing as 'volition' or 'intention' implies a future date relative to the point of willing and*

thus the future is tinged with modal meanings of 'volition' and 'intent'. Consequently, one might argue that the sense of 'volition' present in would is more appealing as a basic or a core meaning. This becomes obvious if we contemplate the presence of 'volition' in the following texts, despite the difference in the (underlined) verbal expressions employed in them :

(62) I will go with you.

(63) I must go with you.

(64) I have to go with you.

The argument for the notion of *futurity* being basic, appears, however, to be stronger in texts where it is displayed in combination with the notion of *progression* :

(65) The little girl is going to school.

Further, Perkins ( p.268 ) equates *conditionality* with *modality*; more specifically, he treats the former as a type of modality \_ an approach that seems to be sufficiently justified. He says that :

**"...the specific notion of conditionality..... offers a more precise way of distinguishing between different degrees of modality in terms of the nature of particular conditioning environments which can be seen as a manifestation of modality. "**



*conditionality*, he concludes, is a result of a condition whether explicitly expressed or not, and seems to convey an *epistemic* sense that can be derived from the speaker's apparent lack of confidence in the truth of the proposition in the conditional clause.

It is, however, important to add that even if we accept the suggestion that the secondary modals in (66-68)

(66) That should be sufficient.      (*...,if you ask me,*)

(67) That would be the cat.          (*...,if you ask me,*)

(68) I might be delayed.            (*...,If I miss the next bus.)*

can, indeed, express 'modality' via 'conditionality', it is fair to point out that the modality expressed through such modals can only be of the *epistemic* type. It is a mode of knowing, whose content is largely determined by the context of situation. Conditionality appears to be used as a means of expressing three subtly different types of future possibility. It is either the speaker's intention to substantiate his belief in the truth (i.e. *the strong probability*) of the proposition; that is, 'that (thing) being sufficient' as in (66) and 'that (creature or source of noise...etc.) being the cat', as in (67), or it might express that speaker's lack of confidence in the truth of the proposition of 'the speaker's being possibly delayed' as in (68).

(69)

The three types of *possibility* conveyed through *conditionality* often appear in *epistemic* disguises of a *mere conditionality* as in (69), or of *probable future outcome* as in (70) or of a *less likely future action* as in (71) :

(69) I should be grateful if you would send me an application form.

(70) If they leave at 7.30, they should be able to catch the 9.00 o'clock train.

(71) If you should see her again, please give her my regards.

#### 2.2.6

#### Quirk et al (1985)

Quirk et al ( 1985:219 ) identify two types of modality in each modal auxiliary, i.e. ' *intrinsic* ' and ' *extrinsic* '. The former has to do with ' *human control over the shaping of events* '. This can be illustrated by texts expressing volitional use. The latter, the extrinsic modality, may be categorised as *incorporating the distinction root/epistemic*. The label ' *root* ' refers to the older sense of the modal i.e. *obligation in the sense of 'must'* , whereas the label ' *epistemic* ' refers to the sense developed later ( i.e. the use of *must* by the sophisticated speaker to assign some degree of likelihood to the proposition ). The two types,

nevertheless, admit the existence of areas of 'overlap' and 'neutrality', in the two senses of the English modal ( obligation and possibility ). What is interesting about Quirk et al's section on 'modality' is their definition of the term as :

*" the manner in which the meaning of a clause is qualified so as to reflect the speaker's judgement of the likelihood of the proposition it expresses being true. "*

*Proposition*, in the above context, is meant to be a statement with a particular opinion or judgement. Indeed, this definition is quite important as it evidently cancels out the supposedly clear-cut distinction upheld by traditional schols of grammar, where almost all verb systems are loosely called ' tenses '. The view based on the new definition lends support to Lakoff's call ( 1970:841 ) for considering the point of view of the speaker of the sentence regarding what she calls *false tenses* including those expressed by modal auxiliaries which curiously tend to shift the focus from the *expression of time* to the *expression of truth*. Indeed, in most cases, the expression of modality is not only dependent on reference to the time of occurence of the event but also on the point of view of the speaker or briefly the lines he/she is thinking along.

### 2.3 Modality in English

From the above brief review of a selected sample of treatments of *modality*

it appears that in English the phenomenon is largely treated as a semantic feature which can be represented by

"... either or both of two elements, one verbal and the other non-verbal  
( where verbal means ' functioning as a verb '.) "  
(cf. Halliday, 1970: 328-38 )

Halliday makes the point that *modality* itself has no tense, but may combine with any of the tenses of the verb. He added that it may, in the process of combining with a tense, acquire the tense itself as in :

(72) She may express her opinion if she wants. (permission.....*any time*)

(73) She may be expressing her opinion now. (possibility.....*at present*)

As the main concern of this work is to compare modalised texts with their approximate translations, it is important that a more practical, text-oriented definition is adopted, bearing in mind the fact that we are looking at contextual translations of modalised sentences. A more realistic position, therefore, will have to be taken \_ a position that would take into account not only modal verbs ( as it would then be relevant only to English ), but also other modal verbs, expressions and texts available to languages other than English, like Arabic, for instance.

Because the expression of *modality* requires more than the presence of modal verbs, one has to take a broader look at it and ultimately make an attempt at re-defining it. Therefore, Rescher's definition (1968:24), based on an



extended system of modalities offered within a framework of logic, will be considered. In this definition, he suggests that when :

*"... a proposition is ...made subject to some further qualification of such a kind that the entire resulting complex is itself once again a proposition, then this qualification is said to represent a modality to which the original proposition is subjected. "*

In the light of such a definition, translation equivalents in Arabic of texts like :

(74) The cat will be hungry *in a minute*.

(75) It will rain *tomorrow*.

and,

(76) The parcel will arrive *next week*.

*which are claimed to express mere futurity without any 'volitional overtone', and hence display no modality in English, will be considered as instances of modality. This is so because one can always argue that an opinion is, indeed, expressed by the speaker of (74-76), which suggests some kind of possibility. Further, in Arabic where many expressions are laden with Islamic overtones, particularly those linked with future prediction ( i.e. whatever happens in future is determined by God, ), examples such as the ones in (75) and (76) may legitimately qualify in Arabic as displaying*

instances of *modality*. This position is undoubtedly in line with the view expressed by Quirk et al (1985) and Quirk et al (1990). In English in Use, (1990:193), they suggested that

" ... *the future is often tinged with modal meanings such as intention and volition.* "

as in

(77) He says he will pay promptly.

They rightly added that a purer expression of future can be achieved by using ' be going to ' or by combining the verb *will* with the *progressive form* in a structure often frowned upon by the purists as pretentious, unnecessary journalese. Consider the following pair of examples :

(78) They *are going to* leave.

(79) She *will be addressing* the conference soon.

As for the question of regarding *negation* as a form of modality, it is worth noting that Kruisinga (1932:527), though we do not totally agree with his claim, has actually referred to *not* and *n't* as adverbs of modality. This view does not appear to be feasible ( see section 3.5, Chapter III) as negation can only be employed as an auxiliary mode of expression, since rather than acting as a qualifying marker of modality, it either transforms

a given text into one with a reverse meaning or one with an affective meaning. The latter may, however, bring it closer to being a modal device if one accepts the fact that such addition is meant to be a form of qualification. Nevertheless, according to Rescher's definition, one may further argue that there are ways of negating in English as well as in Arabic, as we shall see in Chapter III, which may be regarded as ways of employing negation as a symantic system for interacting with and for expressing perhaps some degrees of modality (i.e emphasis, wish...)

#### 2.4 A recent view of modality as expressed by English modals.

Some authors (see, Banks 1983:75) seem to make a distinction between what is a modal category and what is a modal verb in terms of *function* as apposed to *form*. To them, the first

**" expresses attitude to an action or a state represented by a verb. "**

whereas the second is represented by the *mood* in which the verb form is used. But, broadly, modal auxiliary verbs exhibit two types of senses, i.e. *root* and *epistemic*, between which resides an ambiguity. In the root sense, for instance, *can* is generally held to mean 'ability' while epistemically it applies basically to *what is possible*; *may* 'permission' and epistemically 'possibility', and curiously its meaning, according to

Quirk et al (1990:193), varying in accordance with the subject. The modal verb 'must' means '*obligation*' while epistemically it may signal '*possibility*'. Shall and will signal '*futurity*' but they may indicate '*determination*' or '*intention*'. In this sense, shall and will might even imply '*ability*' as a power of '*volition*' on the grounds that it is a requisite of actions, although it may not specifically refer to action. The latter fact is characteristic of can and may ; shall and will in their epistemic senses. That will be demonstrated by the texts in chapter III, wherein *theoretical possibility, necessity* and *futurity* are implied by such auxiliaries in their order of mentioning. The concept *epistemic*, thus appears to suggest that the uses covered by the term involved the exercises of the senses or the intellect. This very quality makes epistemic modality appear, despite what is said about it earlier as a vague term, worthy of cotemplating by the translator. Westney (1986:311) is perhaps right in his tentative remark that it is generally employed

**"to denote the kind of qualification a basic statement like he's right undergoes in expressions such as I think he's right and so on. "**

By basic statement, he means 'an unmodified proposition', or in other words, the proposition before an opinion or a judgement is imposed on it. It is a useful notion that could well apply not only to English but also to Arabic.

However, whether a speaker wishes to express *deontic, epistemic, dynamic modality* etc., or in broad terms *root* or *epistemic* modality. He/she, one may conclude, is ultimately qualifying, in terms of the definition of



modality, etc., or in broad terms *root* or *epistemic* modality, he or she, one may conclude, is ultimately qualifying, in terms of the definition of modality proposed by Rescher, a proposition. In simple terms, he/she is actually trying to get across a different message qualified by his/her new attitude to it.

## 2.5

### Modality in Arabic

Despite the considerable attention given to modality in English, it has remained in MSA and in particular in translation an almost untrodden area of investigation. One major aim of this work is to show that the scope of modality in Arabic is equally broad and to show how modal meanings can be expressed in Arabic where no modal verbs corresponding to English modal verbs are found. Modality in Arabic may be briefly defined as a pragmatico-semantic category, a product of a culturally acquired attitude expressed by the speaker, with the help of a qualifying expression (i.e a formula, a verbal form, a particle etc., ), towards a statement or a proposition embodied in his/ her utterance. In this part of the chapter, some of these expressions will be looked at, and a more detailed study of such devices will be made later in the next chapter.

Mitchell and El-Hassan, in an unpublished University of Leeds manuscript on Arabic modality, speak of a specific message conveyed by the utterance

which does seem to be similar to Rescher's original proposition concept. Their definition, however, throws more light on the nature of modality. They come to the conclusion that it is

*"... a grammatico-semantic category which indicates the degree and type of involvement of the speaker in the message conveyed by the utterance. "*

Their definition can, thus, be seen as a development of Halliday's earlier formulation of modality (1970:335) as

*" ...a form of participation by the speaker in the speech event. Through modality, he associates with the thesis an indication of its status and validity in his own judgement ; he intrudes and takes up a position. "*

Halliday speaks of modality in terms of

*" the speaker's assessment of probability and predictability. "*

His modality, however, requires further qualification. One such modification comes from Pickering (1980:81) who observes that it

*" has to do with attitude adopted by the encoder. "*

By implication, understanding modal meaning entails some type of intralingual translation on the part of the addressee or the reader. Transferring that content into another language will, as a result, involve introducing another type of translation into the process of transfer, i.e. interlingual translation. It should ,therefore be borne in mind that

modality will not always remain outside the process. It does so only when it is inferred. In Arabic, it is inferred as a modalised text consisting of a modifying modal expression ( e.g it may be that... , or I assure you that... ) followed by an unmodified proposition. The inferred type of modality is known in the literature as *epistemic*.

In English as well as in Arabic, *epistemic modality* is essentially bound to the moment of utterance. It appears timeless and so falls outside the tense system. Two forces are seen simultaneously at work ; namely, the reference to occurrence of events and the the fact that the speaker's statements have no temporal point of view. This applies to the following texts and their equivalents in Arabic.

(80) That will be the postman.

Trans. dalika huwa s̄aBī lbarīd.

(81) Those apples will be three for 80 pence.

Trans. yukallifuka dalika ltuffaH 80 pensan.

(82) You must be mad.

Trans. lābudda wa annaka maxbūl.

(83) Did you want anything else ?

Trans. hal araddta šay'an āxar ?

Another serious attempt at studying modality in Arabic has been made by Hany A. Azer in a dissertation entitled The Expression of Modality in Egyptian Colloquial Arabic - its Syntax and Semantics ( Ph.D. London, 1980).\* He has been able to find in the variety of Arabic called Educated Spoken Arabic { ESA for short } some modal signals like /bi-jūz/ *it may be*, /aEtaqidu/ *I believe*. He has also provided an outline of modal expressions, which we think, can also be utilised in the process of providing adequate translation approximations.

One may ask how Mitchell and El-Hassan's definition can be illustrated with respect to Arabic utterances. To answer this question, one only has to look at the following text given in answer to a query about the result of a game of football. The choice between the following modal answers is purely a question of strategy largely dependent on the nature of context of speaking and also the speaker's point of view - two things that need to be considered in any translation. Such a strategy presents itself in Arabic as a modal category, indirectly adding weight to an earlier view of modality advanced by Banks (1983:75) and discussed at the beginning of this section.

(84) ayyu fariqin taEtaqidu bi annahu sayafūzu lyawm ?

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\* Azer provides a fairly detailed account of the syntax of colloquial Egyptian modal expressions and assigns to them the appropriate categories often employed in the semantic description of English modals, such as *basic* and *epistemic* ; *possibility*, *obligation*, *permission*, and *logical inference*.



Trans. Which team do you think will win today ?

Modal answers :

A- sa yafūzu fariqunā lwaṭaniy.  
( or, sawfa yafūzu.....) \*

Trans. Our national team will win.

B- lā budda an yakūna fariqunā lwaṭaniy fa'izan.

Trans. Without doubt, our national team will win.

C- Hatman, sa yafūzu fariquna lwaṭaniy.

Trans. Certainly, our national team will win.

D- qad yafūzu fariquna lwaṭaniy.

Trans. Our national team may win.

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\* In Arabic, the use of future is often marked by the particle 'sawfa', placed immediately before a verb or its shortened form (sa-) which, being a one-letter word in Arabic, cannot stand alone and, therefore, is joined to the verb.

E-      rubbamā faza farīqunā lwaTanīy.

Trans. Our national team might win.

In (A-), we have an inference about the future. In (B-) *logical necessity* is expressed by the speaker whose utterance seems to be characterised by some degree of *certainty*. In (C-), *hypothetical possibility* is expressed whereby the speaker sounds non-committal regarding the truth of the statement. He is seen even less committal in (D-), the *possibility* looks remote and, indeed, unlikely to happen. What the modalised answers [B-D] above have in common is the fact that they all display *unrealised events*. Such events, however, will be realised later in a future time. Arabic, it is to be noted, can express futurity without a future marker; that is, through some concealed future form. \* And though the Arabic verbs in (B-) and (D-) are formally 'present', and the verb in (E-) is formally 'past', the event indicated is a 'future' one. The degrees of remoteness from the proposition as far as the speaker is concerned are only produced by adding modal expressions which act as modifiers to the given propositions. Elaboration on Halliday's definition, in view of the answers given in (84) would seem to be necessary bearing in mind that modality is used also to

\* Concealed future also exists in English. It is characteristic of the English present simple tense ;

He joins the army this summer.

express the speaker's attitude to a remark previously made. A safe and indeed an accurate definition of modality in both Arabic and English would seem, in our view, to be '*a grammatical/pragmatic category* which is used to reflect the speaker/writer's attitude to what he/she is saying or what has actually been said. It indicates a hypothesis or a subjunctive mood but hardly exists in the tense system. It is expressed through modal verbs or modally verbal expressions, like /biSaraHa/ '*frankly*', which do not modify a verb or some part of the sentence but the whole sentence. It is in our view, a subtle process of modifying expressions that can be understood through some situational interpretation based on a shared knowledge of a specific culture. It reflects the mood or attitude of the speaker/writer towards an action already performed or envisaged. It may also reflect the status resulting from such an action. This reflection finds expression in the manner in which a verb or verbal expression is made to convey a subtle variation in the propositional meaning originally intended to present it as a *fact, a possibility, a necessity, an obligation...etc.* This subtle variation enables the speaker or the writer, for that matter, to enhance the overall effect of the utterance or sentence.

Viewed within translation as an overall form of communication, *modality* is but a sub-form of communication strategy for the expression of moods or modes of knowing ( e.g. *being, condition, hypothesis, supposition, wish, speech act,...etc.* ). With a semantic twist, it infringes upon and even takes over the mood territory when the mood expresses hypothesis, supposition or speech act.

A study of modality in translation is, in essence, a study of the semantics of modalised expressions which act in the way suggested above.

Having considered the category *modality*, focusing on it in English and Arabic, particularly on modal expressions whether in de-contextualised or in-context excerpts, we find it necessary to reconcile the current definition in the published literature with one that would suit the aim of the investigation undertaken in the present work. Modality will be taken throughout the study as a qualification or modification of a *proposition* effected by a modal expression in such a manner that a change in the overall meaning is effected \_ a subject that would be demonstrated with examples in the following chapter where, it is hoped, a new practical approach to linguistic analysis will be adopted.



### Chapter Three

#### 3.0            Systematic Presentations :    *Translation Approximations of some Arabic Modal Expressions as rendered in English.*

The aim of this chapter is to show that in producing approximations in terms of form and content in the target text, it is essential to mobilise translation strategies which will ensure a high degree of semantic correspondence between any two modal expressions in two unrelated languages. We would also like in this chapter to look at the implication of these findings for translation theory in general, and in particular consider the ways speakers express attitudes and opinions, and the ways in which other people report such expressed attitudes and opinions, with a view to translating them in a manner compatible with the original context of the source message.

As in English, modality in Arabic is a broad category that is both grammatical and pragmatic. This very fact, we believe, renders modality translatable. We think interlingual equivalence exists between 'like' expressions in them, at the semantic (not at the formal) level and also where functional identity at least can be identified. Structural identity is a non-distinctive and redundant feature. Therefore, before a detailed

demonstration of its relevance to the theory of translation approximation is taken up, it must be examined both at a formal, and at a semantic level in a broad sense that would include the illocutionary level. This is done in the belief with Palmer (1986) that when semantics is used in a wide sense

*"... much of the modal meaning is included in what is sometimes distinguished as pragmatics."*

At the formal level in Arabic, it is found to be essential as a first step to draw possible distinctions among the formal devices of modality available in the language so that categories may be set up and the provision of English translation approximations may be facilitated. At the semantic level, Arabic modal expressions or, more accurately, expressions that signal modality will not be examined specifically against the well-established categories of modality characteristic of the English modals as the latter categories themselves remain difficult to define. Categories typically Arabic, involving particles and expressions functioning as adjectives, verbs etc., will be illustrated. Yet, formally due to lack of a clearly defined category of modal auxiliary verbs in MSA, they would be looked at from the point of view of their capacity as expressions with the ability to modify propositions in Rescher's broad definition of modality (1968: 24-26) \* and to provide semantically

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\* In his definition a proposition is presented by a complete, self-contained statement which, taken as a whole, will be true or false: The cat is on the mat. See full definition on page (72) of this work.

parallel approximations that indicate the speaker's attitudes.

Arabic modal expressions are qualifiers, differing from one another in their syntactic nature; hence, each qualifies the verb and the proposition in its own peculiar way. The type of modality expressed denotes the kind of qualification undergone by a basic statement such as :

(1) huwa marīDun.

Trans. He is ill.

in such texts as

(2) aEtaqīdu annahu (anna + huwa) marīDun.

Trans. I think (that) he is ill.

(3) lā budda annahu marīDun.

Trans. He must be ill

(4) rubbama yakunu (huwa) marīDan.

Trans. He might be ill.

Arabic, for instance, makes use of a distinctive class, called by Arabic

grammarians 'al-nawāsīx' (cf. Owens, 1984:32). This class consists of modifying verbs, e.g. auxiliary verb /kāna/ 'to be', the substantive verb /Zanna/ 'believe' and the adverbial particles of various origins like /inna/ 'verily', 'truly' and /laʿalla/ 'perhaps', 'maybe'. Al-nawāsīx are characterised by three criteria :

- a. They can be added before virtually any normal sentence.
- b. They function as temporal operators.
- c. They change the syntactic relations in modalised sentences.

Examples are :

(5)      kāna Zaydun ʿĀqilan.

Trans. Zayd was intelligent.

In (5), /kāna/ causes the subject of the proposition / Zayd ʿĀqil / ' Zayd intelligent ' in the accusative case, whereas, in (6) below

(6)      Zanantu Zaydan ʿĀqilan.

Trans. I thought Zayd (was) intelligent.

The suffixed pronominal /-tu/ marks the subject of the sentences while the



two-element predicate is in the accusative case, as an object and an object compliment respectively. This is due to the fact that the verb /Zanna/ belongs to the specific class of 'bi-transitive' verbs. In contrast to /kāna/ , /inna/ , it is used to govern not the subject of the sentence but of the proposition in the accusative case, and govern the predicate in the nominative case as in (7) and (8) :

(7) inna Zaydan <sup>—</sup>Eaḡilun.

Trans. Verily, Zayd is intelligent.

(8) laEalla Zaydan <sup>—</sup>Eaḡilun.

Trans. Perhaps, Zayd is intelligent.

A modalised proposition in Arabic may correspond either to ' *reality* ' as in (7) or to a ' *conception* ' present in the mind of the speaker at the moment of utterance as in (8).

In the latter sense, the situation represented is an ' *imaginary* ' rather than a ' *factual* ' one. Here, of course, the translator has to pay due attention to the nature of the context and also the speaker's point of view. Note, for instance :

(9) laEallahu barī' <sup>—</sup>un.

Trans. Perhaps, he's innocent.

(10) rubbamā lā yaEudū ilā faransā.

Trans. He might not return to France.

(11) rubbamā kanā qad qutila.

Trans. He could (might) have been killed.

According to the speaker, no definite conclusion can be drawn from either (9) or (10). Example (10) clearly indicates that the outcome is not a desirable one while (11) represents a case where something which could have taken place, did not do so, to the relief of those concerned including the speaker.

To sum up, propositions are modalised in Arabic by modal expressions that seem to fall, in the main, into three major categories of markers that subsume *lexical verbs, nouns, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, and particles*. \*

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\* Particles in many languages as it has been shown by studies of sentence meaning, " ...are not a unique phenomenon, but rather elements of an exclusive system of verbal expressions with epistemic meaning. " See Hermann (1986:548). 'Particles' is, as J.R. Smart (1986:86) believes, " ... a handy term for the odds and ends of a language, which do not fit into any of the main categories (verb, noun etc.,), Arabic has many such short words, some are virtually meaningless (but habitually used), and others reflect the meaning of the phrase and sentence quite significantly. "

### 3.1 Verbal Expressions

' Verbal ', here, is taken in the sense of 'involving verbs'. Modal uses of the Arabic verb vary between obvious cases, and less obvious cases such as those involving aspect or adverbs of intensification, as we shall see later in the chapter. One of the important categories that may be studied under *verbal expressions* of modality is that with performative force like /anSaHuka/ ' I advise you '. /urāhinuka/ ' I bet you', etc. Such expressions are lexically ( inherently ) modal. Performative verbs and expressions, it must be borne in mind, are used in performative sentences where, according to Comrie ( 1985:35)

*" ... the action described by the sentence is performed by uttering the sentence in question. "*

They are, in other words, sentences the very utterance of which constitutes the act itself, as in :

(12) I promise to pay you ten Dinars.

Trans. aEiduka bidafEi Ea<sup>✓</sup>sarata danānī<sup>̄</sup>r laka.

On the other hand, from the examples cited below, it would seem that such sentences are not used to indicate whether something is true or false, but to reflect particular modal commitments on the part of the speaker(s) ,coupled with some modification of his/her/their proposition. Such performative texts in Arabic contain a first person verbal form which,

unlike in English where the verb is temporally present, is not exclusively imperfective. In Arabic it can be either a two-element or single element form embodying an implicit first person pronoun and a perfective. These two instances may be graphically represented ,for example, as :

(a) / (anā) adEu llāha / ' I beseech God '

or

(b) / (anā) daEawtu llāha / 'I beseech (besought) God' ; ' I pray (prayed) to God '

The explicit independent pronoun is rarely used by native speakers of Arabic unless they want to sound emphatic. Otherwise, it sounds somehow tautological, sometimes, in Arabic. This category of modal expressions includes :

/ urāhinuka / ' I bet you... '

/ aEiduka / ' I promise you ... '

/ uDminu laka / ' I guarantee to you ... '

/ uTam'inuka / ' I assure you ... '

/ aqtariHu Balayka / ' I suggest (that) you ... '



/ atawassallu ilayka /        ' I beg you ... '

/ anSaHuka /                    ' I advise you ... ' \*

What is remarkable about *performative expressions* is their inherent quality of indicating that the speaker is the source of some degree of *deontic* ' permission ' or ' obligation ', the two important categories to be discussed later.

Note that the modal expressions of the type exemplified above are often followed by a noun or a second person pronominal suffix affixed to a preceding preposition and ,thus, remains structurally associated with it. The resulting construction is conjoined to the following statement by the subordinate conjunction / *anna* /which is prefixed by the preposition / *bi-* / ' with '

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\* In English, an indirect form ' i.e., *You are advised...* ' would be more tolerated and, hence, preferred in such a context. According to Wierzbicka (1985:150), in English, for socio-cultural considerations, 'advice' would normally be formulated more tentatively. Consider his modal examples :

1. If I were you, I would tell him the truth.
2. Tell him the truth \_ I would.
3. Why don't you tell him the truth ? I think it would best.
4. Why not tell him the truth ? I think this might be best
5. May be you ought to tell him the truth.
6. Do you think it might be a good idea to tell him the truth ?

In introducing a statement, the previously mentioned performative expressions are employed to perform the task of modifying the propositional content of the statement. To illustrate :

(13) adEū llāha bi'an tajtāza l'imtiHān

Trans. I pray to God that you will pass the exam.

(14) 'urāhinuka bi'anna lfariqu lskotlandi sayafūz.

Trans. I bet you that the Scottish team will win.

(15) aBiduka bi'ann tastarjiEa nuqūdika.

Trans. I promise you that you will get your money back.

(16) uTam'inuka (u'akkidu laka) bi'anna SiHHataka jayyidatun.

Trans. I assure you that your health is fine.

(17) uDminu laki (lit. to you [f.] ) bi'anna mitla hādihī l'axTā'u  
sawfa lan taHdata marratan uxra.

Trans. I guarantee to you that such mistakes shall not occur again.

(18) uSirru Ealā Buqubatihī (lit. his punishment)

Trans. I insist that he (should) be punished

It is important to note that a *free translation* such as the one in (17) will have to take into account Boyd and Thorne's remark about the relevance of using ' *shall*' in this context, in its promissory, emphatic sense that is combined with a deontic element of 'obligation' (see Boyd and Thorne, 1969). The attached 'obligation' is designed to show that it is the speaker who is responsible for making the moral assertion and who, in effect, has actual control over the event.

In line with Boyd and Thorne, Antinucci and Parisi (1971:37) point out that the subject of the surface sentence seems to show responsibility as to the 'promise' implicitly made and the 'obligation' implied is solely the speaker's. The reading of (17) would, therefore, be something like

(19) I give you my word that such mistakes shall not occur.

This could possibly yield in Arabic a translation approximation like :

Trans. wallāhi ( lit. by the oath of God ) sawfa lan taHduṭa mitlu  
hadihi l'xTa'.

The full /wallāhi/ expression has actually undergone a process of *elision* in which the performative verb /uqsimu/ ' I swear ' has been dropped. Thus, the performative verb may be included when it is

followed by the preposition /bi-/to :

(20) uqsimu billāhi anna.... .

Trans. I swear to God that...

Further, translators need to be aware that *modality*, as far as verbs are concerned, is a secondary, yet very important, function as opposed to the primary function (e.g. 'futurity', 'ability', etc). This secondary function is one that is only assumed for the purpose of satisfying some contextual requirements (cf. Lakoff, 1972:910). Functions like the 'performative' and the 'optative' are socio-linguistic devices serving a very similar function.. Consider, for example, the verb form /qabila/ 'accepted' (lit. *He accepted*) as unbound contextually first and then when it is used in a social context, say, of a 'wedding ceremony' in the expression /qabiltu/ 'I accepted', the past meaning is ruled out as *out of context*, since no reference to the past is actually intended. Rather, the situation requires presumably a 'present' state of mind on the part of the speaker and the hearer.

Impersonal constructions may also be treated as a verbal sub-category. Such constructions are of the *objective, hypothetical type*. They consist mainly of modal passives like /yuHattam/ or /yataHattam/ 'it is obligatory that', /yuxsā/ 'it is feared that', /yusmaH/ '.... is allowed', /yuftaraD/ 'it is assumed that', followed by the complimentizer /anna(nā)/ as shown in the examples below :



(21) yuxsā<sup>v̄</sup> an yaSila lTabību muta'axxiran.

Trans. It is feared that the doctor will arrive late.

(22) YuftaraDu an takūna hunā l'an.

Trans. It is assumed that she should have been here by now.

(23) YuEtaqadu annahu lmaSdaru lwaHid.

Trans. It is believed that he is the only source.

(24) YusmaHu laka bi'an tataHaddata.

Trans. You are allowed to talk.

Under verbal constructions, one may include the construction /lā budda/ (lit. *there is no avoiding*) 'inevitably', which is an adverbial. Though originally an adverbial, it has, in time, acquired a verbal force. It may be used with a dependent clause marked by the particle /an/ \* that is

\* /an/ is a particle whose grammatical function is to introduce NP complements. Semantically it has no content of its own. This explains why it is often optionally deleted; particularly, in dialectal Arabic:

(A) lā budd nišūfu, (Cyrenican spoken dialect) 'We must see him now.'

(B) lāzim tiqrāha zayn, (Iraqi spoken dialect) 'You must read it carefully.'

It also explains why forms like the dialectal /lāzim/ and the compound /la budd/, both functioning syntactically as verbs, at least, in some Arabic dialects, have often been mistakenly regarded as modal auxiliaries, in the English sense, in most works dealing with Arabic modal expressions.

suffixed by the subject of the nominal constructions, which immediately follows the particle as in (35).

Worth mention, here, is the fact that the shift from the verb / *taḡhaba* / 'go' (lit. you go) as used, for example, in (27) and (28) into the active participle from / *ḡāhib* / as in (33) changes the semantic function of the modal. The same phenomenon occurs in conjoined structures and passive forms involving modals where the lexical verb is transposed to a verbal noun. (See Emery, 1987:63)

(25) *li ru'yati māḡa imkāniyyati 'aw wujūbi taxfiḡihā.*

Trans. to see the extent of willingness (lit. extent of ability), or desirability to reduce it.

(26) *tawajjaba waḡEu.....*

Trans. It was necessary to place (lit. placing)... .

But, in the main, as far as verbal expressions like the literary / *yajūzu* / 'it is probable'; / *yajibu* / or / *yalzimu* / 'it is necessary', / *yanbaḡi* / or / *yanbaḡi* (Eala) / 'it behoves <lit. upon>'; / *yataEayyanu* / or / *yataEayyanu* (Eala) / 'ought to', / *lā budda* / 'there is no avoiding', etc., are concerned, they are followed by / *an* / with the imperfective form. the exception to this is the colloquial modal / *lāzim* / ' (it is) necessary as in (27) :

(27) (inta) lāzim taxud takṣī.\*

Trans. You (m.) must take a taxi.

(28) yanbaḡī (Ealayka) an tadhaba l'ān.

Trans. It behoves you to go now.

(29) yajibu (yalzimu) an tadhaba l'ān.

Trans. It is necessary for you to go now.

As demonstrated in the above examples , the modal constructions can all be used with an imperfective form of the main verb. \*\*

(30) lā budda an yakūna ḡalika l'Eunwān biEaynihi.

Trans. That must be the very address.

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\* The form /yalzan/ is derived from the verb /lazima/ which is a state verb often translated as 'to be necessary '. See El-Ghobashy et al's Get By in Arabic (1994:50).

\*\* The Arabic verb forms basically fall into three types : the *perfective*, the *imperfective*, and the *jussive*. The perfective, however, should not be taken to mean 'past tense' in the English sense. 'past tense' itself is a controvesial concept as " *completion is not part of its denotative meaning although it is an implication often associated with the past tense in many contexts.* " ( cf. Riddle, 1980:267 )

(31) yajūzu laka an tajlusa l'an.

Trans. You may (you are allowed to) sit down now.

(32) yajūzu an yuEqada l'jtimaEu gadan.

Trans. The meeting may be held tomorrow.

(33) lā budda an yakūna dahiban l'an.

Trans. He must be going now.

It is important to remember that the modal constructions /lā budda/ can also assist in bringing about the intended content of *logical conclusion*. However, logical conclusions can be reached only if a shared body of knowledge exists between both speaker and auditor, or if a regressive sort of contextual extension, when translating, is made available. The expression /lā budda/ can be used to express this semantic category, provided that one of these two conditions is met. Consider example (34) where the particle /qad/ is used to add the sense of 'just'. Particularly note in the extended text in (35) the effect of the use of the modal expressions /lā budda/ and /qad/ :

(34) qad xasirū lmubārātū.

Trans. They have (just) lost the match.



(35) lā budda annahum qad Eādū min isbānya.

Trans. They must have returned from Spain.

Example (35) shows that the logical conclusion arising from the epistemic use of /lā budda/ may readily be inferred if, for instance, (34) is extended to include a *back reference* as in (36) :

(36) xasirū lmubārāt fī isbānya qabla yawmayn.

Trans. They lost the match in Spain two days ago.

That, of course, would reepresent a piece of knowledge shared by the speaker and the addressee(s). The assumption in the back reference (36) indicates that they share the knowledge that if the team, in question, loses, it is required to return, but it is expected to stay on if it wins. Without such shared knowledge of the relation between the result of the game and the team's return, (35) could be interpreted differently. It could well be translated literally at the expense of losing some of its intended meaning. The presence of the particle /qad/ in (35) is approximately equivalent to the presence of /kāna/ 'to be' in the embedded proposition, which constitutes the *inference* itself. Note the following dialectal example from Egyptian colloquial Arabic where the presence of /kāna/ is obviously part of the structure of the text :

(37) lā budd annahum kānu Eādū min isbānya.

A sub-category of verbal expressions that is worthy of consideration is the one subsuming verbs like /amkana/ 'enabled', /tamakkana/, /istaEāna/ , /qadara/ all meaning ' was able ', etc., which express *physical ability* in Arabic :

(38) wa axīran istaTāEa an yaksura lraqma lqiyāsī.

Trans. He was finally able to break the record.

### 3.2 Adjectival expressions

As far as modal expressions in Arabic are concerned, this broad category is by far the most productive. It subsumes various prepositional and partial constructions. This sub- category is used in MSA to convey the sense of *obligation/necessity*. It often expresses an objective type of the *epistemic modality* in contrast to verbal expressions like /aEtaqidu/ ' I think ' ; ' I believe ' which is of a subjective epistemic type. This gloss-like sub-category consists of the preposition /min/ ' from ' plus a definite adjective which can be modified by an intensifier : \*

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\* In Egyptian colloquial Arabic, it is used without /min/ as in;

e.g il'aHsan innak tib'a tis'al ikkunsarī lannā yijī yuTlub ittazākīr.

Trans. You had better ask the ticket inspector when he comes to check the tickets.

( See T.F Mitchell's Colloquial Arabic, 1973:133)

- a. mina lwājibi                      *it is incumbent*
- b. mina llāzimi (jiddan)              *it is (quite) necessary*
- c. mina lDarūriyyī (jiddan)          *it is (quite) essential*
- d. mina l'ajdari                      *it is most appropriate*

It should , however, be mentioned at this point that such forms are but 'toned down' senses of 'obligation' and 'moral duty' (necessity), often approaching the 'sense' expressed in English by ought to. The use of the preposition /min/ is originally intended to show that the speaker is not in fact insisting on the auditor's complying with the command. Also, it would be fair to say that both the full and the shortened constructions with /min/ can modify the propositions in the sentences they introduce :

(39)    mina lDarūriyyī ( Ealaynā 'upon us' )    an nuEīda qirā'ati ilrisāla.

Trans. It is essential ( for us) to read the letter again.

(40)    Mina l'ajdari bika an tusriEa.

Trans. It would be more appropriate for you to make haste.

On the same pattern, Arabic has built many forms that function as modal qualifiers like /mina lmuHtamal/ ' it is possible, probable ' ; /mina lmu'ammal/ ' it is hoped that ' ; / mina lmu'sif / 'it is regretted that' ;

/mina lmutawaqqaE/ ' it is expected that ', etc.

### 3.3 Nominal expressions

This category is basically that of modal expressions of the type consisting of particles like /hunāka/ or, /hunālika/ ' there is , there are '. Such particles have an existential meaning and can be followed by a noun like /iHtimāl/ ' possibility '. ( Diem, 1974 : 446 )

Consider the following :

(41) tammata iHtimāl (Da'il) anna l<sub>t</sub>alja sayasquTu qarīban.

Trans. There is a (remote) possibility that snow will fall shortly.

Another type involving prepositional phrases and noun phrases may also be subsumed under this category. Examples belonging to this category often have a preposition like /bi-/ ' in ' or ' with ', /fī/ ' in ' , or /dūn/ ' without ' and generally followed by a noun, though they may consist of a noun only, used adverbially.

Each of such expressions may qualify as a sentence adverbial that is not an integral part of the sentence, yet is capable of becoming part of its modalised structure. The common factor among such adverbials, it seems, is



the fact that each is capable of expressing some degree of 'possibility'. Such groups of adverbials, often consisting of a preposition and a noun include /bilta'kīd/ 'certainly', /fī ra'yī/ 'in my opinion', /dūna sakk/ 'without doubt', and sometimes only a noun with the Arabic nunation ending as in /Hattman/ \* 'inevitably' or as in :

(42) TaEana xaSmahu TaEnan Hatta lmawt.

Trans. He *stabbed* his enemy *to death*.

### 3.4 The Semantics of Arabic modal expressions

So far, modal expressions in MSA have been dealt with, in the main, as grammatical categories. But since *modality* as a notion is primarily semantic/pragmatic, a translator should be able to look for and identify the type of modal content conveyed by the modal index (marker, expression), or by a context, paying attention to the likely presence of adverbials which help in the shaping of the modal meaning intended.

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\* This is a favourite device of Arabic which involves the use of nominals and makes up for its lack of adverbs 'in the English sense'. The phenomenon highlighted by J.R. Smart (1986:203) in Teach yourself Arabic has, more or less, a parallel in English as in the Biblical "They rejoiced a great rejoicing.", which he regards as meaning, in fact, 'They rejoiced greatly.'

Broadly, modal indexes in Arabic are used by the speaker to show his attitudes towards the proposition embedded in his utterance. Such attitudes may be conveyed in different ways by such culturally acquired indexes. Whatever the number or form of these expressions, they seem to us to fall, in terms of expressing modality, under four major and two related semantic categories. These categories are used by speakers to display, as will be seen in this chapter, different semantic functions which every translator has to consider carefully :

3.4.1      *Possibility*

3.4.2      *Permission*

3.4.3      *Obligation*

3.4.4      *Logical inference*

3.4.5      *Condition*

3.4.6      *Hope/wish*

A controversial semantic form which appears to be inseparable from both ' *possibility* ' and ' *logical inference* ' is predictability. This, itself, is a *future inference* that implies, among other things, a *possibility*. The categories of *possibility* and *logical inference* are both determined by the speaker's epistemic knowledge of the state of affairs. In that sense, the

category may be conceived of as a broad one, very aptly termed *epistemic modality*. Consider the following extract from a newspaper article entitled ' *Politics of the Long Haul* ' published in the *Independent* of the 6th November, 1991 : "...the U.S pledge as an honest broker must be seen by the parties as a threat as well as a promise. "

Unlike *possibility* the semantic categories *permission* and *obligation* are largely dependent on identifying a *deontic source*. Therefore, they may be subsumed under a broader category of deontic modality. The last three categories, *condition* and *hope/wish* will, as we shall see later in the chapter, display features that would qualify them as strategies for expressing 'epistemic modality'.

#### 2.4.1

#### Possibility

In MSA a number of modal markers expressing possibility may be distinguished. The variety includes verb and adverb expressions such as 'particles', 'prepositional phrases', and 'existential phrases' that all behave in conjunction with other linguistic elements of the sentence as epistemic modal auxiliaries. The notion of '*possibility*' which is basically used of things and situations that can exist, happen or be done, like many semantic concepts, is difficult to delimit and consequently define. Therefore, one tends to agree with Householder (1971:92-3) that it ought to be viewed in terms of a scale which extends from the *barely imaginable* to the *almost inevitable*. This simply points out the fact that,

in practice, they are not easy to establish, let alone define. However, it is essential for the translator to note that context is always the final arbiter on which the interpretation is based as, for instance, in :

(43) That will be our neighbour.

Trans. dalika huwa jārūna.

(44) That must be our neighbour.

Trans. dalika huwa jārūna bilta'kīd.

Text (43) seems to imply that checking is necessary, as in the perceived addition :

(45) I will go and see.

In contrast, (44) may well imply confidence and thus a strong *possibility*, very often expressed in Arabic by such modal adverb markers as /bilta'kīd/, /Hatman/, etc. In English, the message of possibility in examples like (43) above, if it is uttered, for instance, as a verbal reaction to a knock on the door, will be something like the implicit formula 'excuse me'. Such reaction seems to give credence to the possibility in the statement. The situation does arise in Arabic and therefore draws its equivalence from the shared epistemic knowledge. Further, while the possibility appears in (43) as a weak type backed only by the speaker's natural expectation, it



becomes confirmed in English by the use of the modal *must*, while in Arabic that confirmation is made by using the modal adverbial. The Arabic expression /bilta'kīd/, like *must*, implies that no checking is needed.

Among the modal expressions approaching the *barely imaginable* end of the scale, we find in Arabic the functional particle /qad/ which is used with an imperfective to convey a non-completive sense approximate to that which is conveyed by the English modal *may* in its sense of 'possibility'. This particular use of /qad/ is apparently intended to convey to the auditor a non-committal attitude like *doubt* and *uncertainty*, concerning the truth value of the propositions on the part of the speaker. Here, the attitudinal /qad/ displays modality through the speaker's covert attitude which is expressed by the use of a contrastive accent, or intonation :

(46) qad yakūnu lšāhidu Sādiqan.

Trans. The witness may be telling the truth.

Another modal index representing cases at this end of the scale, (i.e. indicating a more remote possibility), is the particle /rubbamā/ 'might'\*

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\* This bears some close resemblance to the French use. French, generally, translates this element of 'possibility' by using 'peut-être' with the appropriate verb tense :

Text : It might snow.

Trans. il va peut-être neiger.

as in (47) where there is more suspicion than the one implied in the use of /qad/ of *possibility*, particularly when used with the perfective as in (48) where a certain degree of belief in the possibility is implied :

(47) rubbama kana lsaḥidu Ṣadiqan.

Trans. The witness might be telling the truth.

(48) Easā an yūṢiluna aḤaduhum bil sayyāra.

[previous back-up : Haqqan abtada'ta tuṢbiḤa taqīlan yā waladī lṢagīr]

Trans. May be someone will give us a lift.

[previous back-up: You're indeed getting heavy, my little boy]

A different epistemic meaning is possible with /rubbama/ 'might' which expresses a lesser degree of *doubt about a possibility* if used with an imperfective form of /kāna/ as in (49). Here, a *hypothetical possibility*, which needs to be attested, is expressed :

(49) rubbama kānati lmākinatu Eāṭilatan min qabl.

Trans. The machine might have been out of order already.

Should the Arabic speaker have some doubt mixed with expectation about the truth of what he/she is saying, the verb /laEalla/ 'may', 'may perhaps' is

used as in :

(50) laEallaka tajida lfilma mumtiEan.

Trans. You may perhaps find the film interesting.

as for the almost inevitable end of the scale, it is represented by modal expressions like the phrase / bi Sūratin šibhi mu'akkadatin / (lit. in a semi-certain manner ) ' almost certainly ' as in (51) ,

(51) sa ya'tī bi Sūratin šibhi mu'akkadatin.

Trans. He will almost certainly come.

or by /qad/ as in (48), and /laqad/ as in (57) and (58).

The finite particle /qad/ is, therefore, yet another modal expression that is used to express ' certainty '. It is, however, a particle that can serve various functions. According to the context it is used in, it may mean now, indeed, or already. It can, for instance, be used to emphasise that the action has certainly finished. In fact, it

*"... is really finished just at the moment of speaking. "*  
( See Wright, 1974:3 )

Its use is often associated with the present perfect to emphasise the

propositional content where, for instance, /qad kataba/ is glossed in English as a *recent past*, i.e. the present perfect 'he *has written*'

( cf. Comrie, 1976:81 )

The particle /qad/ can transfer a suffixed perfective verb with a dynamic aspect into one with a stative aspectual value, and thus no definite temporal value ( cf. Beeston, 1970:78). That value leaves no doubt as to the *certainty* of the utterance.

(52) qad 'anhaw muHadaṭatīhim tawwan.

Trans. They have just finished their discussions.

as opposed to 'anhaw' ' *They finished...*'

It may be of interest , at this point, to mention in passing that the verbal particle /qad/ is often used initially, but when it enters into combination with the auxiliary verb /kāna/ *to be*, we have the aspectual expression /kāna qad/ where /kana/ precedes /qad/. The new form often functions as a verbal modal with an aspectual nature.

(52) kānat (f) qad daxalat, Hinamā waSala lSaHafiyyūn.

Trans. She had already gone into the hall, when the journalists arrived.



It is equally interesting to note that if /qad/ is followed by /kāna/, the verb /kāna/ can no longer be regarded as an auxiliary verb. Therefore, it will be treated as a main verb ; the expression /qad kāna/ is rendered as *has been* where /kāna/ is given the same treatment as say the perfective /kataba/ in /qad kataba/ (he) *has written*.

As it has been demonstrated in (47), /qad/ may be used before a perfective to express the *completion* or *certainty of action* and can sometimes be left untranslated. Very often the certainty and the emphasis are reinforced in Arabic by prefixing the particle /la-/ to /qad/, hence, the new particle /laqad/. ( See Cantarino, 1974:69)

Thus, in (53) and (54), we have :

(53) laqad mātu

Trans. Indeed, they have died.

or They died.

(54) laqad kāna Ealaykum an turājiEū lTabīb.

Trans. You ought to have seen the doctor.

The particle /laqad/ emphasizes in (54) the *necessity* and the ' *moral obligation* implied in / kāna Ealaykum / ' *you ought to* ' .

Supporting evidence comes from the Holy Qur'ān, though examples like (53) and (54) are very characteristic of MSA usage. Qur'ānic texts with /laqad/ are not very much different. \* It is very easy to see in them that the aim is primarily to emphasize a 'certainty'

(55) laqad ji'tum šay'an iddan.

(Chapter 19, verse 89, Maryam 'Mary')

Trans. Indeed, ye have put forth  
A thing most monstrous.

The emphatic device /laqad/ is made stronger when it is prefixed by the particle /wa/' and '. Here, a high degree of 'certainty' is achieved.

The Holy Qur'ān abounds in such texts :

(56) Wa laqad xalaqnā l'insāna min sulālatin min Tin.

( Chapter 23, Verse 12, Al-Mu'minūn, *The believers*

Trans. Man we did create  
From a quintessence (of clay)

- (57) wa laqad jaʿalnā fil samā'i burūjan  
wa zayyannāhā lil nāDirīn.  
( Chapter 15, Verse 16, Al-Hijr, *The Rocky Tract* )

Trans. It is we who have set out  
The Zodiacal Signs in the heavens

The particle /qad/ can also be used at the beginning of the text to indicate a ' possibility ' that amounts to a reality :

- (58) qad 'aflaHa lmu'minūn.  
( Chapter 23, Verse 1, Al-Mu'minūn, *The Believers* )

Trans. The believers must ( eventually ) win through

A type of certainty in MSA that has already become a reality can be indicated by an entity consisting of /kāna/ and the particle /qad/ to highlight a reality of remote concern as can be seen in (59) below :

- (59) sayajtamiEu lyawwma bilsayyidi wayt lil tabāHuṭu biša'ni iTlāqi  
sarāHa lsujana'i. wa kāna lsayyidu wayt qad waSala ilā Bayrūti  
'ams.

Trans. He meets today with Mr. Waite to discuss the release of  
prisoners. Mr Waite had arrived in Beirut yesterday.

Thus, as a particle which is capable of highlighting background information against which further facts are presented /qad/ may be regarded as language specific.

To the category of ' *possibility* ', one may add a special semantic sub-category. It is represented in MSA by the construction ( *kāna* + the future particle *sa-* + the imperfective form of the main verb ) as in the following newspaper text (60) :

(60) *fī* Eamī 1942, *kāna* l'amīru Husayn, wal ladī *kana* sayuSbiHu lmalika Husayn, maliku l'urdun...

Trans. In 1942, Prince Hussein who was to become King Hussein of Jordan...

The Arabic construction / *kana sayuSbiHu* / may well be regarded as somewhat comparable with, or more accurately, sharing much of the modal meaning of the English modal construction ( *would + have + infinitive* ) as in :

(61) *law kana qad qaddama la kana sayuSbiHu surTiyyan.*

Trans. If he had applied, he would have become a policeman.

However, one has to bear in mind that the compound past tense / *kana sayuSbiHu* / ' *was to become* ' which looks at the future from a point in



the past is possible only in contexts where the utterer is absolutely certain that what he /she is talking about is not a mere speculation.

To ' *the almost inevitable* ' type of possibility, we may add the construction /mina lmu'akkad/ ' it is certain ', as in (62) ; /bi Sūratin šibhi mu'akkadatin/ ' *almost certainly* as in (63) ; the negative phrases like / lā šakka / ' *there is no doubt* ', or / bi dūni šakk / ' *without doubt* ' as in (64), (65) and (66) where such Arabic constructions express what is probably and indeed very likely or even expected to happen :

(62) mina lmu'akkadi annahā Ealā Haqq.

Trans. It is certain that she is right.

(63) laqad adraka lmuHāSarūn bi Sūratin šibhi mu'akkadatin bi anna madīnatahum sa tasquTu.

Trans. The besieged realised that their city would almost certainly fall.

(64) lā<sup>X</sup> sakka annahum sa yugādirūna ġadan.

Trans. There is no doubt that they will leave tomorrow.

(65) al šurTatu qādiratun dūna šakkin Ealā muEalajati lmawqif.

Trans. The police should be able to handle the situation.

(66) anta jā'iEun dūna šakki, l'ān.

Trans. You ought to be hungry now.

The *almost inevitable* end of the scale may also be expressed in Arabic by performative verbs like /uqsimu/ as in the construction /uqsimu billāhī/ ' I swear to God '

(67) uqsimu billāhī ra'aytuhum.  
( or, qasaman billāhī ... ) \*

Trans. I swear (to God) I saw them.

The use of the performative /uqsimu/ in (67), as is the case in similar contexts, constitutes an oath. An oath in Arabic as defined by the Qur'an is ' an invocation of the name of God or of some deity or object held sacred by the person using the invocation', to witness the truth of a solemn affirmation' and to emphasise that affirmation. It is used to signal the end of a possibility which has become a reality from the utterer's point of view. However, expressions of oath containing the very words *religion* and *Lord* are freely employed in Arabic, and that

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\* Originally / uqsinu qasaman / ' lit, I swear a swearing ' / do swear,

See also footnote, P.104.

includes some of its dialects, such as the Lebanese. Here, one finds them in such expressions as /bi dīnī/ ' by my religion ' and /bi rabbī/ (lit. by my Lord) ' by God '

Within the semantic category of ' *possibility* ', we have along the area extending between the two ends of the scale, other expressions and verbs of mental process like :

/atwaqqaEu/                      I expect

/yutawaqqaEu/                      It is expected

/mina lmutawaqqaEu/              It is expected

as in (68) :

- (68)    (a) atawaqqaEu                      )  
         (b) yutawaqqaEu qarīban        )        anna ljawwa sa yastaEdilu.  
         (c) mina lmutawaqqaEi           )

Trans. (a) I expect that the weather will improve soon.  
         (b) It is expected that the weather will improve soon.  
         (c) The weather is expected to improve soon.

Similarly, the same goes for :

/aEtaqidu/                I believe  
 /yuEtaqadu/             It is believed  
 /mina lmuEtaqadi/      It is believed

and also /atSawwaru/ ' I imagine ', /yutaSawwaru/. ' It is imagined ',  
 /mina lmutaSawwari/ ' It is imagined ', and /fī taSawwirī/ ' In my  
 opinion ', etc :

(69)      fī taSawwirī anna lmuškila bāligatu ltaEqīd.

Trans. In my opinion, the problem is quite complicated.

And :

/mina lmumkin/ ' It might be possible', /YuHtamalu/ ' It is probable ',  
 /hunālika tammata iHtimāl/ ' There is a probability ', ' etc., as in  
 (70), (71) and (72) :

(70)      mina lmumkin an aEbura lbuHayrata sābiHan.

Trans. I could swim all the way across the lake. \*

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\* Quirk et al (1985) believe that 'could', here, may be paraphrased by constructions, one of which is 'be possible to'. " The possibility of an action, " they say, " is due to some skill or capability on the part of the subject referent. "



(71) yuHtamalu ( hubūTu [n.] ) an tahbuTa lDarā'ibu sarīEan.

Trans. Rates might go down quickly.

(72) hunālika tammata iHtimālin li Zuhūri Ealāmati taHassun.

Trans. There is a possibility that signs of improvement may appear.

Here, the translation gives the sense of ' *it could be possible for me to swim ...* '. But contrast (70) with (73) :

(73) kāna mina lmumkin an aEbura lbuHayrati sābiHan.

Trans. It was possible for me to cross the lake.

But if a wider context is provided, where it is possible to infer a hypothetical interpretation. i.e. *unfulfilled possibility* from (72). based on awareness of a suppressed conditioned like :

(74) law kāna ljawwu Hasanan..... .

Trans. If the weather had been fine.... .

then, the translator will need to render it as :

Trans. I could have swum all the way across the lake.

Deliberate questions (or rhetorical questions) \* also appear to have a special kind of emphatic possibility - expressing functions. They have, thus, it appears, acquired a well-defined rhetorical nature. Rhetorical questions do not basically ask for information. Their main function, it seems, is to convey information about the speaker's attitudes and opinions. Questions are treated as rhetorical when they are merged with an implicit (built-in) modal answer. In English as well as in Arabic, though of a different form in the latter, the resulting text is very often an indirect one :

(75) ( yā turā..... ) hal yadrī Eammā yataHadat ?

Trans. Does he know what he is talking about ? ( ..... I wonder).

(76) atasā'alu in kāna yadrī Eammā yataHaddatu ?

Trans. I wonder if he knows what he is talking about ?

the reason why such questions may be regarded as devices for expressing modality, without necessarily employing the so-called well established modal auxiliaries particularly in English, is the fact that modal

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\* Rhetorical questions are questions that do not require answers. For various functions of such questions, see Barnwell (1974:103-6). Also see John Lyons (1977:756) for further clarification.

expressions in them seem to express some degree of doubt in the truth of the proposition in that they compare it with the *uncertainty* expressed by the speaker. In Arabic, it is often realised through the use of expressions like /turā/. /yā turā/ or /atasā'al/ as it is shown in the above examples. Perkins (1983:111) believes that questions, in general,

*" ... may be regarded as expressing epistemic modality. "*

Deliberate (rhetorical) questions, in particular, present in this regard an interesting case. For instance, the Arabic example in (77) :

(77) hal yastawī lladīna yaElamūna wa lladīna lā yaElamūn ?

Trans. Will those who know be equal to those who do not, I wonder.

A special category that seems to display different degrees of *possibility* in Arabic, is that of the forms with either non-harmonic function or those with harmonic function. Such functions characterize certain modal expressions when used in combination. The resulting effect from the latter may be described, as it was put by Halliday (1970:331), as ' accumulative ' for which interpretations like *I insist that it is possible* are very likely candidates. Here, it appears that the performative verbs (*insist, grant, ...etc.*) which are in harmony with the modal expression that follows serve the function of *intensification* of the content of the text. The speaker appears to guarantee the truth

of his statement. Typical examples from Arabic are the ones comparable with those that involve adverbial expressions of *intensification* like /lā maḥāla/ ' *inevitably* ' or /bil Darūra/ ' *necessarily* ' , ' *by necessity* ' as in (79) :

- (79) U'akkidu Ealā kawnihi (his being) Tabībun.  
 ( lā budda wa an yakūna Tabīban lā maḥāla )  
 ( lā budda wa an yakūna bil Darūrati Tabīban )

Trans. I insist that he is indeed a doctor.

or /mina lmumkin/ possibly which, as in (80), signifies that the subject of the sentence has legal authority to do it and that he has indeed the authority to do it.

- (80) aḤtarifu anna lqāḍiya qādirun Ealā lḤaddi min ḍalika.  
 uDminu.....

Trans. I grant that the judge can stop it.

*Accumulative texts*, though translatable, are, in plain words, tautological. The intensifying expressions, in particular, according to Gowers (1977:86), "...*contribute nothing* " to the general content of the text. But one may argue that even when is being tautological, one is constantly modifying a proposition, and consequently using modal devices for the purpose of reinforcing a previously made viewpoint, adding some



new content to it.

The phenomenon of modally harmonic has been given prominence by Lyons (1977:78-80). *Modal harmony*, as we have seen, normally occurs when two modals of the same order ( i.e. two more or less synonymous expressions of modality ) colligate with and enforce each other. According to Hermeren (1978:11), the harmonic function characterizes certain modal expressions when used in combination. The resulting effect is also described by him as " *accumulative* ", which he maintains is due to the fact that interpretations like : I insist that *it is possible* do reinforce each other. The phenomenon finds expression in the use of modal expressions like /rubbamā/ plus the particle /qad/ , or /qad/ plus the verb /yajūzu/ ' *it is somehow likely*, ' *it may well be* ', as in (81) and (82) :

(81) rubbamā qad yuEraDu lfilmu qarīban.

Trans. The film might possibly (perhaps) be shown shortly.

(82) qad yajūzu an takūna sayyāratī baTī'atan wa lākin... .

Trans. My car may not be fast, but... .

The Arabic text in (82) is in fact a *back - translation*, by an Arab post graduate student of Linguistics, of an interesting quote from which the translation in (82) ,itself, is an extract. The original text which was

written on a sticker, on the rear window of a car is as follows :

" My car may not be fast,  
but it is paid for and  
it is in front of you. "

Bu using /qad/ plus /yajūzu/ in the Arabic translation, the translator has kept in mind the importance of preserving the build-up of suspense in the sarcastically tentative tone of the car owner. Should the whole ' chunk ' have been translated at first , the owner's state of being non-committal towards the truth of the statement would have been adequately maintained.

It is worth noting that the presence of the verb /yajuzu/ to intensify a preceding /qad/ in Arabic in a text of this type, despite Gower's claim ( see p.123 of this work), is *obligatory*, if that modal content is to be preserved. At this point, it is useful to remember that example like (82), to use Lakoff's terminology (1972:910), are always" *contextually linked* ". This is particularly true, since it is difficult to determine the degree and type of possibility conveyed by *may* in the structure of the car owner's text if it is presented as ' *My car may not be fast...*' with no further back-up information. One may note, here, that there is a tendency nowadays to use some of the modals to describe facts rather than possibilities. Hence, ' *My car may may not be fast*' is equal in meaning to ' *My car is slow*'. However, consulting the wider context in which that text is uttered will have the advantageous effect of what

is equivalent to seeing the pieces of a jigsaw in their right positions. Indeed, to quote Trikkonen-Codit (1986:95),

*" Comprehension of the text and equivalence in translation cannot be achieved without access to the full range of cultural features. "*

It is equally useful to note with Jenny Thomas (1983:99-100) that in order to interpret the force of an utterance in the way in which the speaker intended, the hearer or the intelligent reader must take into account both contextual and linguistic clues. When the expression "*bad luck*" to quote her again, is assigned the force of "*commiseration*" rather than "*malediction*" it has nothing to do with the linguistic expression but with the force that is often conventionally assigned to it , and also with what is a plausible interpretation in context.

Some Arabic modal expression may display uses that are non-harmonic : that is, where, for instance, the senses '*deontic obligation* and *possibility*' as in (84), '*possibility*' and '*permission*' as in (85), are reconciled in the text. In (83), borrowed from a television cartoon script, one of the characters protested about the result of a game and expressed through that medium his annoyance over such unfairness :

(83) You cannot be the referee and the winner.

Trans. laysa mina lEadli an takūna lmuHakkima wa lfa'iza.

The modal can shows in the example above a unique combination of moral ' obligation ' and ' possibility '. Thus, the decision of declaring the winner in the manner portrayed above is obviously deemed morally unacceptable, impossible and unfair for that matter. Other examples depicting this phenomenon are (84) which seems to demonstrate yet another, though slightly different, combination of ' obligation ' and ' possibility ', and (85) where ' possibility ' and ' permission ' are politely reconciled :

(84) lā budda an yakūnu biSuHbatī ummahātihim fī kāffati l'aHwāl.

Trans. They must in all circumstances be accompanied by their mothers.

(85) rubbamā yusmaHu laka bil duxūl majjānan.

Trans. You might be allowed to enter free.

### 3.4.2

### Permission

In MSA, the semantic category of ' permission ' covers an interesting range of granted as well as sought 'permissions' as may be seen from the variety of expressions and examples that follow :



(a) /yafūzu/	<i>It is permissible</i>
(b) /yumkinu/	<i>It is made possible</i>
(c) /yusmaHu/	<i>It is allowed</i>
(d) /lā māniEa/	<i>There is no objection</i>
(e) /in <sup>√</sup> si't/	<i>If you like</i>
(f) /ismaH/	<i>allow</i>
(g) /nuraHHibu/	<i>we welcome</i>
(h) /marHaban/	<i>you are welcome</i>
(i) /ahlan wa sahlan/ *	<i>you are most welcome</i>

The above expressions may be illustrated by the following examples :

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\* ahlan wa sahlan is generally regarded as a routine greeting ; also as a formulaic expression of 'permission'. It is abbreviated from /atayta qawman ahlan wa mawqiEa sahlan ' *Thou hast come to a people who are like kinsfolk and to a place that is smooth, plain, not rugged* ' , (cf. Lane, Edward William, Arabic- English lexicon, Frederick Unger Publishing Co., New York (1955), Vol. 1, part 4, P.1453,

(86) yajūzu laka an tūqifa sayyārataka hunā.

Trans. You can (may) park your car , here.

Contrast this with /yajūzu/ in its sense of *possibility* as in (87) :

(87) yajūzu annahu marīDun.

Trans. He may be ill.

(88) yumkinuka an tadhaba l'an.

Trans. You can go now.

You are allowed to go now.

(89) yusmaHu lil rukkābi lnuzūlu hunā.

Trans. Passengers are allowed to get off here.

(90) Lā māniEa bi'an ta'tiya maEanā. \*

Trans. There is no objection that you come with us.

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\* The ' permission formula / la māniEa / is often understood in Arabic through knowledge of this very conventionalised formula. *Could*, however, may be used in the translation as it is generally felt that it is less definite than 'can' e.g. You can come with us.

(91) taEāla wa ltaHīq bīnā in šī't.

Trans. Come and join us if you like

(92) nuraHHibu bikum fī waTanikum l<sub>t</sub>ānī.

Trans. You are welcome to you second country.

(93) marHaban bikum jamīEan. (lit. welcome to you all)

Trans. You are all welcome.

(94) ahlan (wa sahlān) bika.

Trans. You are (most) welcome.

(95) ismaH lī an uqaddīma laka lduktōr munāf.

Trans. Allow me to introduce to you Dr, Munāf.

Each culture has its own routine expressions with regards to the process of introducing someone. Such formulas as ' *allow me ...* ' ; ' *may I introduce....* ' are, it appears, modal formulas of ' *politeness* ', associated with English. Their presence in Arabic, where originally no such formulas are needed sometimes, is but a result of translation and borrowing from English. This seems to be in line with Abdulaziz's claim

(1986):12) that :

**" if sustained contact continues and the translation exercise intensifies, then linguistic borrowing of vocabulary, phraseology, syntax and stylistic features usually results. "**

In (88) and (89), the 'deontic source' of permission, i.e. the one granting the permission, is either the speaker or some other authority ; in (89) the impersonal passive /yusmaH/ is capable of implying both. In addition, it is not unreasonable to argue that such permission does imply the existence of some restriction to be imposed, when necessary, by the speaker.

In (90), the speaker is giving the addressee absolute permission and in (91) it is more than a given permission as the addressee accorded freedom of choice, and thereby the making of a decision is entirely his/hers. Permission in both, it seems, is granted in response to, perhaps, a permission-seeking question like ' May I come in ? '

Again, in the case of /lā māniEa/, the speaker's message conveyed to the addressee seems to be equivalent to ' *There is nothing to prevent you from coming with us.* ' Pragmatically, this is taken to mean " You may come with us ' which is the content that every translator ought to be concerned with. Pondering over that, one is bound to reach such a conclusion, otherwise common sense tells us that there is little point in telling the addressee that he/she is free to come in if the speaker has no intention to grant him/her such a permission.



In examples like (96)

(96) atruku laka l'ān Hurriyata ltaSarruf.

Trans. I leave to you now the freedom of choice.

the performative verb, like all verbs of its kind, is characterised by the very act that is performed precisely by uttering the formula containing it. But, here, it seems also to tone down, and indeed out of politeness, suppress the role of the speaker as the real deontic source of permission to such an extent as to leave the addressee to his own discretion.

In (93), we have the verbal expression /marHaban bikum/ which by virtue of the performative force expressed by its implicit verb gives the meaning that 'permission' to stay is being granted. This is courteously put across and the speaker sounds as if he/she were saying :

*' You don't need to seek our permission. You don't need to say : ' May I join you ? '*

Both of the seemingly semantically equivalent expression; namely, /marHaban bikum/ and /ahlan wa sahan/ are in fact classical Arabic forms of exclamation which have eventually become an integral part of MSA's greeting formulas. Modal expressions like /ahlan wa sahan/, according to Thatcher (1976):28, often stand :

*" in single expressions - especially exclamations - where a verb is to be supplied. "*

His example was none other than /ahlan wa sahan/ where the perfective /ji'ta/ ( lit. You came ) is understood, and thus, the reading would be something like :

*Welcome to you. You are indeed a welcome guest in our home. You have come to friends and an agreeable place.*

### 3.4.3 Obligation

Under this heading, MSA may subsume a number of expressions as :

(a) /Ealayka/ (lit. on you) ' have to '

(b) /lā budda/ or /lā maHāla/ \* ' must '

---

\* /lā budda/ (Lit. there is no escape) 'must', 'it is absolutely necessary' is synonymous with two other forms used in classical Arabic, yet not common in MSA; /lā mafarra/ ( Lit.no wheel [of a draw-well] ) and /lā maHāla/, both meaning ' there is no doubt about it ' , ' most certainly ' , ' positively ' , ' absolutely ' or ' by no means ' . (cf. Wehr's Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic, 1976, Spoken Languages Services, Inc. However, while /lā budda/ is used initially and medially in the sentence, /lā mafarra/ and /lā maHāla/ are always used finally as in :

e.g. Kullu lbāšari fanin lā maHāla.  
Trans. All men must die.

- (c) /al'ajdar/ or /mina l'ajdar/ ' ought to '
- (d) /al'awlā/ or /mina l'awlā/ ' had better '
- (e) /yajibu/ ' it is compulsory '
- (f) /mina lwajibi/ ' it is dutiful '
- (g) /yanbagī/ ' it behoves ', ' it is desireable '  
 ' it is desireable, proper, seemly '
- (h) /yuftaraDu/ ' it is obligatory '
- (i) /yustaHsan/ ' it is best for '

Forms like /Ealayka/ (Lit. upon you [sing. masc.] ), /Ealayki/ ( upon you [ing. fem.] ), /Ealaykum/ ( upon you [pl. masc & fem.] ), /Ealayhi/ ( upon him ), /Ealayhim/ ( upon them [pl. masc.] ) /Ealayhin(na)/ ( upon them [pl. fem.] ) are used when the source of 'obligation' does not appear to be the speaker's. It is an *obligation* based on logic and seems to be more external than /lā budda/ 'must' which implies the speaker's *recommendation* as in (104) :

(97) Ealayhi ltaqayyuda bi ltaElīmat.

Trans. He has to comply with the regulations.

(98) Ealayka an taEtadira lahum

Trans. You have (got) to apologize to them. \*

It is worth noting that /Ealayka/ is often combined with the impersonal verbal expression /yajibu/ to express *obligation* in all contexts.

However, in legal texts, it implies as in (99), for instance, that the law enjoins strict compliance on the vendor :

(99) yajibu Ealā lbā'iEi an yaltazima bi Siyānati lmuEaddati jayyidan.

Trans. The vendor *shall* maintain the equipment in good repair.

It also worth noting that while /yajibu Ealā/ may appear to be suitable in all contexts where '*obligation*' is being talked about, the translator has to accept that there are degrees of '*obligation*'. Therefore, different instances are expressed by different expressions in Arabic.

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\* There is increasing evidence to suggest that in British English people tend nowadays to use have got to as opposed to have to to express a stronger type of '*obligation*' approximately equivalent to the Arabic use of /Ealayka/. An extract from the Guardian Newspaper illustrate the recent phenomenon ;

You have to move on and not dwell on the past. You've got to go with the flow.

' Erogenous (Tom) Jones ' , The Guardian, Tues, Nov 22 1994.



The 'obligation' is made stronger when it is followed by phrases like /ltaqayyuda bi/ 'strictly adhering to' as in :

(100) yajibu Ealā lbā'iEi ltaqayyidu bi liltizām bi Siyānati lmuEddati jayyidan.

Trans. The vender shall *strictly adhere* to maintaining the equipment in good repair

English translations like the one in (101) also seem to find expression in the authoritatively coloured use of *shall* used in (99) and (100) to carry the implication of a *threat*, in semi-legal texts when a particular condition (e.g. *a regulation*) is not met :

(101) lā budda min tawbīxihi in istamarra bi lta'xīr.

Trans. He shall be reprimanded if he keeps on coming late.

In (97) and (98), the expression /Ealayka/ is placed in an initial position in the sentence to make it function as an imperative verb. \*

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\* Other expressions that behave like verbs in MSA and are often identified in the language as 'fillers of verb positions' are /ruwaydal/ 'treat gently', from the noun /ra'ud/ 'slowness', as in /ruwayda Aladdin/ 'Treat Aladdin gently', or /dūnaka/ 'seize' as in /dūnaka lliSSa/ 'seize the thief'. Such verb-like expressions belong to a class of words known in Arabic as /asna'u l'afEal/ 'nominal verbs', with their meanings implied in the propositions.

The function of verbal forms like /yanbagī/, /yalzamu/, /lizāman/, /mina llāzim/ and /mina lwājib/ carries the implication that what follows is logically necessary and naturally expected. It seems to offer therefore a good reason to soften the 'obligation' that is associated with the presence of /Ealayka/or /yajib/ in the text while at the same time add a moral dimension on to it :

(102) yanbagī Ealayka an tuEīna Sadiqaka.

Trans. You ought to help your friend.

(103) mina lwājibi Ealayka an ta'tiya mubakkiran.

Trans. You ought to come early.

Both /yanbagī/ in (102) and in (103) are translated by 'ought to' because they are used when the anticipated action is tied up with shared rules or conventions as in titles like '*How people ought to talk*'

The softening technique is extended in MSA to include /la budda/ where its sense of 'obligation' is softened to suit a given social situation similar to that identified by Lakoff (1972:910) as in (103) below. In this modified sense it is like English 'must' which is described by Lakoff as a " *contextually linked form*". What applies to must in this sense in English, applies to /lā budda/ in Arabic. The point which should be stressed is that the presence of 'must' does not always help

to display the sense of ' obligation ' only. This is just what Lakoff seems to point out. ' *Must* ', she shows, may be employed in a context where it has a socially determined sense of *politeness* comparable to the sense usually inferred from the word ' *please* '. This is what also happens in Chinese as well as Arabic where it is socially and culturally regarded as 'impolite' to refuse food , although curiously, it is customary to go through the motions of refusing . As far as Arabic etiquette is concerned, it occurs in a ritualistic form of repeated exhortation particularly when food is served :

(104) Lā budda an tadūqa hāda lSinf.

Trans. You must taste this type.

The underlying meaning in (104) above is usually taken to read in Arabic as :

*' Please, do taste it for my sake. I beseech it as a favour of you.'*

Another use where /la budda/ has its coercive content of 'obligation' weakened is the *sarcastic*, or *ironic* one with the conditional construction /in kāna/ \* at the beginning of the sentence as in (105).

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\* The construction /in kana/ is usually employed as a substitute for compulsive 'if', be it explicitly expressed as in (105) or merely implied as in : Should you insist ..... . '

It is, here, used to show that there is a desire to do something on the part of the addressee which causes annoyance to the speaker. This is reflected in his/her compulsive *mood* at the moment of utterance. \* This is, of course, realised by the use of the particle /fa-/ plus the imperative form of the verb as in:

(105) in k̄ana wa la budda an taErifa, fa qul rajā'an Eala l'aqall.

Trans. If you must know, at least say 'please'.

One may, at this point, reach the conclusion that once 'obligation' is softened, the modal expression becomes morally *deontic*. This sense of *deonticity* seems to culminate in Arabic in the modal expression /al ajdar/ (see p134), which like its English approximation 'ought to' is prescriptive in tone, and thus combines the concepts of 'necessity' and 'moral obligation' as in (106) and (107) :

(106) alaysa l'ajdar bika an tattaSila hatifiyyan bi zawjatika.  
alaysa mina l'ajdar ..... .

\*" Mood "is not to be confused with 'modality' as the former is a form which shows the moment when the action of the verb is represented. It may indicate a fact ( *Nobody helps me* ) or a quest ( *what time is it ?* ) or a command ( *Sit down !* ) or make general statements through the use of infinitives ( *To know him is to despise him* ) and to indicate hypothesis or supposition ( *If I were you ...* ) where it seems to be infringed upon by a semantic twist of modality. It may even indicate an indirect speech act where one mode is replaced by another ;  
When, for example, " It is stuffy here. " is interpreted as " Open the windows. "

Trans. Shouldn't you be calling your wife now ?

(107) kāna mina l'ajdaru bihi an ya'xuda ldawā'a.

Trans. He should have taken the medicine.

In (107) it is obvious that he did not take it. The *deontic obligation* was unfulfilled. Note in this example how the perfective form /kana/ is employed to indicate past temporal value and refer to the addressee's failure to conform to what is morally expected from him. Failure of the addressee in his/her duty causes the speaker to express disapproval or even mild rebuke depending on the wider context. With the help of this device, the sense in each of the two preceding examples has assumed the illocutionary force of *deontic obligation*.

Another complex expression which Arabic uses to express moral obligation particularly when it is required to convey a sense of obligation that amounts to a duty is /al awlā/ (see p.134) which introduces, from the speaker's viewpoint, a statement of paramount importance :

(108) al awlā biha an tuSgiya ilā wālidayhā.

Trans. She ought to listen to her parents.

One final point concerned with *obligation* in Arabic remains to be discussed. It involves the modal expression/ lā budda/. This



expression seems to imply more coercion than the other modal expressions of obligation, perhaps, because of the build-in negation represented by the particle /lā/ 'no' in its negated structure. However, the form is sometimes used in Arabic, curiously to convey a 'hospitable' type of obligation, a cultural value that is so alien to English. It is a kind of hospitality that may sound to an English person as too patronizing. It is, nevertheless, perfectly natural for an Arab host to say to his/her guest :

(109) xud(i) (f.) wāHida uxrā. lā budda an tafEal(i).

Trans. Have another one. You must (do that).

Cultural tradition in English demands a less solicitous style \* while for an Arab, the *generosity maxim* systematically overrides the *quantity maxim*. It is interesting to note, that from the point of view of an Arabic speaker unaware of this fact, the following two-fold question, therefore, would reflect a lack of warmth and hospitality :

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\* In the advertisement "FLY CANADA BY BRITISH AIRWAYS", the underlying meaning is :  
*You ought to fly Canada.....*

[ Quoted from Teach Yourself English Grammar by B.A. Pythian, Hodder & Stoughton, 1988 ]

(110) hal targabu bi tanāwuli wāHidatan uxrā ? amuta'akkidun anta ?

Trans. Would you like to have another one ? Are you sure ?

#### 3.4.4 Logical Inference

Here is an area where one '*mood*' is replaced by another. Thus, in everyday communication, " *It's cold !* " would sometimes, depending on the context, mean " *Close the door !* " .

Communication involves three basic factors shared between speakers and hearers in a given culture :

- <a> A body of linguistic knowledge (grammar).
- <b> A body of non-linguistic knowledge and beliefs (encyclopedia).
- <c> A set of inference rules.

It is the duty of the translator to consider these factors in order to make his/her translation which is , in effect, a form of communication that could not be vastly different from the speaker-hearer type, assuming that the translator acts both simultaneously and internally as a speaker and a hearer. The process, with all the rituals and hedges involved is, indeed, an art in itself. When modality forms part of this process, hearers always resort to their natural ability to make use of

The shared inference rules to grasp the intended message. Advertisers who are masters of the art often make an extensive use of the modal expressions.

The category of *logical inference* or '*necessity*' can be expressed in Arabic by the imperfective form of the impersonal verb /yalzam/ 'must', the modal expression /lā budda/ 'must', or indeed anyone of the (min-) constructions, like /mina lmafrūDi/ 'it is obligatory', /mina lDarūriy/ 'it is essential', /mina llāzimi/ 'it is very necessary', /mina lwājibi/ 'it is incumbent'...etc.

Such expressions, by occurring with an imperfective form of /kāna/, the perfective or the imperfective form of the negated verb /zāla/ 'ceased to exist' \*, e.g. /lā zāla/, /mā zāla/, lam yazal/ can assist in the development of a sense required by a content of *logical necessity* as in the following examples :

(111) yalzumu an yakūna lHiSānu lladī yajurru lEarabata qawiyyan.

Trans. The horse that pulls the carriage must be very strong. \*\*

\* The verb /zāla/ *ceased* may be preceded by a negating particle like /lā/, /mā/, or /lam/ and followed by a participle or an adjective in the accusative, bearing the suffix /-an/ as in (113), to indicate that the action is still going on and may continue into the future.

\*\* The text (111) and its Arabic translation are borrowed from David Cowan's Modern Literary Arabic, 1980, P.12.

(112) lā budda an yakūna lsajīnu bari'an.

Trans. The prisoner must be innocent.

(113) lā budda annahu lā zāla Ealā qaydi lHayat. (Lit. did not cease to  
be considered alive)

.....mā zāla.....  
.....lam yazal.....

Trans. He must be still be alive.

(114) lā budda anna l'umūra mā zalat Ealā Hālatiha..

Trans. Matters must be still as they are.

(115) lā budda anna tilka lmākinatu lā zalat EaTila.

Trans. That machine must be still out of order.

Of relevance to the category of *inference* in Arabic are the adverbials /idān/ or /lidā/ which frequently occurs in philosophical writings and discourse typical of the type found in mathematical classes. /idān/ and /lidā/ normally introduce assertions which serve as *conditions* initiated by the compound particle /bimā anna/ ' *since* ' and strengthened by expressions like /mina lwājibi/ which express *moral duty* as in (116) or

/lā budda/ which very often indicates ' *natural inevitability* 'firmly based on *deduction* as in (117) :

(116) bimā anna lbaEuDa yanqulu lmalārya, lida yuSbiHu mina lwajibi  
Ealayna lqaDa'u Ealayhi.

Trans. Since mosquitoes carry Malaria, we must then eradicate them.

(117) bimā anna lfillina yaTfu Eala lma'i, idan lā budda an yakūna  
axaffu waznan mina lma'i.

Trans. Since cork floats on water, then it has to be lighter than water.

From examples like (16) and (17), a conclusion must always be reached on evidence available in a previous *condition* initiated by the compound particle /bimā anna/. In such cases, in order for the 'conclusion' to satisfy the 'condition', the second part of the assertion will normally require an obligation modal expression like /lā budda/, /yajibu/ or /yanbaġi/. The device of creating a *condition* and a *conclusion* is by no means limited to philosophical or school text books. Indeed, it is often employed by MSA formal style users :

(118) Bimā anna lTariqa masdūdun, lā budda idan an nasluka Tariqan  
axar.

Trans. As the road is blocked, we must then take another one.



In examples like (118), the adverbial /idān/ can be replaced by the compound particle /līdālīka/ 'for that reason', without any significant change of meaning.

### 3.4.5 Condition

Two categories that show some of the characteristics of previous categories are *condition* and *hope /wish*. \* As in English, in MSA they seem to cut across all the other previous categories. We shall, now, look at the first of these two categories and then treat the second under a subsequent separate sub-heading. Conditional constructions in Arabic are always introduced by particles like /idā/ 'whenever', /in/ 'if', /law/ 'if one were to...' or 'if one should' and /lawlā/ 'if not for'. In common, they seem to have modal implications for four

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\* The verb 'wish' implies a *concealed condition* as in ;

'I wish I'd won the pools', meaning 'If only.....the pools. The concealed condition, itself seems to derive its force ( *sense* ) from the 'barely imaginable end of the possibility scale' discussed in (3.4.1, P.106). It even appears to be based on a point preceding that end as in :

Text: naẓara biḥasadin wa lisānu Ḥalihi yaqūl yā laytani kānat liyā ajniḤatun.  
Trans. He looked enviously and thought : 'if only I had wings'.

reasons. First, they contain, like their corresponding English constructions, conditional particles that function both as modal qualifiers( see P. James, 1986:455 ) , as well as semantic markers which add qualifications ( *extra information* ) to the propositional content (what the proposition is about) :

(119) law staqāla latadaEa lEamal.

Trans. If he resigned, the business would collapse.

In this regard, F. James (p.450) explains that the modal particle 'if' adds the information that the relation between words and world signified by the *mood* may or may not hold. He convincingly argues that if one recognises the subordinating function of 'if' , one can consider the conditional clause, itself, a modal qualifier that affects the interpretation of the *mood* in the main clause. Like 'if', Arabic conditional particles are modal qualifiers. The type of qualifications the conjoined basic statements undergo, may indeed be considered as *epistemic*. Secondly, they appear to be concerned with expressions of *certainty* and *uncertainty*, degrees of *probability* and *speculations* about the past, present, future. The second reason is that most conditionals are concerned with hypothetical, unrealised events or better still, propositions which cannot be or which are unlikely to be realised as in the following examples. However, note that what is called the main clause must be introduced by the prefixed particle /la-/ :

(120) lōw kuntu fī makānika, la mtanaEtu Ean lamsihā.

Trans. If I were you, I should not touch it.

They may be concerned with a condition which has not even come about as in :

(121) lōw kāna Ealā'uddini hunā, la Sawwata li SālīHina.

Trans. Were Aladdin here, he would have voted for us.

The conditions in (120) and (121) are thus taken to be understood as *not having come about*.

Thirdly, seems reasonable indeed to argue that some modal expressions are paraphrasesable with a *supressed condition* as in (122) :

(122) kāna yanbaġi Ealayka an tas'aluni.

Trans. You ought to have asked me.

The implication in the Arabic text would be something like;

".....*if you had wanted to be polite.* " . It could also mean, depending on the wider context, " It would have been your duty to ask him, *if you had been dutiful.* "

Fourthly, Arabic modal constructions, like English modal auxiliaries, are capable of referring to the present even when they are used in the past tense form. Thus, they can express the particular modal attitude of the speaker. For instance, while a non-modal past perfect in English expresses anteriority in the past, there is no such restriction with conditional clauses as the past perfect :

" ... *does not express such anteriority : it may also refer to the present.* " ( cf. R. Declerck, 1979:722 )

Consider the following Arabic conditional construction which involves the use of an aspectually significant modal element, the hypothetical particle /law/ with the perfect form of /kāna/ :

(123) law kuntu Earīfa lHafli, la qaddamtuhu.

Trans. If I had been the chairman, I would have presented him.

A conditional sentence in Arabic consists of two parts : the condition /al šarT/ and the consequence' /jawābu lšarTi/ ' the answer to that condition' ' which is in fact a statement of what will happen if the condition is fulfilled. This has its parallel in English, as shown by J. Aitchison (1994 :64). A condition may be either *affirmative* or *negative*. It is usually introduced by the relevant construction. Affirmative constructions are :

<a> /in/

<b> /idā/

<c> /lɔw/

<a> The particle /in/ is basically followed by the perfective, or the *jussive* form of the verb \* which was described by MacCarus (1976:5) as the surrogate perfect ( translated by *should + inf.* ) as in (134). It is interesting, here, to note the fact that the perfective used in the sense of the English 'past simple' may be used simultaneously in both the protatis and the apodosis. That occurs when the speaker, wishing to express a particular viewpoint, uses the modal qualifier 'if' to turn the real world in which they are uttered into a hypothetical assertion of truth, or an *epistemic* one of probability, possibility ...etc. At this point, one cannot but agree with Riddle (1986:277) that the :

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\* The *jussive* is an imperfective form in Arabic marked by a final /sukūn/, i.e. a signal indicating utter silence arising from the absence of any vowel on the third radical, as in /yaktub/ ' He writes. ' A verb is said to be in the /jazm/ 'jussive' mood when it has a /sukūn/, the other two remaining verb moods being the /rafE/ 'indicative' signalled by the presence of /-u/, and the /naSb/ 'subjunctive' by the mark /-a/. The *imperative* formed from the jussive mentioned above is indicated by the small circle /o/ through rejecting the prefix of the 2nd person sing.



*"... best denotation of the simple past tense may be simply true before speech time in the speaker's belief world, with the completive sense being determined by context and the meaning of the verb. "*

Thus,

(124) in kāna qad qāla dālīka, kadība.

Trans. If he said that, he was lying.

(125) in yaqul dālīka, fa huwa yakdību.

Trans. If he says that, he is lying

(126) in daEawna, fa sawfa nulabbī ldaEwa.

Trans. If they invite us, we will accept the invitation.

the context and the meaning of the verb 'invited', despite its being in its perfective form, is not in correspondence with past time. The form 'invited' signifies future time in the text; it conveys modal future prediction.

MacCarus (1976) remarks that the difference in the tenses is, in the main, neutralised and thus in order for an imperfective verb to display this, it has to be preceded by a perfective form, usually /kāna/ as in :

(127) in kunta taErifu ljawāba, dawwinhu.

Trans. If you know the answer, write it down.

<b> Another particle /idā/ which is used in classical Arabic in the sense of ' when ' is commonly used as a synonym for /in/ in MSA. This modal particle normally takes the perfective form in both parts of the conditional sentence. In fact, it is fair to say that in the majority of conditional sentences in Arabic , the modal is in the perfective form, regardless of what time is referred to :

(128) Idā waSalat, dahabnā jamīʿan.

Trans. If (when) she arrives, we shall all go.

<c> The conditional particle /law/ is applied only for conditions the fulfilment of which is *doubtful* or even *impossible*. In a sense, the condition it introduces refers to a mere *supposition*. Here, the perfective form of the verb is employed in both parts of the sentence. The perfective form, however, has in most cases little to do with the notion of ' *past tense* '. It often refers to non-past state of affairs. Thus, the message is not dealt with by the grammar; the content of such uttered texts as (128) above follows logically from the utterance together with the background knowledge shared by the speaker and hearer in context. Time, therefore, is indicated contextually. The perfect morpheme used correlates with an unreal condition indicated by the use

of the particle equivalent to ' if ' in English. The apodosis, is generally introduced by the *certainty - indicating particle* /la/ :

(129) Lōw kuntu tariyyan, la <sup>ˇ</sup>staraytu Haqlan kabīran.

Trans. If I were wealthy, I would (certainly) buy a big farm.

Note that both , in the text and its translation, we have a case where a *counter-factual* use of the past tense form is made specifically to show a hypothetical situation which has no parallel in reality . Consider also examples (130), (131) and (132) :

(130) law k̄ana lil jīmālī ajniHatin la T̄arat.

Trans. If camels had wings, they would (definitely) fly. \*

(131) law <sup>ˇ</sup>sariba ldawā'a la <sup>ˇ</sup>safiya.

Trans. If he drank the medicine, he would (certainly) recover.

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\* Taking account of cultural differences, a closer-to-English translation is available in the proverbial saying :

*If pigs had wings, they would fly.*

If the conditional sentence, however, is a nominal one, it may be introduced by /law/ + the particle /anna/ :

(132) law anna l'insāna qādirun Ealā Himāyati nafsihi lama Htāja ilā ayyati Hukūmatin.

Trans. If man could protect himself, he would not need any government.

As the Arabic verb after the conditional particle will normally be in the perfective or the jussive form, the translator should bear in mind the fact that the tense of a conditional sentence translated into English has to conform to the grammatical tendencies of MSA. For instance, the sentence in (124), may be rendered in English as in (133) despite the different tenses shown in the translations :

(133) in qāla dālīka, kaḍiba.

Trans. If he said that, he was lying.

or, If he says that, he is lying.

or, If he says that, he will be lying.

In MSA, there is a tendency to use the perfective form for past conditions and the jussive for the futurity although the use of the future particle /sa-/ with an imperfective indicative tense in the

apodosis is becoming increasingly common for future conditions :

(134) in yakun awwala man yaSīl, aETihā lahu.

Trans. Should he be the first one to arrive, give it to him.

In order to leave no doubt that a past tense is intended, one is advised to use the modifying verb /kana/, as it is commonly the case in MSA, with the perfective. Examples (135) and (136) may clearly illustrate this :

(135) in kāna qad dakara dālīka, kadība.

Trans. If he mentioned that, he was lying.

(136) in kānat qad ġadarat, la ra'aytuhā.

Trans. If she had left, I would have seen her.

In Arabic, occasionally, the condition may be implied through an imperative verb immediately followed by a second verb in the jussive :

(137) Eiš qānīEa, takun malīkan.

Trans. Live contented , (and) be a (your own) king.

( If you live contented... )



(138) udrus tanjaH.

Trans. If you study, you will succeed.

When the hypothetical particle /in/, however, is explicitly stated, we have a form consistent with the condition in (125), for example :

(139) in tadrus, tanjaH.

Trans. If you study you will succeed.

Besides the conditional particles discussed earlier, there are other particles that introduce negative conditions in MSA. They are the compound particles /lawla/, /lawlam/, /in lam/, all meaning ' if not ' and /wa'illa/ ' otherwise '.

Negative conditions usually take the *jussive* in the first part ; otherwise, they follow the normal rules of affirmative particles :

(140) in lam taqif, ramaytuka.

....., armika.

....., fa sa'armika.

Trans. If you don't stop, I will shoot you.

Unless you stop,..... .

The negative compound particle /wa'illa/ is used with unfulfilled conditions. It is followed by a perfective or an imperfective with a future implication as in (141) :

- (141) kuffa Eanni wa'illa<sup>̄</sup> stadEaytu l<sup>̣</sup>surTa.  
wa'illa<sup>̄</sup> sa 'astadEi l<sup>̣</sup>surTa.

Trans. Leave me alone, otherwise, I shall call the police.

*Unfulfilled or repressed conditions* may also be inferred from religious stock expressions like /bi'idni llāh/ (lit. with God's permission) ' if God chooses, which according to Rice and Sa'id (1979:23),

*" indicate that the speaker hopes that something has turned out favourably, or will turn out favourably. "*

when it stands alone, the phrase constitutes a response to a question like:

- (142) hal sa tuEida lī kitabi<sup>̄</sup> ?

Trans. Will you bring me back my book ?

In English ,the semantic category of *hope/wish* is normally expressed overtly by the lexical verbs ' hope ' and ' wish ' or sometimes less overtly by other forms like *may+ V*, ' *would that ...* ', ' *if only* ', etc. The category may be expressed in MSA by particles that signal modality like the tentative /Habbada/ ' *how nice it would be if* ' ; ' *how kind of you it would be if...* '. This semantic category may also be expressed though a combination of such elements as the vocative particle /yā/ ' *O* ' + the hypothetical particle /law/ \* , + the cajoling particle /Habbadā/ or /ya/ + the verb /layta/ ' *how nice it would be if* ' as in (43) ; the perfective or the imperfective form of verbs like /wadadadtu/ \*\* or /awaddu/ (lit. I wish), /argabu/. /arumu/. /uHibbu/, all meaning ' *I wish* ', /atamannā/ ' *I hope* ' /ufaDDilu/ ' *I prefer* ' , /Easā/ ' *it is to be hoped* ', /laEalla/ ' *perhaps* ', /layta/ ' *if only* ', as in (144) and (145) or the perfective form of the verb preceded by the negative particle /la/ to convey a ' *negative wish* ' as in (162).

We may also add clauses like the culturally bound ,almost fixed expression /in šā'a llāh/ ' *God willing* ' as in (154)

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\* In hypothetical texts, modal verbs or particles are used to express a hypothetical situation in which they signal modality as a grammatical relationship initially.

\*\* From the stative verb /wadda/ ' *to wish* ' ; ' *to will* '.

and /kam tamannaytu low/ ' *how I wished* ' as in (151). The polite expression /Habbada/ in (143) below seems to express a type of content equivalent to the performative expression ' *I suggest...* ' which justifies the use of ' *might* ' in the English translation \* as in trans. (b) in (143) :

(143) yā Habbadā low faEalta šay'an bism l'insāniyya.

Trans. (a) How nice it would be if you did something in the name of humanity.

Trans. (b) You might have done something in the name of humanity.

A further reason for the use of ' *might* ' in the English translation in (b) above could perhaps be the need to convey the type of *politeness* associated in Arabic with the use of /Habbadā/. Thus, it would appear that the past tense form *might* is capable of expressing what Lyons (1968:311) calls :

" *a secondary function which is often described in terms of tentativeness or politeness.* "

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\* For the use of ' *might* ' in this sense, see Boyd and Thorne (1969:73),

Another verb that is used to illustrate covertly an unfulfilled strong wish in MSA is the verb /layta/ which seems, according to Wright (1974:33), to be a *changed classical* /layta/, a variant form of /ra'ayt/ (lit. I saw ). Curiously enough, the form /rayt/ is retained by colloquial Arabic formally but not semantically in the exclamatory /yarīt/ as in / yā ritni ruHt/ ' *if only I had gone* '. ( see T.F. Mitchell, 1973 :120)

(144) yā laytanī Eariftu mā yajrī l'ān.

Trans. If only I had known what was going on now.

(145) yā laytanā kunna maEakum.

Trans. If only we had been with you.

The verb /layta/ can express a highly hypothetical content in Arabic when used as a component of a verb string \* preceded by the introductory

\* A verb string is comprised of two or more verbs which follow each other without an intervening particle such as /an/ and the subjunctive. For example, an English sentence like '*She wants to go*' is translated into Arabic by a verb string which is realised literally as '*She wants she goes.*'. But that represents only the colloquial.

\*\* Wehr's example (cf. Wehr's A Dictionary of Modern Contemporary Arabic 1976, J.M.Cowan [ed] ), Spoken Language Services, p.764.



exclamatory particle /yā/ which serves to emphasize the optative /layt/ as in (146) :

(146) yā laytahu kāna qad dahaba.

Trans. I , indeed, wish he had gone.

It is to be noted that in emotionally charged situations, should the verb /layta/ be preceded by the archaic vocative particle /yā/, it is translated by *O* + the rare expression *would that*...as demonstrated in most translations of the Holy Qur'ān as in (147) below. Here, the hypothetical situation may or may not occur or have a parallel in the real world of the speaker. While the sense is carried by the subjective mood of 'wishing' in Arabic, in English it carried by the modal verbs :

(147) Yā laytanī muttu qabla hadā wa kuntu nasyan mansiyya.

Trans. O' would that I had died and passed into oblivion.

( The Qur'an, Maryam 19, V 23. )

A literal translation of (147) above according to N.J.Dawood (1983) would be ,

" *O, would that I had died before this and was utterly forgotten* "

though an interpretation of the very text would be ,

*" Would to God I had died before this, and had been a thing forgotten,  
and lost in oblivion . "*

according to Arthur J. Arberry (1980) who was strongly in favour of  
interpreting when dealing with the language of the Qur'ān. Also note :

(148) (yā) laytanī muttu li'ajlika.

Trans. ( O' ) would to God I had died for you.

Very often the category ' wish ' is overtly expressed by verbs like  
/awaddu/ as in (149) followed by a verb usually in the past but  
expressing a present situation.

(149) wadadtu (lit. I wished) an takūna rabīHta.

Trans. I wished that you had won.

(150) awaddu  
argabu  
HuDura lnadwa.  
arumu  
uHibbu

Trans. I wish ( I would like ) to attend the seminar.

Phrases like /kam tamannaytu/ ' *how I wish* ' can also be used to express a long cherished *wish* in Arabic :

(151) kam tamannaytu law kunta huna.

Trans. How I wish (*wished*) you were here.

A tentative type of *wish* may also be expressed by the lexical verb /yaxšā/ *fear*, though /yaxšā/ usually indicates a type of fear that is associated with *lack of faith* or *optimism*. It is merely to predict undesired possibilities. As the notion of *fear* is marked explicitly in English, the English translation will be as in (152) :

(152) axšā an takūna Bala xafa'

Trans. I am afraid you are wrong.

Another type that may be subsumed under this category is such Islamic clauses as the hopeful /in šā'a llāh/, /in arāda llāh/ ' *God willing* '; and also phrases like /biEawni llāh/ ' *with God's assistance* ' and /bi idni llāh/ *God permitting* / \* , ' *if God choose* '.

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\* Though *permission* is implied in the absolute clause *God willing*, it is by no means guaranteed; it is only wished for. Therefore, the primary semantic function of expressing a '*wish*' seems to be more justified. In translating /in šā'a llāh/ or /in arāda llāh/ into English, we need to remember that the absolute clause *God permitting* has, in fact, undergone a process of *ellipsis* in which the modal article is left out without affecting the general meaning of the clause, though the implication as understood in Arabic has boiled down to a *formalistic* '*wish*'

The religious concepts denoted by such clauses have specific, cultural values. The lack of semantically equivalent expressions reflects differences in religious outlook. Some important aspects of Muslim ethos, i.e. devotion, an expectation of shared attitude will be lost in translation unless this peculiar cultural feature is modulated to a culturally neutral concept in the target language. /in ʿsā'a llāh/ has, however, become an ubiquitous expression in many linguistic contexts regardless of the religions of Arabic speakers. In Arabic, examples like (153) are quite common :

(153) hal satadhaba ilā lHaflatī hādīhi l-layla ?

Trans. Are you going to the party tonight ?

Answer : in ʿsā'a llāh.

Trans. if God wills.

Thus, the absence of such phrases implies the existence of a different ethos, and obviously different life patterns in English. In Arabic, it reflects a culture comprising a collective historical experience. This experience, thus , reflects a cultural content that has no parallel in English. That expression is used to display a combination of absolute submission to the *will of God* and a *resigned optimism* about the awaited decision. It is used to express epistemic modality since its primary semantic function is to qualify the truth of the proposition by making

that truth relative to the speaker's *uncertainty*.

As will be demonstrated below in (154) and (155), the ubiquitous clause /in šā'a llāh/ may be employed initially to thematize modality, to interpolate it and finally to adjoin it in utterances that have a future reference. This is also characteristic of clauses and phrases like /in 'arada llāh/, /bi Eawni llāhi/ and /bi idni llāhi/ :

- (154) in šā'a llāhu, kullu šay'in sa yasīru Ealā mā yurām (lit.  
everything will go [ as desired ] well )

in arada llāhu, kullu..... .

bi Eawni llāhi, kullu..... .

bi idni llāhi,, kullu..... .

Trans. God willing, everything will be all right.

- (155) kullu šay'in in šā'a llāhu, sa yasīru Ealā mā yurām.

Trans. Everything, God willing, will be all right.

- (156) Kullu šay'in sa yasīru in šā'a llāhu Ealā mā yurām.

Trans. Everything will be, God willing, all right.

- (157) kullu šay'in sa yasīru Ealā mā yurām, in šā'a llāh.



Trans. Everything will be all right, God willing.

There are verbs like /ufaDDilu/ and /uHabbidu/, both meaning 'I prefer' which express a *wish combined with a choice*.

(158) ufaDDilu lbaqa'a fī lmanzili.

Trans. I would rather stay at home.

(159) ufaDDilu Eadama qawli mā aEtaqid.

Trans. I would rather not say what I think.

As for verbs expressing a *mere hope*, the two impersonal, indeclineable verbs /laEalla/ 'may be', and /Easā/ 'perhaps'; 'it is hoped that'; 'in order that'... are a case in point :

(160) kaḍalika yubayyin llāhu lakum l-āyata laEallakum tatafakkarun. \*

Trans. Thus doth God  
Make clear to you  
His signs, in order that  
Ye may consider

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\* The Glorious Qur'an : Translation and Commentary by A. Y. Ali. The Islamic Foundation, London, 1975, Verse 272, P.85.

Here, there is a genuine hope that men ( for their own good ) consider God's words.

On the other hand, in current spoken and written Arabic, an underlying *wish* is implied when users of such verbs, especially /Easā/, display non-committal attitudes towards the truth of their proposition:

(161) Easā lmarīDa yašfa Qarīban.

Trans. It is hoped that the patient will soon recover.

Perhaps, the patient..... .

A close examination of those verbs which express *hope/wish* shows among other things that modality is a secondary function of certain verbs. For instance, whereas the perfective /aflaHa/ 'succeeded' (lit. he succeeded) can function as a past tense of the present tense /yuflīH/, this past tense form appears from the colligation with /lā/ in (162) that it does not actually refer to the past act as such :

(162) lā aflaHa.

Trans. May he never succeed.

Compare the use of the negative particle /mā/, when used instead of /lā/

(163) mā aflaHu.

Trans. They did not succeed.

It is essential to bear in mind that in Arabic the *optative* function may be expressed by the perfective form of the verb alone, provided that it is placed at the beginning of the sentence. In such a context *may* is often used in English to perform that very function whose near equivalent in Arabic has a *pious* association. The formulas are characterized by the conversion of the subject noun phrase and the modal auxiliary in English. Note the modal tone of regret in (164) :

(164) *raHimahu llāh.*

Trans. *May God have mercy upon him.*

However, Thatcher (1976:195) is quite right in saying that

*" in speech and popular written language, the optative is expressed by a nominal sentence with the verb in the imperfect. "*

Consider his example :

(165) *May God have mercy upon thee.*

Trans. *allah yarHamuka.*

This view is also shared by MacCarus (1976:4) who, in a footnote,

reasonably ascribed its use in modern fiction, especially in spoken passages, to the strong influence of colloquial Arabic.

A *negative wish* may be expressed by the use of /lā/ followed by the perfective, as in the English version it is realised *optatively* without the use of a negating article :

(166) lā samiHa llāh.

Trans. God forbid.

or perhaps,

Trans. May God forbid.

Example (166) shows how the negation interacts with modality through the use of the *optative*. Also, examples similar to (166), show that the negating particle, when added, will only serve the grammatical function of negation as in (168) :

(167) Eāfāka llāh.

Trans. May God keep you in good health.

(168) lā Eāfāka llāh.

Trans. May God never keep you in good health.

## 3.5

The non-modal category 'negation'

Negation is a grammatical function and not a modal one and therefore it does not qualify the proposition as the expression of modal attitude lies outside its scope. It seems only to interact with modality. Further, two main problems with negation as a modality may be identified in English in particular. First, the way it ought to be interpreted when it involves modal auxiliaries, and secondly the lack of a formal way of indicating whether it is the main verb or the modal that is negated. A good example is *cannot* and *may not* when they are used epistemically. They negate the modal ( e.g. *no permission*, while *must not*, in contrast, negates the main verb and thus provides us with nothing but the already established sense of *obligation*, only negated as 'not to'. Also, when we have a case of *epistemic* modality expressed with *must*, the form *can't* is used. It follows then that it is not *epistemicity* that is negated as in (169), but *obligation* which in this case runs counter to what is intended :

(169) lā yumkin an yakūna lmarīDu lā zāla fī lfirās<sup>v</sup> l'ān.

Trans. The patient can't be in bed now. ( *Logical necessity* )

(170) Ealā lmarīDi an lā yabqā 'stay' fīl firās<sup>v</sup> l'ān.

Trans. The patient must not be in bed . ( *Obligation* )



Example (170) demonstrates the inability of *negation* to qualify as a modal category while (171) shows, with the help of the negative modal construction /mina lmustaHīl/ ' it is impossible ; [it] can't be ' ', what is really intended.

(171) mina lmustaHīl an yakūna lmarīDu fī lfirās l'an

Trans. The patient can't be in bed now .

The controversy over whether or not *negation* is a modal category arises in fact, from the observation that *negation* appears to be capable of implicitly expressing some epistemic meaning in English. But the fact remains that epistemic meaning can be encoded mainly by linguistically explicit expressions like modal auxiliaries or modal verbs (e.g. assume) as in :

(a) I *assume* that he is elsewhere.

or modal adverbs (e.g. probably) as in :

(b) He is *probably* elsewhere.

While it is true that *negation* is sometimes present in the intonation, it is not capable of expressing modality. It only provides an opposite version. Indeed, *negation* as an expression of modality seems to be

(172)

obvious. The assumption, that sentence forms expressing negation in which specifically epistemic expressions are missing can express some sort of epistemic modality like *assumptioin* is equally vague.

For example :

(172) Hasn't Peter gone ?

However, the observation may possibly hold in English and to a lesser extent in Arabic, as the negative question (172) is translated by a pure interrogative (173) :

(173) turā hal dahaba pīter ?

Trans. Has Peter gone, ( I wonder ) ?

However, since the argument is based on the whole sentence form ( here, a question ) as a modal linguistic device, it is not very clear how the negation itself is responsible for the production of modal meaning.

Indeed, negation appears to play a subsidiary role in shaping the expression of semantic modal categories. It is evident, for instance, that the only way of expressing the negation of epistemic *must* is by using *can + not* (see, p.171) above.

Ultimately, as for the question of whether it is *deontic* or *epistemic*, modality clearly seems to be more a property of the verb or the verbal

(173)

expression rather than a property of the negative adverb *not*.

Holmes (198:352) convincingly argues for the unlikelihood of *negation* being a modal device. She makes the point that *negation* is a syntactic device used

" ...to express an effective rather than modal meaning . "

Its main function, she says, is

" ... to boost the illocutionary force of a speech act in interrogative structures, exclamations and tag statements. "

She illustrates this with the following texts :

(174) Didn't she sing badly ?

(175) Isn't that great ?

(176) That's my brush, isn't it ?

Thus, *negation* appears, as suggested at the beginning of the section, to interact with modal meanings, further adding to the overall content of the message of the speaker's utterance by, for instance, strengthening the *disapproval* in (174), the *compliment* in (175) and *certainty* in (176). It may also be employed to seek the hearer's concurrence in the speaker's assertion and confirm

" ...*the opinion of the speaker*. " according to J. Algeo (1990:446) as in examples (174), (175) and (176).

It may also function as part of a device of enhancing a pragmatic role of *politeness*, where the speaker appears to give options to the addressee as in (177) :

(177) rubbāmā k̄anū qad Dullilū, alaysa kaḍālik ?

Trans. They could have been misled, couldn't they ?

In the light of what has been said so far about the relation between *negation* and *modality*, we tend to agree with Perkins (1983:48) that it is but an independent semantic system. This negation system works in English and in MSA in almost the same way. How it works has come to be known as *external* vs. *internal* negation, *auxiliary* vs. *main verb* negation ( Quirk et al., 1972:384 ) and as *modality* vs. *thesis* negation ( Halliday, 1970:332 ).

The relation may be demonstrated in Arabic with the help of the following modal expressions of *possibility* :

(178) min ḡayri lmuḥtamal an tatakallam lqirada.

Trans. It is not probable that monkeys talk.

(179) mina lmuḥtamal anna lqirada la tatakallam.

Trans. It is probable that monkeys do not talk.

It follows, then, from (178) and (179) that external negation may be exemplified by the main verb, often an imperfective form preceded by the negative particle /lā/. It is also apparent from (178) and (179) and other examples involving negated modal expressions that negation in this context seems to be tied up with expressions of *possibility* either in its epistemic or non-epistemic meaning ; and *necessity*, be it *logical* or *deontic*, with an *obligative* sense.

The two types identified have also been called ' *negation of the modal* ' as opposed to ' *negation of the event* '. These types, however, are based on the semantic non-equivalence arising from the interaction of negation with one of the two logically related categories of *possibility* and *necessity*. Thus, one expects to find either a negated category of *obligation* with a *deontic* implication :

(180) min ġayri lmuḥtamal an yakūna ḍalika lsayyid \*lqārūnī.

Trans. It is not possible that that is Mr. Al-Karooni.

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\* Titles representing a *profession*, *status*, etc., are written in full in Arabic and are often defined by a definite article.



(181) mina lmuḥtamal an lā yakūna ḍalika lsayyid raṣād.

Trans. It is possible that that is not Mr. Rashad.

To express possibility with a negated implication, Arabic also makes use of the particles /qad/ and /rubbamā/. But in English such particles are translated, in the majority of contexts they are found in, as *may* and *might* respectively followed by the negators :

(182) qad lā arāhā marratan uxrā.

Trans. It is possible that I will not see her again.

A similar example of *epistemic possibility* with a negated implication conveyed in the event may be noted in the use of /rubbamā/ as in (183) :

(183) Rubbama lā tajida Suḍubatan fī fahmī ḍalika.

Trans. It is possible that you will not find difficulty in understanding that.

Related to the category of possibility in Arabic is that special case where possibility is negated by the inherently negative particle /lan/ \*

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\* /lan/ 'won't', usually joined to an imperfective, is a contraction for /la+/ann/, i.e./ la yakūna an.../ 'It will not be that ...see W. Wright, Vol.1, 1974:287 )

' won't ' as in (184) or by a construction consisting of a positive future particle /sa-/ 'will'+ an imperfective + a negative substantive verb, /laysa/ \* as in (185) :

(184) lan yunjiza lEamala fī usbūEin wāHidin wa innamā fī yawmin  
wāHidin.

Trans. He won't finish the work within one week but in one day.

(185) sa yunjiza lEamala laysa fī isbūEin wāHidin wa innamā fī yawmin  
wāHidin.

Trans. He will finish the work not in one week but in one day.

As for examples characterised by the absence of obligation, there seems to be an indication of a *deontic type of obligation* expressed through the illocutionary force of the verbal expression as in /Ealayka/ :

(186) Ealayka an lā tadkura dālika.

Trans. It is essential that you do not mention that.

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\* /laysa/ ' not to be ' (lit. he is not) is inherently negative. It is an indeclinable verb with no imperfective or imperative form.

(178)

(187) lā Ealayka bidikri dalika.

Trans. It is not necessary for you to mention that.

(188) lā Hājata laka bi dikri dalika.

Trans. You need not mention that.

In conclusion, one can safely predict that interpretative procedures based on modal functions would seem to be quite useful as aiding devices that would hopefully enable, if consistently used, translators to recognize the intended content before transferring (translating) it into the target language and finally realising it in T1 modal expressions.

## Chapter Four

### 4.0 Conclusions: *Implications for the intercultural transfer of modal content*

Having described the state of affairs experienced by translators and interpreters as a consequence of the elusive nature of modality and the difficulty of accommodating it to the notion of translation equivalence, we are now in a position to suggest an approach that might help to solve some of the theoretical and ,above all, practical problems arising from the need to achieve a more approximate translation equivalence.

At the outset, one must realise that the significance of the area of translating modality lies in the observation that inexperienced translators who are non-native speakers of English are sometimes bewildered by the large number of possible ways of expressing the contents of *possibility, necessity, permission, obligation* and other semantic categories. As English makes greater use of modals than Arabic, many such translators tend to use the wrong equivalent , often a lexical meaning, regardless of the requirements of their context, understandably failing to convey an approximation of the intended content or the overall interpretation - based translation. The field of translation is especially demanding because of the number of tasks that would need to be undertaken by the translator/interpreter. Some of these tasks are concerned with general cultural knowledge as well as

translation/interpreting skills. The hardest part is bridging the cultural gap between two cultures when we try to transfer the total message, carried through the concepts and symbols ( i.e. thoughts and words ) of one language into another.

The texts used in Chapter III show clearly that in translating modal expressions of both colloquial and classical texts, cultural sensitivity and creativity are essential if we wish to maintain the style of the total communication. Very often, different languages communicate similar content via different expressions involving different numbers of words.

Because modality is such a broad area the material cannot be delimited in specific ways - particularly in terms of the fields covered here, for instance *politics*, *the genre* (eg. newspaper writing ), and the *text-type* (eg. argumentative) to allow us to make reasonable generalisations regarding the appropriate translation strategies, relevant to the categories we have been able to identify. The principal aim of the study, therefore, has been to look at the aspect of modality in a variety of contexts in an attempt to maintain sufficient control over the relevant modal features of each of the contexts often encountered. What is sought here is the ability to identify in the course of such demonstration, recurrent patterns on which rules of interpretation may be based.

In all instances, the overall translation is shown to be possible in the form of approximation when linguistic considerations are first of all



envisaged. What we exactly refer to by linguistic considerations is the translator's, or more accurately the interpreter's ability to retrieve his mental lexicon where according to Katamba (1994: 259)

*"... lexical items are listed with the information about their meaning, pronunciation and grammatical and morphological properties stored as separate sub-components. "*

But ,first, it seems ideal for the native Arabic-speaking translator to have adequate understanding of the two languages involved, and also sufficient understanding of their respective cultures. In short, to be able to approximate a SL content, he/she is required to have some textual competence, so to speak, ideally expected from a bilinigual. By textual competence, here, we mean the ability to pinpoint the lingual/cultural function served by the particular occurrences of modal expressions in texts that would be translated.

Secondly, in order for translations of modal texts to be successfully rendered for the sake of carrying out a focused study, where sentences or parts of them had to be de-contextualised and then broken down for analysis, modal semantic categories characteristic of the source language need to be identified. Such identification, it is hoped, will contribute to the awareness - building process, by presenting an exercise that draws attention to the merits of obtaining contextual clues from the wider context of original text. Texts of this type, though many will argue that they often run the risk of presenting an incomplete meaning, are often felt to be more practical than they are in longer forms. Certain linguistic features ( here, modal functions ) may readily be pointed out to the intending or, in training courses, student

translators by contrasting a whole manageable text with its translation rather than carrying out long static systemic contrasts of, say, *syntactic, lexical or phonological* elements as is the case in the traditional approaches to translation. Contextual meaning, we think, can in this way be adequately dealt with later through interpretation. Therefore, the analyses in chapter III demonstrate that in studying modal constructions presented along with their translations, the need to look at the modality as a language-in-use phenomenon is not overlooked. Appealing to the wider context becomes essential after a limited meaning is established. In the following chapter, we seek to show that rules of interpretation can be used to supplement the limited translational meaning and ultimately arrive at an approximation to the intended meaning of the source text. Approximation carries with it the implication that we need to clear out of the way, sometimes, what hampers communication in the target language. Certain things that are likely to get lost in such a process may be annotated, sometimes bracketted. Attempts will be made to see what theoretical and ultimately practical implications this inquiry can have for the production of translation. Modal functions will be identified in the light of the analyses of modal texts already carried out in the previous chapter.

#### 4.1

#### Theoretical implications

One of the main conclusions one may derive from the analyses of modal texts, nevertheless, is the significance of a text whole as a most adequate unit of analysis. And since we believe that a text is essentially a continuous thing and that everything in it has a context, a translator should always go beyond the written (visual) text - indeed into the pragmatics of its context or *what is triggered by the text*. In other words, it is vital to consider translation, in so far as it is influenced by the situational context. Such an approach to the context helps the translator to select the relevant interpretation. But the fact remains that the starting point for the translator is a manageable text whose meaning is determined by the context. Decontextualised texts as opposed to whole texts ( *chunks* ), are sometimes used because they are both convenient and practical as self-teaching aids containing modal expressions. Some texts, as it happens, contain a number of modal expressions making it difficult to focus one's attention on all individual semantic contributions to the content of the whole text at the same time. Therefore, to point out the importance of a text whole in producing target language approximations and to confirm the view that adequate translations of modal texts can be achieved, their rendering must be supplemented by interpretation and therefore be carried out in the light of rule-based interpretation obtained from the original contexts of which the isolated texts form a part. Target language approximations of any source texts must be shown to be the result of actually selecting from a range of possible realisations because one must remember that here are two types of ambiguity (i.e lexical and syntactic) which may be found in a modal structure that allows more than one interpretation.

The chosen realisation must convey a close approximation to the source language sense which is expressed by the source text deep structure. That is, if the source language text message expressed by the modal expression is intended to be a *request* rather than *permission*, then only the former content may be transferred into the target language text. The content intended by the source language author may adequately be formulated, provided that the wider context is taken into account, i.e. in the context in which the isolated expression to be translated originally occurs.

The obvious argument is that if you have an isolated source language text, you are bound to have, as a result in the target language translation, an isolated meaning. Even pre-established linguistic meaning would be transferred and consequently realised in a different cultural setting as in (1), where a guest is asked to taste some food :

(1) Lā budda an taḍuqa hāda lSinf mina lTaEām.

Trans. You must taste this type of food.

While in the Arabic text the speaker is asking the guest to act in accordance with a conventional rule of generosity, in the English translation, the speaker seems to insist that the guest acts also according to a conventional rule, but certainly not in accordance with some rule of generosity. To achieve an approximation, here, the overall translation would have to be something like :



*You must taste this type of food , please.*

despite the fact the Arabic linguistic equivalent of 'please' is not physically present in the original text.

At this point, it is important to reiterate that most of the texts in chapter III are , in fact, presented in isolation from their wider context for purely presentational purposes. While it is true that our discussion above is in favour of relating texts to their natural contexts, we must point out, nevertheless, that the basic aim behind introducing them in this manner is solely to simulate the actual procedures followed by translators. Such translators start off with translations as '*translation proper*' and then progress into an *overall frame of translation* that embodies interpretation. They do this because the nature of their work involves a selection of texts covering a large area of communication. This selection is bound to involve types of texts which often overlap. Note, for instance, example (186) in chapter III, where *command* and *advice* seem to be inseparable.

The fact that our selected texts are not confined to a certain text type, field or genre, that they are presented as individual texts while at the same time making use of the contextual clues derived from their original context, points to the applied aim of our study. The analyses have been presented as an exercise in the critical assessment of modal translations based on traditional approaches to contrastive linguistics. Though in such analyses our material embodies a diversity of *fields*,



genres, and text-types, we shall attempt to make reasonable generalisations regarding some appropriate translation strategies, based on rules of interpretation relevant to the modal functions in the texts analysed. Specifically, we have tried to delimit our material in terms of their functions from a translational point of view. Such functions include major ones like *advice, politeness, request and command* and minor ones like *promise, threat, logical obligation, self-imposed obligation, policy justification, recommendation, strong suggestion, deduction, natural inevitability, social distancing, intensification, doubt, wishing, persuasion ...etc.*

As contexts in Arabic and English often differ, minimisation of multiple choice in the search for a compatible text conveying a parallel sense will be done in the light of rules governing a common function. The sense, therefore, is not transferred without such choice being based on the understanding of the cultural setting in which a text is uttered. A case in point is what happens when, in Arabic, someone, in response to a question like ' *Are you coming tonight ?* ', says /in<sup>ʔ</sup> sā'a llāh/ ' *God willing* '. The obvious answer if he/she were English on this occasion would have been simply ' *yes*' if he/she were coming .

In English, the speaker is in no doubt that he/she will do so. While in Arabic, the speaker does not seem to be so sure as there is a cultural convention that man's fate and future actions are determined by God, *Allah*. However, if the sense is not conveyed into the target language text, the result will be a mere linguistic translation and possibly a total ' *pragmatic failure* ', to use J. Thomas's terminology (1983). If,

for instance, text (1) above could cause some misunderstanding if the literal sense is presented unmodified in an English context. What causes 'pragmatic failure' is basically failure to combine translation and interpretation when dealing with an intended sense. Literal translation feels wrong due to failure of looking at the text as merging into the meaning whole, otherwise known in linguistics as " *discourse* ". The conclusion has an important implication for the translating of such a confusing grammatico-pragmatic category as modality.

The state of modality in translation makes one argue in favour of considering ways of understanding and analysing language in such contexts. The intending translator, thus, is actually offered a chance to see equivalence not as a formal identity of grammatical, or even rigid mapping of lexical patterns but in terms of functionally equivalent text approximations. If the context of an isolated text is clarified by some plausible clues from the original text, translators might see for themselves the importance of such clues. Indeed, if the text and its translation can show this, then the method can be used as an effective strategy that will predict and solve problems arising from the use of certain modal devices.

One way of doing this might be the setting up of rules of interpretation based on the notion of speaker and hearer, and the assumption of shared knowledge and conventions between them. The translator will assume the role of both the speaker and that of the hearer with whom the translator identifies. Therefore, he/she is bound to follow the hearer's rules of

Setting up rules of interpretation is essential for the overall translation of modals due to the unreliability of comparing surface realisations as translations of each other. Identification of the functions is done in accordance with the rules each function complies with. The rules are particularly useful in the sense that they can apply to colloquial as well as standard texts. Awareness of such rules can accelerate the translating process, provided that modality is treated as a cultural phenomenon by the translator who concentrates on the intellectual as well as the creative aspects of the translation. Each task requires interpreting the conveyed messages. Thus, as translation gives way to interpreting, the use of interpretation procedures becomes quite necessary.

#### 4.2 Translation-oriented rules of interpretation

From the earlier chapter, one comes to the conclusion that no translation is complete without interpretation. The translator is responsible for making his meaning clear. It is not the responsibility of the reader to deduce the meaning that may underline a text. As in actual verbal situations, speakers and writers follow certain strategies, it is important that rules based on how to understand such strategies are set up. Any attempt at setting up such rules of interpretation, in our opinion, is bound to take into account the two principles according to which conversational texts are organised ( cf. James, 1980:128 ).

By these principles is meant ' *Grice's four maxims of co-operation* ' ( Grice, 1975:45 ), plus Lakoff's ' *rules of politeness* ' ( Lakoff, 1973 )

Briefly, Grice's four primary maxims, to which he believes, utterances conform, are summed up as :

- a. *Quantity:* *Be as informative as is required but no more than that \_ avoid redundancy ( or make your conversational contribution necessary )*
- b. *Quality* *Say only what you believe to be true or what you have evidence for.*
- c. *Relevance* *Be to the point.*
- d. *Manner* *Be clear and succinct. Avoid obscurity ( or simply do not be ambiguous.*

Unlike grammatical rules, Grice's rules are not consistently observed by the speakers. They very often *flout* them, resorting to indirect speech acts, or in Grice's terminology *conversational implicatures*.

Lakoff ( 1973: 297-8 ) is quite right in suggesting that in normal, interesting conversation, such rules are more honoured in the ' *breach*' than in the ' *observance* '. Lakoff does not offer alternatives to

Grice's rules but relates instead, her rules to them. Her claim is that conversation conforms to three rules which she calls the *rules of politeness*. Her rules were obviously meant to relate to English, in particular. Such rules, however, may apply to Arabic to a certain extent, though of course, that is not Lakoff's intention. She identifies three rules for *politeness* :

- a. *Don't impose.*
- b. *Give options.*
- c. *Make 'A' feel good \_ be friendly.*

Following is her illustration, here, rendered by us into Arabic. It shows that once the situation is identified by the speaker, he/she then ensures that the three rules operate simultaneously :

(2) hal bi imkānī an as'aluka kam dafaEta min ajli <sup>√</sup>sira'i hādihī  
lmizhariyyati yā sayyid pikering ?

Trans. May I ask you much you paid for that vase, Mr. Pickering ?

James (1980:129) elaborated on the first rule, by saying that possible risks of *intrusion* may be minimalised if *permission* is simultaneously sought.



Thus, it appears that knowledge of such rules of interpretation by the reader is a must, from both a practical and specifically a pedagogical point of view. It is an essential requirement for being a successful translator. Awareness of these rules will certainly provide the translator with a critical eye for the type of semantic/pragmatic category expressed by a particular expression, and also help him/her set a new way of pinpointing and then tackling a very old translational problem. Such needs, however, are excluded in the case of clear-cut knowledge of something like *ability*...etc. Equally important is awareness and knowledge of contextual rules of interpretation. If they can be set up as in (4.2.1), (4.2.2), (4.2.3), (4.2.4)... , then translation can easily be aided. Further, if clues demonstrate the likelihood of a well-defined function, say, *advice*, being the main message conveyed by the text, then the translator can readily ascertain that through identifying with the hearer and applying the relevant rules for identifying *advice*.

#### 4.2.1

#### Advice

Rules for *advice* in Arabic may be represented as follows :

a- A tells B directly that B ought to do X .

b- B has the ability to do X.

c- B has the moral obligation to do X.

d- There is no overriding reason against doing X.

e. If X is done, the hearer B will benefit from it.

As far as the rules identified for *advice*, one needs, in addition, to remember that *advice* in Arabic is typically offered in the form of a *performative* as in (3) :

(3) anSaHuka bi an turajīEa lTabība bi asraEi waqtin mumkin.

Trans. I advise you to see the doctor as soon as possible.

Yet, in English, a rendering like (3) would seem to the English reader or hearer as conveying a *commanding tone*. It would, therefore, be restricted to formal contexts. In the absence of formality, it would be formulated more tentatively as :

*I would see the doctor as soon as possible.*

Contrary to what happens in Arabic, in English, if ' *advice* ' takes the imperative form, the *mood* is softened down by a following *elliptical* clause as in (4) to get the addressee to do something for his/her own good. In (4), this is done with the overt expression minus the conditional clause :

" *If I were you* .... "

(4) Tell him the truth. I would.

In (5), the ellipsis takes another disguised form:

(5) I should see a doctor at once.

The ' I should ' part in (5) is used in the sense of ' *I think you should* '. See Nolasco ( 1990: 134 )

However, it may be noted that Arabic, through contact with English and other European languages, has adopted some linguistic strategies as in the clause / ləw kuntu fī maḤallika ( makānika ) /, on the analogy of the English stock clause *If I were you*, for instance, making translation of such Arabic phrases into English and vice versa a relatively easier task. Text (4) above does satisfy rules (a) and (b) and (c) if we retrieve the verb phrase that has undergone the ellipsis (... *if I were you* ). In texts like (6) and (7) below, the focus seems to be on rule (e) because of a generally understood rule that we act *voluntarily* to get what is good for us . So if the hearer were to do X, it would indeed be for this reason. The 'advice' is put across *provocatively* as in (6) and (7). This is supported by the implicature that the hearer would indeed do X if the situation were beneficial as proclaimed :

(6)      lŏw kuntu maHallika, laštaraytuha Hālan.

Trans. If I were you, I would buy it immediately.

(7)      lŏw kuntu makanaka, la aTlaEtuhum Ealā lHaqīqa.

Trans. If I were you, I would tell them the truth.

As for texts (8) and (9), they seem to satisfy rule (6) which states that there is no overriding reason against doing X :

(8)      lima la tuxabbiruhum (bi)nafsika ?

Trans. Why don't you tell them, yourself ?

The underlying implication, here, is something like ' *I think this might be best* '.

Rule (c) may be applied directly as in (10) :

#### 4.2.2                      Politeness

*Politeness* is a vague semantic function. It is expressed by several

conversational devices aimed at being ' nice ' to the addressee, that is, making him/her feel good. Thus intending translators and translators alike need to be made aware of the basic rules of identifying this concept. Lakoff's first rule ' *Don't impose* ', however, does not always apply to Arabic as in (9) since Arabic life patterns especially require imposing the speaker's will on the addressee.

Most of the English translations in chapter (iii), particularly those containing modal auxiliaries, seem to involve one form of *politeness* as a major or a secondary function. But despite the validity of modal auxiliaries as a means of expressing ' *politeness* ', modality cannot usefully be evaluated in terms of degrees of the concept. Lakoff (1974:26) rightly points this out by saying that :

*" There may well be different idiolects of politeness. What is courteous behaviour to me might well be boorish to you, because we have slightly but differently formulated rules or because our hierarchy of acceptibility is different. "*

Consider the following texts :

- (9) xud qitEatan uxrā. wallāhī, lā budda an tafEala.  
 ( uxud baEad wiSla. wallā lāzim tāxud. [Informal Iraqi dialect] )

Trans. Have another piece. You must.  
 ( Take another piece. Go on. )



Despite being a norm in Arabic, , (9) may appear to an English person as a hectoring method of offering that does not leave open the options available to the addressee, and appears to violate Lakoff's rule (b) which applies to English. By implication, it imposes upon the addressee and therefore violates rule (a). Note, in particular, the use of the , oath '.../wallāhi/ ' ' I swear by God ', even where no such avowal is warranted. Indeed, it appears to imply *imposition* rather than giving options. The conclusion to be derived, here, is that Lakoff's rule of option-giving does not always work for Arabic. Again, that very English person would be surprised to learn that a *politeness-expressing* text like ,

*Would you like some cake ?*

as a translation in (9), would, in Arabic, be quite insincere and hence impolite. Gramley and Patzold (1992:159), however, seem to identify a type of *obligation* nearly similar to that found in Arabic. They claim that

· " *If something pleasant is expressed as an obligation, must is unproblematic ( You must try our new sauna ).* "

The *oath* and the *imperative* in (9) work hand in hand in the cordial, solicitous attempt to persuade the guest to eat more. The cultural content conveyed by such linguistic strategy, i.e. oath + imperative differs from that conveyed by its English counterpart ' would + you + inf. ... ?

The difference must not be described in terms of *politeness* but in terms of different cultural traditions and hence different hierarchies of cultural values. Consider, for instance, the following text :

(10) tafaDDal bil julūs. (lit. Please yourself by sitting)

Trans. Would you like to sit down ?

At this point the translator should be reminded that when English expressions like

*Would you like ...?*

have no Arabic equivalents, this in no way implies that Arabic does not employ interrogative forms in ' requests '. Indeed, one could in Arabic ask about the addressee's ability to do something, or about her or his *kindness/goodness* to do the speaker a favour as in (11) , and (10) above as well :

(11) hal tastaTiEu an tusaEidanī ?

Trans. Could you help me ?

Yet, we could not ask the addressee in Arabic to do something by using, for example, the literal Arabic equivalent of such English expressions as :

(12) Would you like to sit down ?

Trans. hal laka (fī) 'an tajlusa ?

The translation in (12) above would, from an Arab point of view, be rather odd \_ in fact represents a naive hypocrisy. Such a view clearly misses the point. The inexperienced translator, who is unaware of the degree of *politeness* conveyed by the text, has in the above translation taken the linguistic meaning literally, leaving out the *cultural content* conveyed by the situation in the English cultural setting. Again, even such translation as in (12) above would mean something similar to

*Dost thou wish to sit down ?*

considering the classical nature of the style of the Arabic text. It does not, therefore, capture the notion of English *politeness* expressed in (12), which is something like " *Please, sit down, while....* ". The introduction of more texts of this nature might be quite useful as the student translator needs to conclude for himself that semantic formulas are, in the main, the same and sometimes slightly different in the two languages ; the real difference lies in the linguistic strategies typical of each culture.

#### 4.2.3

#### Request

*Request* is a modal function very often expressed through questions though it may sometimes be made direct through assertions like (13). It is generally seen in Arabic as a combination of ' *request* ', ' *appeal* ' and ' *politeness* '. The last component must not, of course, be understood as it is expressed in English. The function *request* itself as opposed to question is generally assumed, by social convention, to suggest more politeness. It may be expressed, as in English, directly in the form of a question, though pragmatically with the force of a request. Here, to show how this is realised in English, the following illustrative texts quoted in Green (1975), will be drawn upon :

- a- *Will you close the door ?* (p.107)
- b- *Won't you close the window, please ?* (P.137)
- c- *Would you get me a glass of water ?* (P.132)
- d- *Would you mind closing the window ?* (P.118)
- e- *Why don't you be a honey and start the dinner now ?* (P.130)

However, caution is warranted sometimes since literal translations of texts in the form of the last text above , *why don't you...* may very well be interpreted as a combination of ' *question* ' and ' *criticism* ', rather than like utterances of the *request* type. Note, for instance :

*Why do it at all ?*

and,

*Why cry over spilt milk ?*

In this connection, it is worth pointing out that (e) above can hardly be considered a genuine question. Green (1975:127) rightly argues that a text like

*Why aren't you quiet ?*

can, indeed, be a genuine question, unlike the text

*Why don't you be quiet ?*

which cannot be thus considered since, despite having an interrogative semantic component, there is a strong case for treating it as a speech act.

Identification of *requests* by translators may be enhanced by a consideration of the following conditions :

a- The addressee has the ability to do X.

b- The addressee has the willingness to do X.



c- X needs to be done for the benefit of the speaker.

d- The speaker gives the addressee options to do X.

Even with the identification of a *request* in an isolated text, a wider context is essential for the enhancement of such identification and also the recreation of a *coherent discourse*. This often happens in real translation as once our interpretation faculty is activated, we begin to infer a relationship between two successive events. When the two sentences are combined, we usually try to establish a semantic link by binding events together with such structures as co-ordinates.

For instance, texts like (11) are often described as conventional, polite requests. Such requests express a literal meaning which is potentially ambiguous with respect to illocutionary force. Thus, a sentence like

*Can you pass the salt ?*

may well be interpreted either as a *question* about the hearer's ability or as a *request* to perform a service for the speaker. Apart from conventional requests, there are direct and indirect *requests* in Arabic and in English which focus on the listener's physical ability to do X as in (13) and (14) :

(13) hal bi imkānika an tarfaEa Sawtaka qalīlan rajā'an ?

Trans. Can you speak a little louder, please ?

(14) anā abHatu Ean maktabi lsayyid majīd.

Trans. I am looking for (trying to find out where) Mr.Majeed's office is.

Sometimes requests may focus on the addressee's willingness to do X as in (15) and (16) :

(15) hal tasmaHu bi'an tatrukanī wasā'ni ?

Trans. Would you mind leaving me alone ?

(16) hal tasmaHu bi'an tantaZiru hunā?

Trans. Would you like to wait here ?

It will be clear from the contexts from which such examples have been extracted that there is a sense of expectation that the sought compliance is guaranteed.

#### 4.2.4

#### Command

*Command* occurs basically in three types. It can be direct, softened or even muffled. Some modal expressions may serve to express a softened sort of command in English. In Arabic, however, its approximation may be achieved by the addition of /rajā'an/ as in (17), as a counter-part of the question-tag " ..., will you ? " as in (18) below, where the hearer is left almost no choice.

The rules for identifying this function in Arabic are reflected in the following features :

1. They are in the *imperative*.
2. The hearer is *not given options*.
3. X needs to be done for purpose Y.
4. The speaker feels he/she has the right to tell the hearer to do X.
5. The speaker believes the hearer can do X.

As in English, *command* in Arabic is expressed by the *imperative form* as in (17). The imperative mood is often set out as a *direct order* or *strong request* to another person or other persons. It is normally used in the second person which is readily interpreted as an '*implicit you*':

(17) uḡluqī lbāb (rajā'an).

Trans. Close the door (,please).

The English *command* may, sometimes, take the form of a tag-imperative as there seems to be a strong reluctance to employ the imperative. Thus, the student translator needs to be aware of this distinctive feature of the English language. Therefore, *command* is very often expressed with one of the softening devices that cause it to enter a middle ground between a *request* and an *obligation*. But, it must be remembered that the contextual situation often provides us with clues that indicates the presence of a falling intonation or other contextual clues in the case of written texts. Such contextual features effectively enhance such a *command*. It also helps to mitigate the force of the imperative as in (18) :

(18) Stop the noise, will you ?

....., won't you ?

....., can't you ?

....., would you ?

In MSA, speakers do sometimes tag their imperatives with modal expressions like /idā tismaH/ (lit. *if you allow*) or /ldw samiHt/ '*if you allowed* though it must be emphasised that it is less impolite to use

commands in Arabic than in English. Therefore, many of the commands in the former are, in fact, polite requests. The use of modal tag structures of the /law samiHt/ type in Arabic seems to have taken over in the form of new stylistic developments or loans from either of the two languages, namely, English and French with which it has been in contact. These Arabic modal expressions are semantically approximate counterparts of English *if you will* and the French *s'il vous plaît*. Examples like these have been, it is to be noted, fostered by a new habit of bilingual thinking and also by linguistic conditioning through translations. Thus, there comes a point where Arabic takes over stylistic calques, with improvised variants of its own making, and where the Arab writer and reader completely fail to perceive the very strangeness of the new expressions. Such modal expressions have readily found their way into many of the present-day Arabic dialects. For example, there are modal expressions, used like tags after commands, like /idạ tismaH/ [Iraqi dialect], /law samaHt/ [Arab Gulf dialect], /law smiHt/ or /izạ samaHt/ [Egyptian dialect].

Note how in (19) below the politeness coloured expression '/ida samaHt/' is approximated :

(19) ijlis, law samaHt.

Trans. Take a seat, will you.



A *muffled* type of command in Arabic that may fairly be treated as a *proposal* is the one introduced by the exhortatory particle /li-/ as in (20) or, to make the proposal provocatively persuasive as in (21) by the use of a combination of the two particles /fa-/ and /li-/. The Arabic first person plural is indicated through the presence of prefixe /nā-/. In such cases, the particle or the combination is prefixed to the form of the verb. In English, it is comfortably translated through the use of the verb 'let' as an auxiliary plus an infinitive without the marker 'to'.

(20) li nadhab maEan.

Trans. Let's go together.

(21) fal(i) nadhab sawiyyatan.

Trans. Let's go together, shall we ?

The modal tag expression in English seems to serve the function of 'exhortation' expressed in Arabic by pre-verbal particles as in (21) above.

Another interesting type of command which the translator is bound to find complying with the rules of *command* in the *opaque* type which has been identified and described by Downes (1977:80) in texts like the Arabic *declarative* in (22) below :

(22) anta faqaT tastaTīEu iSlaHa saEatī.

Trans. Only you can repair my watch.

The underlying message is ( *You are the man to repair it. So, do it.* )

The interpretation of this type is primarily based on inferring the proposition /aSlīH saEatī/ ' *repair my watch* ', with help obtainable from the wider context. From such clues, it is understood that the addressee ( and this the speaker seems to be confident about, i.e. his use of the emphatic marker /faqaT/ ), has some experience with watch repair and his services are therefore badly needed by the speaker.

At this point, it may be suggested that translating material expressing modality may first be delimited in ways other than ' *function* ' supported sometimes by the viewpoint of ' *tone* '. It can, for instance, be done in terms of ' *text type* ' or ' *genre* ' e.g. a newspaper article; an advertisement; a notice; a book review; a publicity material; an extract from a novel; a short story; a text book; or an encyclopaedia ...etc. At a later stage, the translator may look for a possible *major function*. This is then followed by a careful search for such *minor functions* as *natural inevitability, threat, promise, logical conclusion, strong recommendation, obligations, self-imposed obligation, social distancing, intensification* ...etc.

## 4.2.5

*Natural inevitability*

Many minor modal functions impose upon the translator their own rules of interpretation in the process of approximating the original message. The translator is advised to look for contextual clues and be aware, at the same time, of the difference between what is basically a *concept* (e.g. time) and what is a *category* (e.g. tense). For instance, the concept of 'futurity' in the following Arabic text is not physically expressed but the combined presence of the contextual clues 'venom' and 'destruction', however, give prominence to the basic rule of 'cause' and future 'effect'. This is understandably accommodated by the use of the modal 'will'.

Following is a translation by M.J. Young & R.Y. Ebied in their anthology 'Arab Stories : East and West' (1977:90) :

(23) qāla aḥadu lmutamarridīn  
inna talqīḥakum fāsīdun  
dawā'ukum summun taftiku bikum.

Trans. One of the rebels said :

Your inoculation is corrupt; your drug is  
a venom which will destroy you.

Here, *will* was used despite the fact that in the Arabic version the concept of time is expressed through the the grammatical category of the

present tense. The inevitability of 'destruction' following the 'consumption' of venom makes death a natural inevitability, hence the use of 'will' by the translator in the English version.

#### 4.2.6 *Threat*

*Threatening* is a modal function which can easily be anticipated if the wider context implicitly indicates the presence of rules which have been broken deliberately :

(24) faman iEtadā baEda dalika  
falahu Eadābun alīm . \*

Trans. Any, who transgresses  
therefore will have  
a grievous penalty.

The modal verb 'will' or 'shall', in addition to expressing *futurity* as

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\* See The Glorious Qur'an : Translation and Commentary by A.Y. Ali, The Islamic Foundation, London, 1975, Verse 97, P.272.

in (24) above, very often serves to bring forth the modal notion of 'threat' which is clearly implied by the tone of the very context and readily understood by the translator. The tone indicates that there are rules which, if broken, punishment will follow as a consequence of such a breach.

## 4.2.7

*Promise*

The modal function *promise* has some features in common with the notion of threat as a modal function. It involves the existence of conventional rules. If such rules are followed strictly and dutifully, the addressee is rewarded. In (25) the word /jaza'uhum/ 'their reward' is conditional upon the performance of their /SaliHāt/ 'righteous deeds' :

(25) inna iladīna āmenu wa Eamilū lSaliHātī<sup>4</sup>  
     ūla'ika hum xayru lbariyya  
     jaza'uhum Einda rabbihim Jannāti Eadnin  
     tajrī min taHtihā l'anharu xalidīna fihā. \*

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\* The Glorious Qur'an : Translation and Commentary by A.Y. Ali, The Islamic Foundation, London, 1975, XCVIII, verses 7-8, p.1767, Al-Bayyina (*The Clear Evidence*)



Trans. Those who have faith  
and do righteous deeds,  
they are the best of creatures  
Their reward is with God.  
Gardens of Eternity  
Beneath which rivers flow;  
They will dwell therein.

It follows then from the previous and this sections that:

1. There are rules to be followed strictly by the addressee(s).
2. If the addressee flouts them, there will be a punishment.  
( A 'promise' with a threat)
3. If the addressee adheres to them, there will be a reward.  
( A genuine Promise of a reward)

Again, the modal verb 'will' or 'shall' is used to fulfill an earlier promise at a pre-determined point in the future.

4.2.8

*Logical conclusion / Strong recommendation /  
Obligation / Policy justification.*

*Obligation* indicates that there is something (X) necessary that needs to be or must be done. Failure to do it, may result in something undesirable for oneself or the addressee. It can be *self-obligatory*, ( relating to internal compulsion ) when the speaker is an 'I' or a 'we' as in (27) or *opologetic* about some external deontic obligation as in (26) :

(26) rubbamā taxtalifu maEī walakīn kāna labudda min ltawqīEī Ealā  
lmuEahada.

Trans. You might disagree with me but the treaty had to be signed.

(27) Ealayya ltawaqqufu Ean ltadxīn Hālan.

Trans. I must stop smoking at once.

When *obligation* is expressed generally, it usually indicates some implied form of *command* though it is formally expressed through the use of 'must' in texts where 'you' is expressed or simply implied (see, 3.4.3), particularly in examples like (97) and (98) where external compulsion is evident. In the case of the three remaining types; namely, ' *logical conclusion* ', ' *strong recommendation* ' and ' *policy justification* ', the rule is to make sure that the subtle differences are identified with the help of cotextual clues. In Arabic, the first is expressed by the forms /yalzam/, /yataHattam Ealā/ or simply /Ealā/, all meaning ' *have(has) to* '; the second by the forms /kāna yalzamu/, /kāna labudda/, /taHattama Ealā/ expressed in English as ' *had to* ' whereas the third is expressed by /yajibu/ ' *must* ':

- (28) bisababi ngilaqu lmaSnaEi, yalzamu Ealā lEummālī lbaHta Ean aEmālīn uxrā.

Trans. Due to the closure of the factory, the workers have to look for other jobs.

- (29) bisababi ngilaqu lmaSnaEi, yajibu (yatawajjabu) Ealā lEummālī lbaHtu Ean aEmālīn uxrā

Trans. Due to closure of the factory, the workers must look for other jobs.

In (28) the use of /yalzamu Ealā/ and its Arabic counterpart /have to/ involves an outside *deontic* obligation which takes the onus off the speaker while /yajibu Ealā/ and its equivalent '*must*' in (29), clearly indicates a subjective type of modality. As for the logical conclusion type, it is generally preceded by a condition offered in the form of a *plausible supposition*. The conclusion is well expressed through the use of / lā budda/ plus / an/ ' *ought to* ' :

- (30) "in k̄anat Turuqu ltaElīmi ltaqlīdiyya qādiratan Ealā rafBī mustawā hā'ulā' l'aTfālī ilā Haddin maqbūl fī 10 ayyamin faqaT, lā budda (w) an yakūna nīZāmuna liltāElīmi l'ibtīdā'i qādirun Ealā taElīmihim lqirā'ata jamīEan xilāla Eāmin wāHidin. "

Trans. " If traditional teaching can bring these children up to scratch in just 10 days, our primary system ought to be able to teach every one to read within one year, "

( 27 August 1995. THE SUNDAY TIMES

#### 4.2.9

#### *Social distancing*

This is a very complex modal function with a veiled combination of closely related functions like 'condition', 'possibility', 'wishing', and 'doubt' with an underlying implication that the addressee may or may not respond favourably. It is often easy to identify, as a rule, through the presence of contextual lexical words like /in/ 'if', or /fīma ida/ 'whether'. It is a way of being both formal and polite. When it is too formal or specifically 'stiff' in tone, it becomes a sign of coldness and may even imply some degree of rudeness. But these are instances which depend entirely on the contextual clues and largely on the intonation and tone in the speaker's voice. They represent a fascinating domain of modality worthy of a separate investigation. It is worth mentioning that this modal function often operates in a 'present' context, despite the fact that it can formally be expressed through a 'present', 'past' or a 'past continuous' tense especially in English. This is due to the fact that 'mood' and 'hypothesis' are not tied up with the tense system :

(31) atasā'alu fīmā idā kunta qādiran Ealā irsāli stimāratī Talabin.

Trans. I wonder if (whether) you could send me an application form.

wondered

was wondering

Another form of *social distancing* is 'assumption'. This sub-category is of the *epistemic* type. It characterises the speech of politicians and spokespersons. The verbs that take sentential complements like 'think', 'would like', 'assume', 'believe' and 'doubt' are especially used to display this conversational strategy. Such verbs are readily employed whenever lack of commitment towards the proposition in the statement is warranted :

(32) aEtaqidu wa u'akkidu lakum bianna hādīhi lmas'ala satazūlu  
qarībn

Trans. I believe and I assure you that this will soon be over.

#### 4.2.10

#### *Intensification*

The basic clue for identifying this minor function is to look for text adverbials or emphatic structures that indicate certainty and at the same time express a mental state of 'possibility', 'vague possibility', 'doubt' or 'wishing'. For interpreting such instances, the simple



rule is to approximate them by using their adverbial counterpart in the target language :

e.g. /rubbamā/ ..... 'may be'

/bilkād/ ..... 'hardly', 'barely'

/taqrīban/ ..... 'almost'

/Haqqan/ ..... 'indeed', 'certainly'

Consider the following examples from the Holy Qur'an :

(33) famā kāna daEEwāhum idd ja'ahum ba'sunā  
illā an qālu innā kunna Zālimīn. \*

Trans. When (thus) our punishment  
took them, no cry  
did they utter but this :  
" Indeed, we did wrong. "

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\* The Glorious Qur'an : Translation and Commentary by A. Y. Ali, The Islamic Foundation, London, 1975, Sura XCviii, Verse vii, P.342. Al-A'raf (*The Heights*)

#### 4.3 Practical implications : ( *Conclusions & Recommendations* )

In a practical process like translation, the problem of modality and of its cultural significance is not a purely theoretical one. It is a problem of practical importance. Therefore, it is fair to say that as long as it is generally assumed that modality is merely a linguistic notion, the prospect for modality as a linguistic device with a cultural aspect is not particularly bright. If translators translate only the lexical meaning expressed by the modal expressions, their translations are likely to be misunderstood, as they will very often misrepresent the source texts. They need to concern themselves with effecting a transfer of the intended concept represented by the modal in the SL text as well as recreating it in the TL. The problem may not be eliminated but it can certainly be minimised if they assume the role of the interpreter by exploring ways of predicting the type of modal content to be derived from the wider context, and acquiring a new skill in the form of a method whereby they may compare any cultural information associated with the use of modal expressions in the source culture with its closest equivalent in the receptor culture. They need to try to transfer that content in TL forms.

Adopting this technique and using the criteria employed for guidance, it is hoped, will gradually improve their ability to communicate through the use of modal structures and also add a measure of interest to the translator's willingness to give due attention to the intentions of the speaker. Therefore, it seems obvious that, after all, a linguistic study of modality in translation based on interpretative procedures has a considerable potential for applications within such fields as

*translator training, discourse analysis and foreign language teaching.* In the case of teaching English as a foreign language, as modal meaning is not always a linguistic meaning, a language course incorporating a modality -in- translation module may be beneficial to the prospective teachers of a foreign language. It provides them with a method that helps them to develop and shape up their own particular approach to teaching. Additionally, it makes them directly aware of the type of problems arising from differences between cultures, and consequently helps them to predict and consequently appreciate such difficulties.

The method proposed here has a great deal to contribute to the fascinating domain of translating and interpreting because languages belonging to different cultures seem to be increasingly edging towards a comparable degree of development. One such contribution, in this regard, is the preparation of a set of basic guidelines or, in other words, some easy-to-follow instructions. It, thus, provides a useful starting point. However, it is important that such guidelines are not treated as templates.

Although we have used traditional terminology, we have tried to show the difficulty arising from their application. Our aim was to make translators feel confident about their understanding skill so that they can focus on their translation.

The findings of this study can also be used to broaden our understanding of modals in general, since the very idea of using them as communicative tools is to force the hearer or the reader into interpreting what is being said and eventually reaching an approximation, an equivalence with a difference.

Since chapters in this thesis are self-contained, they can be adopted easily to suit the needs of the individual intending translators.

Further, as the use of modals enables us to express subtle variations in the meaning of our sentences or, to be more precise, our utterances, one may press the point further and suggest a compilation of a corpus of all the identified modal functions that can be found, to be used later by the human translator, in a computer-aided type of translation to help him/her to retain control over what might be called an *open - ended, creative facility* which only man is endowed with. This points to the merit of being able to retrieve approximate equivalents by making use of the stored information about possible modal functions, regardless of context. The method should also be able to provide a modal on which to work, and thus enable the human translator to concentrate on the intellectual and creative aspect of his work.

The latter part of this observation invites us to ponder over the basic fact that meaning is always mentally represented in a specific format. Such a format could be either pictorial or verbal. But any uttered or written text is actually comprehended in the form of a representation which is neither verbal (written) nor pictorial. Luckily, it can readily be translated into either of those two formats. Armed with the ability to interpret and the skill to translate, a translator can easily represent the content of the modal texts in the verbal form of the target language.

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