

Analysis on Modals of Filipino as a Category of Adverb

Niña Lilia R. Javier

Abstract—This study discussed and analyzed the different modals of Filipino language wherein a concise and easy to understand description of the modal was given by the researcher. There is only a limited number of books in Filipino that discuss modals. In the Tagalog and Filipino grammar, it was not yet clear on what lexical category modal is included. This study clearly explained that the modal in the Filipino language is a category of adverb because the adverb dictates the modal in Filipino. The modal is also focused on the word it modifies in the sentence; therefore, the modal acts as a modifier. The study used comparative analysis on the modals in Filipino and English. This analysis uncovered the great role of modals in changing the meaning of the sentence. It is important to understand the use of modals because by using modals in sentences (syntax), there would be a clear semantics or a well-defined meaning denoted and distinct purpose of the speaker. Overall, these insights will also serve as a contribution to the study and teaching of modals of Filipino and eventually, this can also be included in Filipino grammar books.

Index Terms—Adverb, modals, linguistics, semantics, syntax.

I. INTRODUCTION

Modals are used in sentences to make the intended meaning more vibrant and clearer. However, there has been varied interpretations and definitions of Filipino Modals. In fact, different grammarians have various assertions and theories that modals belong to lexical category. There is a book which states that modal is a noun whereas some assert that modal is a pseudo-verb (Pseudo-verbs indicate some of the modalities (e.g., wants and obligations) expressed by modal verbs in English (e.g. can, may, should). There are also who say that modal falls on the category of an adverb.

Moreover, studies and explanations concerning modals are still limited or only a few are being conducted. In fact, modals are rarely found and read in Tagalog grammar or even in Filipino grammar. The words gusto(like), nais(want), ibig(love), kailangan (need), dapat (must), maaari(may), pwede(can) are all considered pseudo verb (verb-like) [1].

It has been contrasted by other authors as words like dapat, kailangan, gusto, ibig, dapat, maaari, and pwede are called modal nouns [2].

Other authors also divided modals into two. These modals are embedded in modal verbs which express emotions. These modals are divided into non-derivational (dapat, nararapat, maaari, and pwede) and derivational (gusto, nais, ibig and kailangan) [3].

Some authors also called modal as “**panagano**”. Modal

was defined as words that add perspective and express the feelings of the speaker such as modals of: necessity (kailangan, dapat), obligation (dapat, kailangan), permission (maaari, pwede), possibility (baka, tila, maaari), wish (sana, nawa), ability (kaya), want (gusto, ibig, nais) and certainty (talaga, totoo, tunay). Modals are placed under the category of adverbs a sit modifies an adjective, verb, adverb or a word group; thus, a modal is also a modifier [4].

In connection to this, the study on Filipino modals will only prove that it is different from English modals in the sense that English modals are under the category of verbs. This study will clearly explain and discuss the nature and characteristics of Filipino modals under the category of adverbs.

II. OBJECTIVES

This study sought to explain and address the following:

1. Define clearly the meaning of modals of Filipino as a category of adverb;
2. Enumerate the different types of modals of Filipino and the meaning it conveys in a sentence;
3. Analyze the modals in Filipino and prove that it is under the category of adverb.

III. METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

This study is a descriptive study on Filipino modals. It studied and investigated the structure and semantics of modals. The researcher also gathered books in Tagalog and Filipino which had discussions on modals [1]-[3], and [4].

In addition to that, the study of Coates [5] was also used as a reference of this study in her book *The Semantics of Modal Auxiliaries*. Another reference used by the researcher is the definition given by Palmer [6], *Mood and Modality* which is a study on modal in English grammar that clearly discusses modals functioning as a verb in a sentence.

Definitions and explanations on modals were analyzed and compared. The sentences and examples came from the corpus of spoken and written Filipino and were scrutinized accordingly. This study also considered the semantics of each modals to clearly present its meaning in sentences.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The clear definition of modal is that modal adds meaning to the totality of the message or statement [4]. A modal is a word that adds insight or thoughts of the speaker about a statement. It may state the possibility, uncertainty, certainty, necessity, wish, obligations, abilities, and the likes. Modal is also evident in the English language through verbs and not as an adverb. Modals in English grammar is more evident in

Manuscript received March 19, 2018; revised June 5, 2018. This work was supported by The Research Office of the Bulacan State University, City of Malolos, Bulacan, 3000 Philippines.

Niña Lilia R. Javier is with the Bulacan State University, City of Malolos, Bulacan 3000 Philippines (e-mail: nina.lilia_javier@yahoo.com).

verbs like will, can, may, must, etc., but in Filipino, adverbs are the one which dictates the modal to be used [6]. This clearly shows the identity and uniqueness of the Filipino grammar.

Modal is a category of adverb; however, it is different from a usual adverb for a reason that adverb, according to its traditional definition, modifies verbs, adjectives, and another adverb but a modal can stand alone as a predicate whereas an adverb as a modifier cannot stand alone as a predicate without a word being modified.

Further manifestation that modal is a category of adverb is that modal does not only modify a verb, adjective, or even another adverb, but also a modal can modify noun predicate, article, prepositional phrase or the complete predicate.

Example:

- (a) Dapat titser si Yssa. (noun modifier)
(Yssa should be a teacher)
- (b) Parang si Ysrael ang doctor. (noun modifier)
(It seems that the doctor is Rael.)
- (c) Kailangang sa kapitan ang barangay. (article modifier)
(The barangay should be for the captain.)
- (d) Tila para kay Jared ang kotse. (prepositional phrase modifier)
(The car seems to be for Jared.)

In examples (a) and (b), modals “dapat” and “parang” modify nouns. Example (c) shows that the modal “kailangan” modifies an article and in the example (d) the modal “tila” modifies a prepositional phrase in the sentence. Modals give additional colors to the meaning of each statement as shown in the following examples:

- (1) Pumunta ako sa bahay. (definitely)
(I went to the house.) = (possibility of doing the action)
Baka pumunta ako sa bahay. (I might go to the house.)
- (2) Gumawa ka ng assignment. (direct command)
(Do your assignment.)
Kailangang gumawa ka ng assignment. (necessity to do the command)
(You need to do your assignment)
- (3) Kailangan sundin ang dress code tuwing Lunes. (necessity to do the action)
(Dress code needs to be observed every Monday.) =
- (4) Gusto na nang pagbabago ng Pilipinas. (intense desire)
(The Philippines wants change already.) =
- (5) Dapat yatang sumali sa isangorganisasyon. (obligation with uncertainty)
(Perhaps, it is a must to join an organization.) =

To further understand modal in Filipino, the table below shows the following modal in Filipino and what each modal

express together with its examples .

TABLE I: THE FILIPINO MODALS

Modal	Expresses:	Example
1. Kailangan (need) Dapat (must)	Necessity	Kailangang maibalik ang aklat bukas. (The book should be returned tomorrow.)
2. Dapat (must) Kailangan (should)	Obligation	Dapat sundin ang batas trapiko. (Traffic rules must be followed.)
3. Maaari (may) Pwede (can)	Permission	Maaaring pumasok ang may ID. (Those with ID may enter.)
4. Baka (might) Tila (might) Yata (might) Maaari (may)	Possibility	Tila uulan mamaya. (It might rain later.)
5. Sana (may) Nawa (may)	Request Wish	Sana'y bumuti ang iyong kalagayan. (May your condition become better.)
6. Kaya (Can)	Ability	Kaya niyang pumasa sa board exam. (He can pass the board exam.)
7. Gusto (like) Ibig (love) Nais (want)	Wish Desire	Gusto kong bumili ng bagongkotse. (I like to buy a new car.)
8. Talaga (certainly) Totoo (truly) Tunay (really)	Certainty	Talagang mahusay ang kaniyang pamumuno. (His leadership is really excellent.)

Evidences that modal in Filipino is a category of Adverb:

1. Modal is not a noun but this can be regarded as noun-predicate because according to the definition of an adverb, an adverb can modify verb, adjective, or another adverb. Adverbs can also modify phrases, clauses, and predicates.
Examples:
Kailangang piloto si Lui Abraham. (noun modifier)
(Lui Abraham needs to be a pilot.)
Dapat doctor si Angela. (noun modifier)
(Angela must be a doctor.)
Maaaring chef si Lanz. (noun moodier)
(Lanz can be a chef.)
2. Modals in Filipino are not pseudo-verbs. They do not have verb-like meaning, but modals modify verbs that function as an adverb.
Example:
Kailangang magbigay sa nangangailangan. (verb modifier)
(We need to give to the needy.)
Kailangan sundin ang dress code tuwing Lunes. (verb modifier)
(Dress code needs to be observed every Monday.)
Kailangan mong pumunta nang maaga sa klase. (verb modifier)
(You need to come early to class.)
Dapat ibalik ang death penalty sa bansa.(verb modifier)
(Death penalty must be implemented again in the country.)
3. Modal is not an adjective. Schachter and Otones classified the words: “kailangan”, “dapat”, “maaari”,

“pwede” and other such words under the category of adjectival. Modal is not an adjective but it can only modify an adjective which functions as an adverb.

Example:

Kailangang matalino ang titser. (necessity)

(The teacher should be knowledgeable.)

Dapat matalino ang titser. (appropriateness)

(The teacher must be knowledgeable.)

However, there is a difference between the necessity modals “kailangan” and “dapat.” The modal “kailangan” is used as an internal necessity (necessary or need) and “dapat” is used as an external necessity or appropriateness [3].

4. Modal modifies a verb and it is not considered as a verb therefore a modal is functions as an adverb. Modals in English grammar functions as a verb [6] [7]. The following examples proved that modal in Filipino grammar can modify a verb.

4.1. The modal of permission “maaari” (may) and “pwede” (can) are being followed are being followed by a verb or an action intended to do or happen.

Example:

Maaaring pumasok ang mga naka-uniporme sa klase. (Those who are wearing uniform may come to class.)

Pwedeng gumamit ng cellphone habang nagkaklase. (You may use your cellphone during the class.)

When the modal “maaari” is used after the enclitic “ba” following a verb, it expresses request for permission to do an action. It also demonstrates politeness in asking permission in putting “po” or “ho” after the modal “maaari” or “pwede.” A distinguished culture here is the adverb “po/ho” used as sign of respect to the person the speaker is talking to.

Example:

Maaari ba akong lumabas? } May I go out?
Can I go out?
Could I go out?

Maaari po (ho) ba akong lumabas?

(May I go out? [polite])

4.2. The modal of wish uses words like “nawa” and “sana” followed by a verb. Notice that these wish modals modify the whole predicate in the sentence and not just the verb alone. A contracted “ay” (‘y) is added to the word whenever a modal of wish is used.

Nawa’y pagpalain ka ng Diyos. }
Sana’y pagpalain ka ng Diyos. } May God bless you.

4.3. The modal of possibility is used to show that something is possible to occur or to happen but it can be probable or it can also be uncertain. Modals used in expressing possibility are as follows: “baka”, “tila”, and “maaari” modify the verb.

Examples:

Baka umulan mamaya. (possibility that it will happen)
(It might rain later.)

Tila malakas ang kita niya sa negosyo. (uncertainty)
(Perhaps his profit in his business is high.)

Maaaring dumating sila ngayon. (possibility that the statement will happen)
(They might arrive now.)

The given examples above show that the verbs are being modified by the modals and the modals of possibility baka, tila, yata, show a slight variation in its usage. Baka asserts uncertainty and is partly false. Notice also that it was immediately followed by a declamation phrase. The modal tila expresses uncertainty about the result of an event or probably, a part of the statement is not true.

4.4. The modal of competence or ability states the capacity of a person or talent/skills in using an object and this also means truthfulness of the sentence. The modal ‘kaya’ is used however; the word ‘kaya’ may mean other things like using the word ‘marunong’.

Example:

Kaya niyangsumayaw. } She can dance.
She is able to dance.

Kaya niyang gumuhit. (ability do something)
(He can draw.)

Kaya kong makuha ang mataas na grado. (ability to do something)
(I can get high grades.)

4.5. Modals used in modals of desire are: gusto (like), ibig (love), nais(want). There is a slight difference in the modal of desire with its uses in a sentence. The modal gusto (like) is normally used and has an informal tone in expressing desire. The modal ibig (love) is more formal than gusto (like) and nais (want) has a most formal use in a statement.

Example:

Gusto kong kumain ng ice cream. (desire to do something)
(I like to eat ice cream.)

Ibig kong mamasyal sa maraming bansa. (want/desire to do something)
(I love to travel to many countries.)

Nais kong makipagkita sa presidente. (want/desire to do something)
(I want to meet with the president.)

Any of these modals – nais (want), gusto (like), and ibig(love) – can be used in a sentence. However, if modals of desire are followed by sana, the expression would be polite. And if the sentence expresses a more intense desire, the modals will just have to be repeated.

4.6. The modal of certainty expresses verification of the truth of the statement. In Filipino, to state the truthfulness of the sentence, the modal is inserted as a complement talaga (certainly), totoo (truly), and tunay(really) followed by the predicate being modified to confirm the truth in the statement.

Talaga (certainly) emphasizes the truthfulness of the predicate. Adverbs like talaga, totoo, and tunay can also be used to express certainty.

Example:

Talagang maganda ang bata. (The child is certainly beautiful.)

Totoong maganda ang bata. (The child is truly beautiful.)

Tunay na maganda ang bata. (The child is definitely beautiful.)

In the example, “talagang maganda” is an adverb of affirmation that modifies the subject “bata” (child).

V. CONCLUSION

Throughout this study, modal is different from a usual adverb because adverb, according to its traditional definition, modifies verbs, adjectives, and other adverbs. It is evident that the modals in Filipino modify predicate, clause, or a part of a predicate and are frequently used before the word it modifies. It was clearly shown in this analysis that modal in Filipino is a category of adverb. Unlike in English grammar, adverbs in Filipino grammar do not have a definite structure or pattern. Most adverbs in English have a suffix *-ly*, like the words: carefully, freely, etc. Several adverbs have the same structure as adjectives, for example, fast, good, etc. In general, modal clearly adds meaning to the totality of the statement. The purpose of the statement can easily be given with the use of modals. It can also be said that it is important to understand the use of modal because by using this in a sentence (syntax), there would be a clearer semantics or meaning of what the speaker conveys. Furthermore, modals are not only a category of adverb, but it also has special characteristics to deliver a clearer and more specific message.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In this study, the modals of Filipino have been discussed and analyzed thoroughly by the researcher. It is recommended that through this study, there would be further discussions about modals because there are only a few number of Filipino grammar books that discuss modal. It is suggested to generate a handbook or to include in a grammar book on modals of Filipino language. This will serve as a reference work which will give a concise and easy to understand description of the modal that can be very useful to students and teachers. This research on modal is designed to

supplement beginning and advanced learners of the Filipino language with knowledge on Filipino grammar. This study on the modal of Filipino is an immense help to learners of the structure of Filipino language in understanding the language better. This can also be included in the books of Filipino grammar because discussions on this topic is still limited and only a few discuss modals as a category of adverb.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Sincere thanks are warmly extended to the people who made this journal possible; to the administrators, Research Office, Office of the Faculty and Staff Development, our research coordinator, my critic, editor, colleagues, friends, to my mother and family for their genuine support and encouragement, and above all, to God, the source of all wisdom and knowledge.

REFERENCES

- [1] P. Schachter and F. Otanes, *Tagalog Reference Grammar*, Berkley: University of California Press, 1972, ch. 4, pp. 261-273.
- [2] T. Llamzon, F. L. Del Rosario, and M. Sanchez, *Makabagong Balarila ng Wikang Tagalog*, Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila Press, 1974, p. 8.
- [3] M. C. Malicsi, *Gramar ng Filipino*, Quezon City: Sentro ng Wikang Filipino, 2013, ch. 1, pp. 41-48.
- [4] R. M. Ceña, *Sintaks ng Filipino*, Intramuros, Manila: Pambansang Komisyon para sa Kultura at Sining, 2012, ch. 1, pp. 118-121.
- [5] J. Coates, *The Semantics of the Modal Auxiliaries*, London: Croom Helm, 2003.
- [6] F. R. Palmer, *Mood and Modality*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2nd ed., 2001.



Niña Lilia Javier was born in Hagonoy, Bulacan, Philippines on February 20, 1983. She is currently taking up her Ph.D degree in structure of language in Filipino in University of the Philippines, Diliman, Quezon City, Philippines. She received her M.A. degree in teaching Filipino from Philippine Normal University, Taft, Manila, Philippines, in 2008 and bachelor's degree in secondary education from Bulacan State University, City of Malolos, Bulacan, Philippines, in 2004, respectively. She has held a teaching position at Ramona Trillana High School in 2004 and is currently an associate professor I in the Bulacan State University, where she started teaching since 2005. She graduated in college as a scholar of Hagonoy and Friends Scholarship Foundation of Australia and is currently a scholar of Commission on Higher Education (CHED). She serves as one of the trainers in various cultural events in Filipino and speech contests and a lecturer in licensure examination for teachers reviews and K to 12 curriculum. She has authored books on Filipino grammar for grade 9, *Pluma- Noli Me Tangere Textbook* and *Piling Larangan sa Pananaliksik* for Grade 11. Ms. Javier is a member of ILS Development and Training Incorporated, Asian Intellect for Academic Organization and Development Incorporated, PanAsia Training and Research Institute, Transcendence Academic Org. Incorporated, and Asian Academic Association in Research and Management Incorporated.