

## **Re-evaluating the Representation of Central Modal Verbs in Secondary Level ELT Textbooks: A Corpus-Driven Analysis for Curriculum Enhancement in Chitral Pakistan**

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### **Abstract**

Modal verbs, especially the nine central modal verbs including can, could, will, would, may, might, shall, should, must, carry pivotal roles in communication. They are employed to convey various meanings such as permission, prohibition, and overall judgment of speaker towards an event. Studies have shown that ELT students, particularly secondary level EFL students face challenges in the use of these modal verbs due to various factors like interference of L-1, complexity of modal verb function, and over generalization. The present study aimed at finding the frequency and distribution of the nine central modal verbs used in ELT textbooks at secondary level being taught in Chitral to redress these challenges. Data comprised of ELT textbooks for secondary level and BNC were selected. Through adopting descriptive quantitative corpus-driven methodology with the integration of two data analysis tools including Antconc and CLAW POS Tagger, it was revealed that there are significant discrepancies in the distributions of the nine central modal verbs in the ELT textbooks and in the BNC. The findings demonstrate that the presentation of central modal verbs in the textbooks don't concord with that in the BNC. The study identified that the most dominant modal verb in the textbooks was 'will' with frequency 139 and 22.03%, while in the BNC the most commonly used modal verb was 'would' with 19.41%. Similarly, the second frequently modal verb in the textbook was 'can' with percentage 21.24%, while in the BNC, 'will' carries second position. Like these, other dissimilarities were also found in the both corpus. Such dissimilarities and inappropriateness trigger challenges in the proper use of modal verbs. The findings of this study will help curriculum developers, educators and linguists to properly incorporate the modal verbs in ELT textbooks.

**Keywords:** Modal Verbs, Inappropriateness, Frequency, ELT Textbooks

### **Introduction**

Modality is one of central and crucial components of communication. It is a semantic category of language which expresses concepts such as probability, likelihood, necessity, obligation, ability and permission. It is represented through linguistic markers such as modal auxiliary verbs and so on. In ELT textbooks, modality performs pivotal roles as it enables them to communicate their judgment, opinion and degree of certainty in effective way. Learners face challenges in the proper use of modal verbs. Modal verbs have been remained one of the challenging grammatical elements for ESL learners (Khojasteh, 2013). Several studies have shown that modal verbs are not effectively presented in ELT textbooks. There have been revealed discrepancies in the presentation of modal verbs in ELT textbooks while comparing them with standard native corpora (Xiaodou, 2022). Similarly, Ngoiri (2019) discusses that ELT textbooks lack in the balanced explicit presentation of central modal verbs. These textbooks are restricted to can, should and would. While

several studies have investigated modality from different perspectives, however majority of the current studies have examined modality in domains such as academic discourse (MPhil and PhD thesis) and in mass media (newspaper, particularly columns and editorials). There are few studies which have analyzed modal verbs in ELT textbooks and in other pedagogical domains. Most of these studies have also been carried out in foreign countries, while in the context of Pakistan there are rare researches which have been done to investigate modality in English language teaching and learning process such as in ELT textbooks. In the context of Pakistan, English is acquired as a second language. Textbooks are prescribed for teaching and learning English language. These textbooks are anticipated to coincide with the standards of national curriculum that stresses on to progress in the proper and effective use of language. Modal verbs are crucial components of these textbooks, where they are presented to students in different sections of the textbooks like in lesson, exercise and grammar portion etc. Learners face challenges in the proper practice of modal verbs due to several reasons such as certain modal verbs are focused while other are marginalized in the textbooks. Studies have shown that there are imbalances between native and nonnative speakers of English in the use of modal verbs. The present study attempts to scrutinize this issue that how modal verbs have been presented in the ELT textbooks at secondary level. Furthermore, there has not yet been any scholarly work on modality in ELT textbook in the context of Chitral being the largest district of Khyberpukhtunkhwa which shows a significant gap in the current body of study. The present study bridges this gap while providing valuable insights on ELT textbooks which will aid language instructors, curriculum developers and policy makers to improve English textbooks and design them in more effective way. The researcher has formulated the objective to investigate are there differences in the distributional frequency of the nine central modal verbs in ELT textbooks and in the native corpus (BNC). It has helped to coin the research question: Does the distributional frequency of the nine central modal verbs in ELT textbooks align with that in the native corpus (BNC)? While pursuing this research question the author has reviewed the relevant literature which has helped to conceptualize hypothesis and pave the course of research methodology in this study.

## **Literature Review**

Modality is one of the major concepts in linguistics, particularly in semantics, syntax and discourse. It has been studied in various disciplines including philosophy, logic and studies of language since long ago. In retrospect, it can be traced back to ancient Greek times in the works of Aristotle, who discussed it in his work of logic. The twenty century marks the inclusion of modality in linguistics. This milestone transpired due to the efforts of prominent linguists like Jacobson, Halliday, Palmer and etc. Modality or modals have been defined from different ways by different linguists. It is the grammatical system which has the potential to multiply our capacity of expression (Palmer, 1990). It is the opinion and judgment of a speaker about any proposition and circumstance (Halliday, 1985). It can be subsumed within the interpersonal metafunctions of language which were proposed by Halliday. It reflects the evaluations and judgment of speakers towards probability, possibility, obligation, ability and likelihood of a situation (Nuyts, 2001). Gueron et al. (2007) argues that modals and sentences with modality carry take primary importance in English grammar. Nielson (2001) confirms that epistemic modality is not fully understood and misused by Swedish learners. Only 'must; cannot be used for necessity and force, there are other modal verbs to express the same idea like 'shall 'which is not commonly used by learners. Likewise, should is also used less frequently to express epistemic meanings (Nielson, 2001). The frequency and distribution of central modal verbs in English textbooks at middle level in Germany significantly contradict with the native corpora. (Romer, 2004). He identified that pattern of modal verbs distribution in the textbooks is like this: can, must, may, could, would, should, will, shall and might. While the order of these modal verbs in the native corpus like BNC and COCA is significantly different. Contrary to the above studies, Romer employed a robust corpus driven

analysis of central modal verbs. However, Romer considers the only the central nine modal verbs in his study while excluding other important modal tokens. For the purpose of analysis, he selected only textbooks taught at middle and secondary levels in the context of German. This study doesn't explore the semantic functions of modal verbs. Also, another scholar Yong, et al. (2010) analyzing modal verbs in English textbooks taught to junior secondary schools (7-8) discuss that the most challenging type of modality for Malay learners is epistemic modality. Tremendous misuses have been observed in their practice. From primary school to secondary level, epistemic modals have been reduced to must and can. Modal verbs have been ignored in two important sections in the textbook that is, listening and speaking activities at middle to secondary level in Malay (Yong, 2010). The whole grammatical and semantic facet of modal verbs have been downplayed in textbook, secondly more preference is given to writing skill. Similar, this study employs content analysis of textbooks while not considering other important factors. Similarly, orta (2010) comparing Spanish and native English speakers' corpora revealed that the modal verbs that are frequently noted in the native corpus include will, can and may, also the most occurring epistemic modalizers were can, could, may a would. But in the other sight, Spanish authors abundantly use can, could, would, may and might. Epistemic modal verbs are employed distinctly by Spanish writer such as 'can' is frequently employed in place of 'may' to show probability. Unlike others studies, this corpus based analysis provides a comprehensive understanding of how modality is used differently by native and nonnative speakers of English. However, this study investigates only the frequency and distribution of modal verbs between the two corpora. Similarly, the nonnative corpus is not relatively sufficient to fully represent the use and patterns of modal verbs used by Spanish speakers, it has only selected limited number of nonfictions writers. Likewise, Pastor (2014) corroborating with Orta (2010) discusses that there have been emerging variations of modality based on cultural differences, Spanish writers tend to frequently use 'could' epistemically while native speakers of English do this with least frequency. Also, Spanish writers overuse 'can' while native speakers most of the time employ may and might in their academic manuscript. Bensaid (2015) analyzing use of modal verbs by Arabian EFL learners concludes that most of the Arabian students face challenges in the correct use of modal verbs and they are likely to avoid using them in their writing. He also identified that the textbooks focus only on the forms and structures of modal verbs, in place of their authentic and pragmatic use in real life activities. He proposes that contextualizing modal verbs, instructing through communicative approach may lessen these challenges faced by learners (Bensaid, 2015). Although this study is conducted in Arabian context however it can be applied on other ESL learners who also encounter the same problems. However, contrasting with other studies, this work is a conceptual study which only analyzes ESL student grammar textbooks while leaving the actual ELT textbooks, students' observation in the class and feedback from teachers and curriculum developers. Similarly, Kang and Lee (2016) examined the order and number of modal verbs in Korean middle level ESL textbooks. It is thoroughly a quantitative analysis employing corpus based approach. In their study, they came up with results which demonstrate a significant imbalances of modal verbs in the Korean textbooks and in the native corpus. They found the distribution of modal verbs which follows such pattern contrasting with that in the BNC. Such as the order follows this patter: CAN, WILL, SHOULD, WOULD, COULD, MUST, MIGHT and SHALL. In the BNC, the most dominant modal token is WOULD followed by WILL and CAN. Kenyan learners mostly face challenges in the appropriate use of modal verbs in their writing (Ngoiri, 2019). The ELT textbooks don't address the complexities of modal verbs. They are restricted to can, should and would. Specifically, the multiple meanings of epistemic modal verbs have been ignored. Corpus based approach may be fruitful to handle such shortcomings in the textbooks (Ngoiri, 2019). Whittey (2019) through his classroom observation based study concluded that 'can' and 'could' are distinctly used by native and nonnative speakers as represented in the BNS corpus. He also noted that could is excessively used in academic discourse to express epistemic modality, similarly could

is rarely used in spoken. Also 'can' is not used in to express willingness and volition as it is frequently used by native speakers. The multiple meanings of 'can and 'could' should be imparted to students (Whitty, 2019). Similarly, another study by Nguyen (2019) examining modals verbs in ELT textbooks of modal verbs from pragmatic perspective found that most of the ELT textbooks lack the contextualized contents while focusing on decontextualized exercises such as filling the blanks, activities etc. It was found that these textbooks overlook key pragmatic aspects of modal verbs. It suggests to integrate more practical and contextualized contents to aid learners use modal verbs in real world activities. Akbari et al. (2020), while analyzing modal verbs in student narrative composition revealed that the three modal verbs CAN, WILL and COULD were seen dominant in students writing. It is a qualitative analysis of functions of modal verbs with the integration of discourse analysis and some statistical calculation of frequencies leveraging EMAS corpus. However, the sample size and the corpus selection of the study make is imbecile, similarly it is performed in Malaysian context. However, unlike other studies it has integrated discourse analysis while excluding the semantic functions and distributions of modal verbs. Zhang, et al. (2022) concluded that there are not consistencies between the authentic use of modal verbs and textbook representation. It shows that ELT textbooks don't fully incorporate and instruct modal verbs to learners. Pragmatic functions of modal verbs are not fully represented in the textbooks, such approach triggers challenges to leaners in the proper use of modal verbs. According to Zhang, most importantly, the listening and speaking sections completely lack the picture of modality. Similar to Xiaodou, this work is also a corpus based study, for the purpose of analysis of modal verbs two corpora were selected including native speakers' corpus (BNC) and Chinese ELT textbooks of grade 5-9. Similarly, it only focuses on the semantic distribution and frequency of modal verbs in the two corpora while not considering other factors like class observance, feedback from teachers etc. In Malaysian context in the study of modality in English textbooks, Mukandam, et al. (2011) found that there is a reasonable differences in the arrangement and number of modal verbs in Malaysian tertiary level schools from grade 1-3 and their use in native corpora (British National Corpus) that shows real language use by the natives .Contrasting with Khojasteh (2012) it was noted that majority of the ELT textbooks overstress on certain modal verbs such as should, can, and will while marginalizing other modal verbs such as could, would and shall, which are used by natives . Secondly, the basic modal verbs structure like modal verbs+ infinitive order is overemphasized in the textbooks while ignoring advanced level of structures. Such elementary modals structure hinders learner to grasp complex instances of modality in communication. Likewise, another study (Kafipur et al., 2012) justifying the ineffective treatment of modality in ELT textbooks taught in Malaysian context argues that the pragmatic and contextual aspect of modality has been overlooked in the textbooks with imbalance representation of the recurring modal verbs. They found significant differences in the distribution and frequency of modal verbs in the both corpora. The ELT textbooks reflect marginalization and overrepresentation of can and may respectively (Khojasteh, 2012). Furthermore, the drills and exercises in the textbooks related to modality are not flexible with inadequate focus on linguistic competence of leaners. The textbooks which don't incorporate learners' sociolinguistic competence are inappropriate in teaching modality. Discrepancies between English modal verbs and Malaya modal system engender challenges in mastering modals verbs. Language instructors need to count on corpus based studies to find which and what roles of modal verbs are to be incorporated in the textbooks (Kafipur, 2012). Also, previous works have revealed that Malaysian English learners face challenges in the correct practice of modal verbs (Khojasteh and Reinders 2013). The study revealed the same findings as Mukadam (2011) that the number and arrangement of modal verbs in Malaysian textbooks at secondary level and native speakers' corpora like BNC are in concordance with each other. Another study by Abdel et al. (2013) examining Egyptian (ELEC) learner's corpus and native speaker's corpus (MCUNS) argues that are significant differences of modality between the two corpora in terms of their frequency and arrangement. Modal verbs like

can and will were overused by Egyptian learners while neglecting can and might. Also, the frequency of all modal token in the native corpora were high, but they were restricted to only three modal verbs including should, can and will while the modal verbs in the ELEC were diversified with frequently occurrence of modalizers like can, will and would. Similarly, the order of modal verbs in the native corpus were will, would, can and could in contrast to the MCUNS. This highlights a reasonable difference between them (Ghalban, 2013). Also, the number of modal verbs demonstrating deontic roles including necessity and permission were greater in the learners' corpora as compared to the MCUNS. This showcases that Egyptian learner's composition were more straightforward and least polite. Unlike other studies, there is lack of information about the social status and level of proficiency of Egyptian learners in this study

### **Research Methodology**

The present study is descriptive with the employment of quantitative [corpus-driven] research approach. The rationale behind adopting this design is that it clearly corresponds with the questions and objectives of this study, as it is focused on identifying the frequency of nine central modal verbs in ELT textbooks and in the native corpus, the British National Corpus, for comparison to find whether there is discrepancy or alignment of frequencies of modal verbs in the two corpora. Gries (2018) speculates that Corpus-driven studies are reliable and empirical used to examine language in its natural form. Statistical generalization in corpus driven studies make their findings valid (Jones, 2009). The research design involves the following process.

### **Compilation of Corpus**

First of all, the ELT textbooks of grade nine and ten were scanned. Since the textbooks contained extra linguistic symbols such as tables, graphs, images and diagrams to illustrate different concepts to the students. Considering the data cleaning process, only the pure texts in the textbooks were converted into the MS Word form. Each text was copied into the MS Word after careful reading. Extra symbols and some other texts in Urdu and Arabic language used in the textbooks were excluded. Finally, a total of 201 pages' data in the MS word were converted into the text file format (txt) for corpus compilation. After that, the data in text file form was inserted into the Anconc for analysis. Subsequently, the total number of token words was 50602. Sinclier (2005) discussing the size of a corpus states that a corpus should be balanced and systematically structured, size does not matter (Sinclier, 2005).

### **Data Analysis and Instrumentation**

This process involves tagging, analyzing frequencies and tokenization of the text. Corpus-driven studies employ various tools for data analysis. In this study I have employed two special tools for this purpose, they include CLAW Parts of Speech (POS) Tagger and Antconc software. The CLAW Tagger has been used for tagging the central modal verbs in the pedagogic corpus. The POS tagger is primarily used for the tagging parts of speech but can be used for tagging other grammatical items such as modal verbs. It is important to mention that CLAW Tagger tags 300 words at a times if it is used freely. Its paid version tags millions of text at a times. Considering this, I have first categorized the whole text into small chunk [s]. Alternatively, the whole text was tagged in this way. The rationale behind choosing this CLAW tagger is that it is commonly employed by scholars in linguistic, especially in corpus driven studies for tagging different grammatical items. Secondly it provides robust and accurate results. Furthermore, it is generally recommended in linguistic studies. As for as the tagging of the BNC Corpus is concerned it is already found in tagged form. The second important tool which I have used for identifying the frequencies of modal verbs is Antconc software. Apart from this tool, there are many other tools such as Wordsmith tool, I have preferred Antconc because it is an advanced software which is commonly used in corpus studies these days. This tool provides useful features such as to extract key words, identifying collocation and analyzing concordance. Antconc concordance tool is

primarily employed to display: token list, frequency list and keyword in context (KWIC), (Weichman, 2005). In this analysis process, first of all, the textbook corpus was inserted into the Antconc software then the file was executed. The frequency of each central modal verb in the textbook corpus was identified harnessing the concordance slot. Following identifying the frequencies of all modal verbs, they were quantified by finding their percentage as well. The present study is focused to examine the frequency of the nine central modal (can, could, may, might, shall, should, will, would and must) verbs in LET textbooks. The rationale behind choosing these modal verbs is that these are very common in communication and many studies have shown that learners face challenges in their proper understanding and use. Purposive sampling method is employed as this approach aligns with the objectives of my study. For this purpose, I have selected the textbooks of grade 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> because secondary level is one of the significant stage in learning a second language, it is a transition stage from basic to advanced level. There are only these two textbooks which are imparted in both public and private schools throughout the province under which Chitral comes. BNC, the British National Corpus which has been designed by Oxford University Press in 1980s to 1990s, is chosen as a reference corpus to examine similarities and difference in the frequency of nine central modal verbs. BNC comprises of one hundred million words. It is a collection of both written and spoken samples of language spoken by the native speakers. It includes samples from different genera such as academic discourse, fictions, magazine etc. This corpus has been selected for the study because among different reference corpora available, this corpus covers the wide use of modal verbs used by native speakers in British English, this variety of English language is mostly dominant in the context of Pakistan. This corpus is also used in various studies to compare the use of language between native and nonnative speakers of English.

## Results and Discussion

The study found the following results.

Table 4.1 Frequency of the nine central modal verbs in the textbooks

Modal Verbs	Frequency	Percentage
Will	139	22.03%
Can	134	21.24%
Would	83	13.15%
Should	79	12.52%
Could	59	9.35%
Must	55	8.72%
May	52	8.24%
Might	18	2.85%
Shall	12	1.90%
Total	631	100%

The above table No. 4.1 demonstrates the total frequencies and percentage of the nine central modal verbs found in the ELT textbooks at secondary level. As seen, these modal verbs have been used in the textbooks 631 times. The most dominant type of modal verbs used is ‘will’ with a frequency of 139. Similarly, the modal verb ‘can’ is the second most frequently used modal verb with a frequency of 134, it is followed by ‘would’ which is used 83 times with a percentage of 13.15%. In the table No. 3, I have showed the type of modal verbs which has highest frequency and percentage. These three modal verbs have highest frequency among the other. Furthermore, ‘should’ has appeared times 79 with a percentage 12.52 in the textbooks. It is followed by ‘could’ with a frequency and percentage of 59 and 9.35 respectively. The modal verb ‘must’ has appeared 55 times in the textbooks. Likewise, the other modal verbs such as ‘may’ which has been used 52

times which is followed by ‘might’ with a frequency of 18. The modal verbs which has been represented in least frequency include ‘shall’. It is used 18 times with a percentage of 1.90%.

**Table 4.2:** Most frequently used modal axillary verbs in the textbooks

Most frequently used modal verb in the textbooks	Frequency	Percentage
Will	139	22.03%
Can	134	21.24%
Would	83	13.15%

Here, I have shown the frequency of the most dominant modal verbs used in the ELT textbooks at secondary level. As seen, ‘will’ carries the highest position in this list with a percentage of 22.03%. ‘Can’ comes second in the position which has been used with a percentage of 21.24%. Similarly, ‘would’ is the third most frequently modal verb. It has a percentage of 13%.15.

**Table 4.3:** Frequency of the nine central modal verbs in the BNC

Modal Verbs	Frequency	Percentage
Would	242195	19.63%
Will	239466	19.41%
Can	226993	18.40%
Could	158325	12.83%
May	111748	9.06%
Should	107822	8.74%
Must	69293	5.62%
Might	58344	4.74%
Shall	19407	1.57%
Total	1233593	100%

In this table, there is presentation of the modal verbs used in the British National Corpus. It was found that the nine modal verbs have been used 1233593 times in the BNC corpus. The modal verb ‘would’ is used as the most commonly used modal verb with a percentage of 19.63%. Similarly, its counterpart ‘will’ has appeared with a percentage of 19.41% in the native corpus. ‘Can’ is the third highest frequency modal verb with a percentage of 18.40%. The frequency of ‘may’ and ‘might’ are less as compared to ‘can’ and ‘could’. ‘may and might have been used with a percentage of 9.06% and 4. 74% respectively. Likewise, the frequency of ‘shall’ is the least of all among the nine modal verbs. It has appeared with a frequency and percentage of 19407 and 1.57% respectively. This case has also been found in the textbook corpus. Furthermore, the percentage of ‘should’ is 8.74%. The modal verb ‘must’ has been used in the BNC with a percentage of 5.62%. It is crucial to note that the modal verbs might and shall are rarely used by native speakers as the results reflect.

**Table 4.4:** Most frequently used modal auxiliary verbs in the BNC

Most frequently used modal verbs	Frequency	Percentage
Would	242195	19.63%
Will	239466	19.41%
Can	226993	18.40%

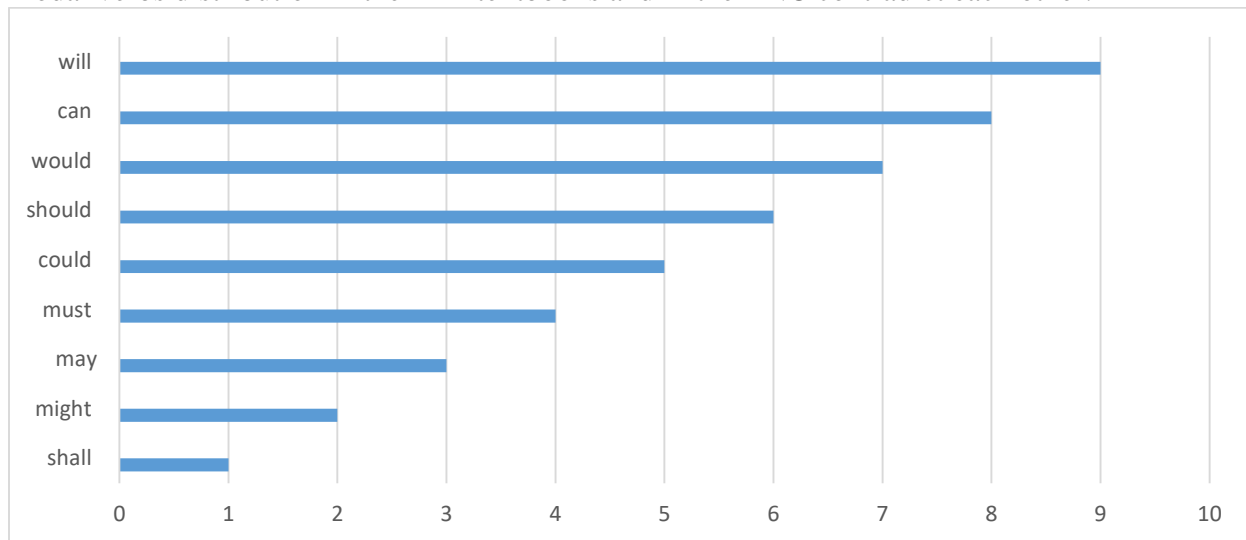
The given table no. 4 shows the most dominant central modal verbs used in the British National Corpus. The top in this list is ‘would’ which has been appeared 242195 times in the corpus with a



percentage of 19.63. Similarly, the modal verb ‘will’ carries position with a frequency and percentage of 239466 and 19.41% respectively. Also, ‘can’ is the third most frequently used modal verb in the BNC. It has a frequency of 226993 and percentage of 18.40%.

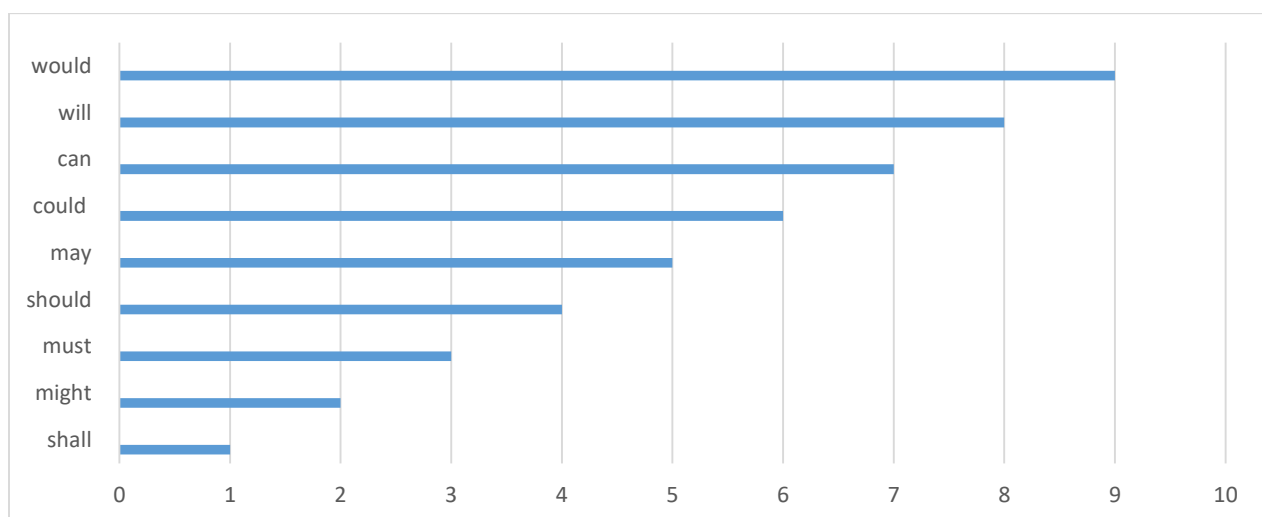
## Discussion

As far as the major question of this research is concerned which states that are there differences in the distributional frequency of the nine central modal verbs in the ELT textbooks and in the BNC, it has been found that there are significant discrepancies in this regard. For instance, let us first start with the top three most commonly used modal verb in the textbooks include ‘will, can and would. Further, the distribution of other modal verbs in the textbooks follow this pattern: should, could, must, may, might and shall. The below charts number 6 and 7 reflect how the patterns of modal verbs distribution in the ELT textbooks and in the BNC contradict each other.



**Figure 4.1:** *Distribution of central modal verbs in ELT textbooks*

In the BNC, the distribution of the three top commonly used modal are ‘would, will and can. It shows that the native speakers most frequently the modal verb ‘would’ followed by ‘will and can’. In the textbooks this distribution is completely different. Similarly, when it is seen in the BNC, the distribution of other modal verbs follows this pattern: could, may, should, must, might and shall. It means that in the native context, ‘could’ is frequently used after ‘can.

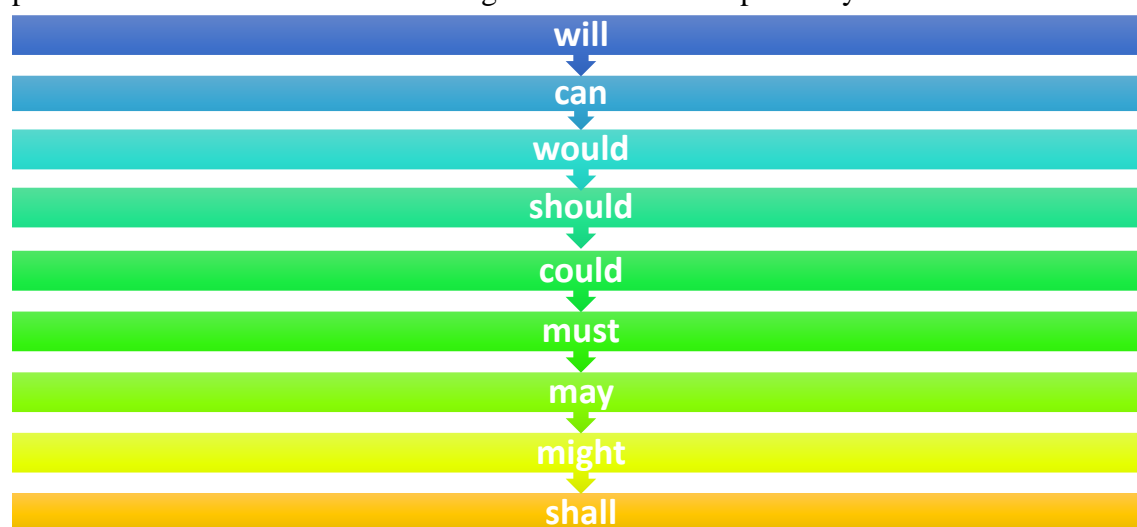


**Figure 4.2:** *Distribution of central modal verbs in the BNC*



Such imbalances show that the textbooks lack the authentic presentation of distribution of modal verbs. As it has been seen in the above charts that there are significant discrepancies in their distributional frequencies. To illustrate, in the BNC, 'would' is positioned at the top of the list with a percentage of 19.63 % while in the textbook 'will' carries this position with a percentage of 22.03%. Similarly, the second modal verb in the distribution in the textbook is 'can' while in the BNC 'will' is the second modal verb in the distribution. Also, in the distribution list, 'can' comes in the third position in the BNC, contrarily in the textbooks 'would' comes in the third placement in the distribution. Furthermore, in the textbooks 'should' comes in the fourth position while in the BNC this position is carried by 'could'. Which reflects that native speakers prefer using more frequently to show politeness than nonnative speakers in the context of Pakistan. Also, in the textbooks, the fifth position in the distribution of modal verb is carried by could while in the BNC 'may' carries this position. It shows that the 'could' is presented least in the textbook the result shows that 'could' is dominantly used in its authentic use in the British National Corpus while the modal verb 'may' is not used as much in the BNC and it is excessively presented in the textbooks. The modal verb which comes in sixth position in the distribution list in the textbook is 'must', conversely in the BNC the modal verb 'should' takes this position. Which again shows imbalance in their distribution. Likewise, the seventh position in this regard in the textbooks is carried by the modal verb 'may'. Whilst in the BNC, 'must' takes this placement. This result reflects strong gap in the distribution of 'must and should'. In the authentic language use, 'must' is not as much used as compared to 'should'. As for as the distribution of the last two modal verbs including 'might and shall' is concerned they show alignment. In both the textbooks and in the BNC, they fall in similar category. As far as the hypothesis of the study is concerned, the results support the alternative hypothesis which states that there are imbalances in the distribution of modal verbs in the textbooks and in the BNC, however it is important to mention that apart from the modal verb 'might and shall' all other modal central model verbs show contradiction in their distribution in the textbooks and in BNC. The results strongly support the alternative hypothesis while the null hypothesis isn't significantly supported by the results even if there have been seen alignment in the distribution of only two modal verbs. The results which have been found are strongly supported by some other previous studies. Such as Akhofullah and Oktavianti (2023) while analyzing semantic distribution of modal verbs at senior high level in Indonesian ELT textbooks found such results which strongly agree to the present study. He also found distributional discrepancies among three corpora such COCA, BNC and textbooks. Similar to my study, it was found that the three most dominant modal verbs in the textbooks included CAN, WILL and WOULD. In their finding, only the difference lies in the order of CAN, which comes first. The other two dominant modal verbs clearly align with I have found in my study. Further, the last three least commonly modal verbs found in their study were MAY, MIGHT and SHALL, which again strongly agrees with my study. They also noticed significant imbalances in the distribution and frequency of modal verbs in the native and nonnative corpora. Furthermore, In the Malaysian context there are two important works which furnish such results which relatively contrast with my study. The first study by Mukundam and Khojasteh (2011) while examining the distribution and frequency of central modal verbs in lower secondary Malaysian TLT textbooks found that the most commonly found modal verbs in the textbooks were CAN, WILL and SHOULD. Because in this study, the modal verbs SHOUD is placed in the third position, preceded by WILL and CAN. However, they concluded the same findings that the textbooks lack clear representation of modal verbs because their distribution don't align with that in the native corpus like BNC. Furthermore, they noted that 'shall and might' were rarely presented in the textbooks, which clearly reinforce the findings of my study. The second important study is by Khojasteh and Reinders (2013) while analyzing and comparing the distribution and the frequency of central modal verbs in Malaysian ESL textbooks, learner corpora and in the BNC found the results where the distribution of modal verbs differs from my study but they support the main thesis statement that there are discrepancies among the corpora

which my study claims. They found the same results as noticed by (Mukundam & Khojasteh, 2011). Likewise, in Chinese context there are also two recent and significant studies which should be discussed here. The first by, Xiaodou (2022) while analyzing semantic functions and distributional frequency of modal verbs in Chinese textbooks found that. In the secondary level textbooks, the distribution of modal verbs follows this pattern. CAN, WOULD, WILL, SHOULD, COULD, MUST, SHALL, MAY AN MIGHT. Here, the distribution of modal verbs relatively differs from my results, as the modal verbs WILL is the most dominant modal verb, similarly in this study, the second most common modal verb is WOULD, while in my studies CAN carries this position while in my results this position is taken by. Despite such differences, there are some similarities as well such as ‘Should’ is the fourth commonly used modal verb in the textbooks in this study, which clearly resembles my results. In conclusion they also recounted that the textbooks lack the authentic distribution of modal verbs. Furthermore, the other significant work in Chinese context is by Gao (2024) came up with the same findings which were noticed by Xiaodou (2022). However, it is important to mention that in latter, he chose only the spoken version of BNC, while in the former case, the native corpus for comparison of modal verbs was BNC. Similarly, Gao chose the textbooks prescribed for primary and middle classes. There is a study by Shubha (2021) which presents such results which significantly contrasts with my study. He while investigating modal verbs in Bangladeshi ELT textbooks at secondary level concluded that in the textbooks the most frequently used modal verbs were might and shall, which represents strong divergence in the distribution of modal verbs in the textbooks because these two modal verbs are least dominantly used in the BNC. It is pertinent to recount that this study was done in the context of Bangladesh, which also shows significant differences in the representation of modal verbs. He further identified that the frequency and distribution of modal verbs in the textbooks which do not correspond with those in the BNC. Bouhlal, F., et al (2018) came up with the findings where the order of modal verbs in the Quebec ESL textbooks relatively differs from my study, for instance, he found the in the textbooks the most dominantly used modal verbs were CAN, WOULD and WILL, whereas in my findings the distribution follow this pattern WILL, CAN and WOULD. Similarly, the least commonly used modal verbs they noticed in the textbooks include MIGHT, MUST and SHALL. Which significantly follows different pattern. For comparison, they also employed two native corpora including BNC and COCA. They also support the hypothesis that there are clear discrepancies of modal verbs in the native and nonnative corpora. For the purpose of comparison, the distribution and order of modal verbs in my study with those in the existing studies I have presented them in tabular form the figure No. 8 and 9 respectively.



**Figure 4.3:** *Distribution of the nine central modal verbs in the ELT textbooks in Chitral.*

**Table 4.6:** Distribution and order of modal verbs noticed by previous studies in ELT, ESL and EFL Textbooks

Previous Works \ Context	Distribution of Modal Verbs in the Textbooks
Mukandam, Khojasteh and Reinder. (2011, 2013). In Malaysian ESL textbooks	CAN, WILL, SHOULD, MAY, WOULD, MUST, COULD, MIGHT AND SHALL
Xiaodou, Gao (2022, 2024). In Chinese EFL textbooks.	CAN, WOULD, WILL, SHOULD, COULD, MUST, SHALL, MAY AN MIGHT
Bouhlal and Martini (2018). In Quebec ESL context	CAN, WOULD, WILL, COULD, SHOULD, MAY, MIGHT, MUST, SHALL
Kang and Lee (2016). In Korean EFL textbooks	CAN, WILL, SHOULD, WOULD, MUST, COULD, MAY, MIGHT, SHALL
Akhofullah and Oktavianti (2023). In Indonesian ELT textbooks	CAN, WILL, WOULD, COULD, SHOULD , MUST, MAY, MIGHT AND SHALL
Romer (2004). In German ESL textbooks	CAN, MUST, MAY, COULD, SHOULD, WILL, SHALL AND MIGHT

The above table shows the distributions of modal verbs which have been found in other studies with some different patterns, however in the last row which represent modal verbs in German ESL textbooks has significantly different order from my study, apart from it, there aren't as much difference among my study and the other ones.

### Implications

The findings of the present corpus-driven study has various significant implications. First of all, the results have shown that the presentation of modal verbs in ELT textbooks doesn't align with the standard native corpus (BNC), this development would assist textbooks and curriculum developers to resign the textbooks in such way which introduces modal verbs in standardized distributional way. Apart from it, teachers and language instructors may leverage these findings to focus on those modal items which are commonly used in Standard English. Similarly, less focus will be given on those modal verbs which are least used in standard context. Apart from this pedagogical implication, the findings have impacts on existing literature as it fills a significant gap.

### Conclusion

The current study revolves around the main objective of the research: are there differences in the distributional frequency of the nine central modal verbs in ELT textbooks and in the native corpus (BNC). Through quantitative corpus driven study It was found that there are significant dissimilarities in the usage of the nine central modals between the ELT textbooks and the standard native corpus (BNC). Such as, the three most dominant modal verbs in the textbooks were 'will, can' and would'. While, in the BNC, the frequently used modal verbs include 'would, will and can', which showcase significant discrepancies. Such inappropriate incorporation of these modal verbs causes challenges to sufficiently grasp them by EFL learners at secondary level in Chitral. The findings of this study will help language instructors, policy makers, curriculum developers and educators to appropriately incorporate the nine modal verbs in ELT textbooks. Further, the findings will also contribute to the existing body of knowledge to have a diverse understanding of the usage and presentation of modal verbs in nonnative context, particularly in Pakistan.

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