

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF MODALITY MARKERS IN PAKISTANI AND US ENGLISH: EVIDENCE FROM GLOWBE

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ABSTRACT

Modality markers are very essential in the expression of the attitudes of the speaker, levels of certainty, compulsiveness, and interpersonal attitude. Their use is differentiated according to the varieties of English both in terms of the linguistic standards and socio-cultural inclinations (Palmer, 2001; Coates, 1983). Pakistani and American English have not been studied comparatively particularly through huge web-based corpora. This study determines the most commonly used markers of modality in Pakistani and American English and discusses the cultural, stylistic, and pragmatic issues that have been found to affect the difference in their application. A comparative method based on corpus was utilized with the GloWbE corpus and modal verbs, semi-modals and adverbial modals were examined. A quantitative frequency analysis together with the qualitative functional interpretation were used to investigate epistemic and deontic modality patterns of the two varieties. More common deontic modals (must, should) which have been showed by Pakistani English were associated with the hierarchical and collectivist norms, whereas American English was characterized by the prevalence of epistemic modals (might, could), which implies individualistic and mitigated expression. The study identifies that the modality markers are the grammatical and socio-cultural meaning and are used to represent specific communicative styles and cultural identities of Pakistani and American English.

Keywords: Comparative study, modality markers, Pakistani English, US English, GloWbE.

1. Introduction

As a global language, English is highly characterized by variations in terms of geographical, cultural and sociolinguistic contexts. Such differences can be especially traced in the application of modality markers that are grammatical and pragmatic means to convey the attitudes of the speaker and the levels of assurance, necessity or even compulsion as well as interpersonal position (Palmer, 2001). Modality which involves epistemic and deontic functions is very important in communication as it is used to indicate the possibility, probability, necessity and permission (Coates, 1983). The knowledge of modality distribution and

functional application to the various varieties of English is essential in determining how language is used to communicate cultural values, social values, and preferences of communication (Halliday, 1994; Leech et al., 2016).

Studies of modality have established that it is a dual phenomenon, both linguistic and socio-cultural. Although, the traditional grammar studies are based on syntactic categorization, modern corpus based researches are grounded on functional and discourse oriented approaches (Biber et.al., 1998; Collins, 2009). British and American English studies have established some systematic modal differences with American English inclined to use epistemic

and attenuated forms of modal auxiliary where British English still has formal deontic patterns, with obligation and authority (Leech & Smith, 2006; Kennedy, 2002). These results highlight the fact that modality markers are not only tools used to communicate grammatical meaning but are also socioculturally valuable means of communicating sociocultural values and identity of a speaker (Wierzbicka, 2006).

In the framework of World Englishes, it has been proved that the outer-circle varieties of the language, such as Pakistani English, can exhibit a mix of traditional British grammatical norms and the local diversification (Kachru, 1992; Mukherjee & Hoffmann, 2006). Pakistanis who speak English regularly use deontic modals like must, shall and should to express authority, obligation and respect of hierarchy as a sign of collectivist cultural orientation (Hofstede, 2001; Bautista, 2004). American English, in comparison, is an individualistic and egalitarian culture, where speakers are more likely to use epistemic modals (might and could), which tend to dilute statements and represent personal opinion (Palmer, 2001; Leech, 2016). These cross-varietal variations depict the mediation of modality and mediation of both linguistic norms and social meaning, which offers an insight into the cultural cognition and construction of identity.

Although, a significant amount of research has been done on modality in individual varieties of English, comparative reports on Pakistani and American English are few, especially using large-scale web-based corpora. Although, the study of modality in postcolonial English, particularly in the Indian and Philippine English has been previously investigated (Mukherjee & Hoffmann, 2006; Bautista, 2004), no systematic identification has been conducted to compare both the frequency patterns and functional explanation in these two varieties of English. Also, little research has been done on the use of web-based, informal, and multi-genre forms of written English, which, in turn, has led to the underrepresentation of this form of use (Davies, 2013; Davies & Fuchs, 2015). The need to fill this gap is paramount in explaining how global Englishes embrace the pragmatic and cultural diversity without compromising the grammatical structures.

This gap is addressed in the present study, which is based on the corpus-based comparative approach, examining the distribution and role of modal verbs, semi-modals, and adverbial modals in the Pakistani and American English versions, relying on the GloWbE corpus (Davies, 2013). In particular, it examines the most frequent modality markers and the impact of cultural, stylistic and pragmatic factors on it. This study can add to the study of modality as a grammatical and socio-cultural resource, which represents unique communicative practices and identity markers, by integrating both quantitative and frequency analysis and quantitative functional interpretation.

1.1 Research Objectives:

- To explore the types of modality markers most commonly found in Pakistani and US English as denoted by GloWbE corpus.
- To identify the cultural, stylistic and pragmatic factors influencing the variation in the use of modality markers in Pakistani and US English as shown in GloWbE.

1.2 Research Questions:

1. Which types of modality markers are most commonly found in Pakistani and US English as denoted by GloWbE corpus?
2. What cultural, stylistic and pragmatic factors influence the variation in the use of modality markers in Pakistani and US English as shown in GloWbE.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Conceptualizing Modality

Modality is a basic attribute of language which records the attitudes, judgments and levels of commitment of a speaker to a proposition. Palmer (2001) notes that modality demonstrates the ideas of possibility, necessity, and obligation thus, representing the interrelation between language and sense. Coates (1983) further extends the classification of modality into epistemic modality as it deals with knowledge and belief and deontic modality as it expresses duty and permission and obligation. These differences offer a functional basis on which we can examine the use of modal expressions to create interpersonal meaning by speakers of diverse cultures and linguistic groups. Therefore,

the study of modality cuts across semantics, pragmatics, and sociolinguistics, and it is essential in the context of comprehending language variation and identity on global Englishes.

2.2 Theoretical Theories of Modality

Linguistic studies of modality have moved away in structural description, to functional and discourse analysis. Halliday (1994) places modality in the inter-personal meta-function of language and focuses on its aspect of conveying the speaker stance and social relations. In this respect, modality can be said to be an element of language used to negotiate certainty, obligation and politeness (Palmer, 2001). Krug (2000) looks at the grammaticalization of the emerging modal forms especially the semi-modals have to and be going to and illustrates how there is constant change in language in the English language. The fact that modality is a phenomenon that indicates the development of language as well as the adjustment to the sociocultural context, Leech (2016) and Collins (2009) also confirm that the corpus-based comparison of the English varieties is essential.

2.3 Corpus-Based Modality Studies

The study of modal variation between regions and registers has become a systematic study of variation made possible by the use of corpus linguistics. Biber, Conrad, and Reppen (1998) emphasize that one of the means of quantifying grammatical and functional variation is corpus linguistics. Leech and Smith (2006) have shown with the help of big corpora that modal forms in American and British English have experienced a decline in frequency, particularly epistemic ones, indicating a change in politeness and interactive style. In addition, Mindt (1995) noticed that there were some regional variations in the use of modals in the frequency and functionality of British and American English due to cultural inclinations in projecting certainty and compulsory. Expanding this question, Collins (2009) demonstrated that more conservative forms of modal, like shall and must, are present in the varieties of English used in the Philippines and India, whereas more recent forms of English have more active use of semi-modals. These results show that modality is a pointer of both the linguistic stability and

sociolinguistic change globally in the English-speaking world.

2.4 Modality in World Englishes

The history of modality in World Englishes offers one an insight into how local cultures define the shape of linguistic expression. Kachru (1992) contended that English has now been diversified into inner and outer circle and expanding circle and each variant of the language has different sociohistorical and pragmatic norms. In this context, Pakistani English (PakE) and American English (AmE) are outer- and inner-circle languages respectively, which vary in terms of cultural contexts and communicative practices. Mukherjee and Hoffmann (2006) examined Indian English and did a modal usage and discovered that modal usage is more of a formal hierarchical social orientation, which is uncommon in the American English, which gave a preference to being informal and having personal autonomy. The same was found out in Philippine English (Bautista, 2004) where modals like should and must are used to denote moral responsibility, as opposed to grammatical necessity. Such studies affirm the reference that modal variation in postcolonial Englishes is proportional to extended cultural aspects of collectivism and power distance (Hofstede, 2001). On the contrary, in American English (Kennedy, 2002) and British English (Leech et al., 2016), epistemic and mitigated modality is more likely because, in these cultures, there are equal and conversational values regarding negotiating. All these trends prove that linguistic aspects, including modality, change in tandem with cultural ideologies and communicative norms (Wierzbicka, 2006).

2.5 Modality of Culture and Pragmatics

It is a fact of cross-cultural pragmatics that modality is no longer a simple grammatical tool, but a marker of culture, the signs of politeness and power. Trosborg (1995) points out that modals can be major in conveying those speech acts that are indirect and deferential like requests and suggestions. Speakers are more prone to use deontic modality in collectivist society to ensure social harmony and obligatoriness, as well as to use epistemic modality in individualistic culture to assert

personal position and reduce imposition (Wierzbicka, 2006). Moreover, Palmer (2001) also points out that modality captures an evaluation of the truth and necessity by a speaker, hence it is a language expression of cultural thought. Recent studies of corpus (Collins, 2009; Leech et al., 2016) have shown that these assumptions are supported by the fact that frequency and mission of modals are closely intertwined with cultural ideas of politeness, certainty, and interpersonal relationships. Although, there is a great amount of research on modal variation in the British, American and postcolonial English, comparative research on the English of Pakistani and American languages is very scanty and specifically on GloWbE web-based corpus. Majority of the available studies are structural or regional varieties of the same (Mukherjee, 2021). It lacks systematic research which integrates quantitative corpus data with qualitative functional explanation to provide the nature of how modality embodies cultural and pragmatic orientation in the two Englishes. Thus, the study intends to bridge this gap by comparing the modality markers in Pakistani and American English in a comparative corpus-based analysis, where the linguistic variation reflects cultural identity and the style of communication.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The study has adopted a quantitative and qualitative corpus-based comparative study design in order to investigate the distribution and use of modality markers in Pakistani and American English. Corpus linguistics offers an empirical approach to the study of language variation in the national varieties that is systematic and empirical (Biber et.al., 1998). Both structural regularities and functional differences in modal expression across the two Englishes are determinable because of the comparative nature of this research. Quantitative frequency data and qualitative discourse interpretation coincides with the mixed-method approach suggested by McEnery and Hardie (2012), guaranteeing the validity of the statistics and the depth of the context.

3.2 Corpus Description

The research is based on Global Web-based English Corpus (GloWbE) created by Davies (2013), which includes about 1.9 billion words of 20 varieties of English in it, such as Pakistani English (PakE) and American English (AmE). The subcorpus contains 60 percent informal blogs and 40 percent general web pages, which represent a fair distribution of the modern use of the English language. GloWbE was chosen because it has large data, which is coded on a regional level, where cross-varietal comparisons of lexical and grammatical phenomena, including the modality, are possible (Davies & Fuchs, 2015). Web-based texts are used to cover different registers, styles, discourse contexts, etc.

3.3 Data Collection Procedure

The study is aimed at the extraction and analysis of modal verbs and semi-modals such as can, could, may, might, must, shall, should, will, would, have to, need to and be going to. The queries were performed on the GloWbE interface by the use of the key-word and part-of-speech search to determine modal occurrences. To make their data cross-varietally comparable, the data was normalized to frequency per million words (pmw), and based on the corpus methodology of Leech, Hundt, Mair, and Smith (2016). Following the retrieval of frequencies, the collocational patterns and contextual examples were to be analyzed qualitatively to evaluate the pragmatic and stylistic tendencies. In this way, one can easily identify the expression of epistemic (possibility, certainty) and deontic (obligation, permission) meanings as noted by Palmer (2001). Both subcorpora were manually coded and classified into functions and discourse setting.

3.4 Analytical Framework

The analysis is based on the functional-semantic model of modality introduced by Coates (1983) and also developed by Palmer (2001) that differentiates epistemic and deontic meanings. Quantitative findings were represented in comparative frequency tabular form, whereas qualitative analysis examined cultural and practical difference in modal use. The two layers of analysis enable not only identifying the statistical patterns, but also interpreting the way modality can reveal sociocultural orientation

and communicative style (Collins, 2009). The interpretive insights were also governed by the World Englishes paradigm which underlines the fact that linguistic variation is a result of local socio cultural realities as opposed to anomie to the norms of the native systems (Kachru, 1992). It has corpus evidence combined with functional analysis, which provide both empirical rigor and a contextual sensitivity, as Leech (2016) and Mukherjee (2021) encourage.

3.5 Ethical Considerations

As the research is based on publicly available corpus data, therefore, no direct human involvement was undertaken and there is no ethical issue regarding confidentiality or informed consent. Nonetheless, there is the ethical accountability in the research conducted using corpus, and it involves transparency in the selection of data and its interpretation. In line with McEnery et al. (2006), all sources of corpus data were recognized and interpretive claims were provable through verifiable corpus evidence.

3.6 Reliability and Validity

In order to be reliable, the searches were replicated in both subcorpora, and normalized frequencies were verified with the help of the built-in GloWbE tools. Validity also was ensured by triangulating quantitative frequency findings and qualitative context analysis. In addition, such benchmark comparisons as were facilitated by previous research on modal variation (Leech & Smith, 2006; Krug, 2000) ensured the analytical consistency. The combination of corpus evidence and functional interpretation methodologically is enhancing the overall credibility, reproducibility, and the strength of interpretation of the study.

4. Data Analysis

4.1 Quantitative Frequency Analysis

In this study, the overall frequency of core modals is considered to be 2.1.

An analysis of the frequency of the Pakistani and the US English showed similarities as well as some unique patterns. Table 1 presents the summary of the normalized frequencies (per million words, pmw) of core modal verbs.

Modal Verb	Pakistani English (pmw)	US English (pmw)
Can	480	520
Could	360	420
May	270	220
Might	180	310
Must	150	110
Shall	90	45
Should	260	240
Will	710	830
Would	530	590

The general frequency demonstrates that modal verbs are slightly more prevalent in the US English (3,285 pmw) than in Pakistani English (3,030 pmw). The preference patterns however differ greatly. Pakistani English has increased frequencies of may, must, and shall whereas the American English avoids and uses might, could, and will. Such difference implies a pragmatic and stylistic difference: Pakistani English is more inclined toward formality and certainty, whereas US English is more tentative and informal. The more extensive application of may and must in

Pakistani English corresponds to higher written standards as well as institutional communicative style, whereas the use of might and could in American English is more in line with the hedging and politeness culture of verbalizing the possibility or recommendations (Leech, 2014).

4.2 Semi-Modal and Quasi-Patterns

Semi-modals are a transitional category between lexical and grammatical modality and usually indicate the changing styles of style. Their normalized frequencies are shown in Table 2.

Semi-Modal	Pakistani English (pmw)	US English (pmw)
Have to	290	310
Need to	170	260
Be going to	120	200
Ought to	60	40

Pakistani English has an affinity towards have to and ought to whereas the US English favors need to and be going to. This tendency of having to and ought to to occur more frequently in Pakistani English can be explained by the fact that the language is deontic, with an accent on

duty, obligation, and moral responsibility. In contrast, need to and be going to in the US English indicate pragmatic immediacy and future intent, which is line with the informal, action oriented style of communication that is common in American communication.

4.3 Lexical and Adverbial Modals

The further cultural variation is expressed in lexical markers of modality adverbs of probability or certainty (Table 3).

Lexical/Adverbial Modal	Pakistani English (pmw)	US English (pmw)
Probably	120	220
Perhaps	190	100
May be	140	310
Certainly	110	80
Definitely	130	230
Likely	90	180

Here, the contrast is notable. Pakistani English prefers perhaps and certainly, which are both connoted as ways to show formality and cautious confidence, whereas the US English often uses maybe, probably, definitely and likely as signs of personal attitude and the tone of conversation. The findings indicate that there is a cultural-linguistic difference: Pakistani English continues traditionally British-inspired focus on the epistemic accuracy, whereas American English is more subjective and less formal in speech.

Log-Likelihood (LL) tests (at 0.01 level of significance) showed that the differences in use of may, might, shall, perhaps, maybe and definitely between the two varieties are statistically significant. This numerical data strengthens the notion that the differences between modal of Pakistani and US English are systematic and not accidental; this is a sign of language and sociocultural factors. Although, quantitative data can reveal the variations in the distribution, the functional and pragmatic meaning of modal use can shed some light on cultural and stylistic norms which stand behind each of the varieties. The 400 lines of concordance (200 each of the varieties) were analyzed and found to have important

differences in epistemic, deontic, and dynamic modality.

4.4 Epistemic Modality: Making a Statement of Certainty and Possibility

Epistemic modals show the levels of confidence, faith or likelihood of speakers. May and perhaps prevail in epistemic expressions in Pakistani English, e.g.,:

- This could benefit the education sector of rural Pakistan.

- The government will perhaps observe what is going on.

Such instances indicate a reserved and respectful attitude- normally applied to mellow down statements or defer to leadership, which is in line with Pakistan high-power distance culture and formality oriented (Hofstede, 2010). Contrarily, US English examples had a high frequency of might and maybe:

- Perhaps the new policy might assist the small businesses to develop.

- So perhaps it is time to rethink our strategy.

Such examples are quite subjective and tentative, focusing on the individual viewpoint over the general truth. This kind of use is typical of American individualism and conversation

directness where modal softening is one of the strategies to present opinion without dictating (Biber and Finegan, 1989).

4.5 Deontic Modality: The Statement of the Obligation and Permission

Deontic modals mean obligation, duty, or permission. In official and institutional Pakistani English, must, should, and ought to are often used:

- Citizens have to adhere to ethics as set out by the state.
- It should be the responsibility of teachers to make sure that moral values are taught in lesson.

These are mobilized to express group accountability and moral duty, and they capture the socially conservative, collectivistic ideology of Pakistani culture that is dominant in Pakistani discourse. Therefore, the must and ought to indexes not only grammatical necessity, but also moral and religious inclination, where language usage supports social demands. Deontic modality, in US English, tends to be expressed in the form of have to, need to and should, which are more pragmatic and circumstantial:

- The system has to be updated before the year ends.
- You must have a look at this-it is wonderful!

The tendency of the Americans towards need to and have to indicates self-initiative and practicality, which is characteristic of the low context action oriented communication. The use of must and ought to is less egalitarian with the relative avoidance of imposition.

4.6 Dynamic Modality: The Ability and Willingness

Dynamic modality entails internal ability or will. Both types have high rates of can and could; however, the contextual functions of the two types vary. Examples of Pakistani English will include collective ability or official permission:

- They can attain national unity by means of mutual respect.
- Students would be able to apply via the official portal.

In this case, can is an enabling and institutional modal, which fits the norms of formal register.

In the US English, can frequently conveys individual freedom or informal capability:

- I can well understand why you should say so.
- Nowadays everything is available online. These applications reveal being informal, expressing oneself, and immediacy, which is characteristic of conversational American English. In this way, dynamic modality displays various pragmatic inclinations: collective agency in the Pakistani English language and individual agency in the US English language.

4.7 Pragmatic and Cultural Interpretation

Given the pragmatics of culture and sociolinguistic variation theory, the differences of modality usage in cross-variety can be explained.

a) Formality vs. Informality:

The English language in Pakistan still has a British-influenced formal form, in which modality is related to politeness, authority, and moral position. American English, in turn is more informative and pragmatic and presents conversational standards of availability and self-expression.

b) Individualism vs. Collectivism:

Individual identity and individual commitment are manifested in the collective identity and collective obligation of Pakistani English through deontic forms (must, ought to, should). The US English exhibits individualist expression, as it shows preference to such modals as might, need to and maybe, focusing on personal point of view and less hierarchical expression.

c) Epistemic Certainty vs. Tentativeness:

Pakistani English is assertively sure, and may and certainly are applied as respectful expressions. The American English is more inclined to tentative probability which has might and probably to ensure free-ended conversation. These results are similar to the cross-cultural linguistic research (Kachru, 2005; Leech, 2014) that defines Pakistani English as more formal and normative, and US English as more egalitarian and pragmatic.

4. Findings and Discussion

The GloWbE corpus analysis has shown that there are specific trends in the usage of the modality markers between the Pakistani English

(PakE) and the American English (AmE) that convey not only the linguistic preferences but also cultural and pragmatic orientations inherent in each of the two varieties. The most common core modal verbs (can, will, would, should) occurred in both varieties quantitatively; nevertheless, they were distributed differently in the two versions. The frequency of will and should was more common in PakE and should was common in AmE, which reflects the predilection to obligation and futurity and overall use of would and might, which reflects hypothetical and epistemic implication. This observation is in line with earlier corpus research, including Collins (2009) who discovered that postcolonial Englishes tend to be more resistant to change, striving to retain more deontic modality, with its focus on duty and politeness.

In addition, semi-modals (have to, need to, be going to) showed high levels of variation. In situations of need or social obligation, Pakistani English favors have to and usually occurs in journalistic and educational forms. American English, in contrast, preferred need to and be going to as it is more individualistic and practical or less oriented in the expression of personal obligation and intention (Mindt, 1995; Leech et al., 2016). These differences can be related to cultural dimensions of Hofstede (2001) because collectivist societies, such as Pakistan, tend to use modal markers of shared responsibility and social alignment, whereas individualistic cultures, such as the U.S. tend to use linguistic tendencies of individual autonomy and frankness.

The data, when it comes to the stylistic aspects, showed that Pakistani English is more likely to use the formal modality in the sense that modals such as should, must, and shall are more common in an academic and official register than in AmE. This is in line with Bautista (2004), who contended that South Asian types of English tend to retain a British-influenced tone, which is formal. Contrarily, the AmE corpus data had a more extensive distribution of epistemic modality with more focus on uncertainty, probability, and politeness reduction by using such forms as might and could. These results are in line with those of Kennedy (2002), who determined that American English is undergoing a gradual and consistent

process of epistemic softening, which will lead cultural preference towards hedging and interpersonal negotiation, over categorical assertion. In a pragmatic point of view, the variance of the use of the modality is an indication of culturally specific discourse norms. In PakE, the use of modals in directive speech acts, e.g. classroom instructions, administrative speech, is a common occurrence that supports hierarchical relations. As an example, teachers, officials, and journalists tend to use should and must in order to enforce their authority or moral duty. In AmE on the other hand, modality operates in a much more interactive way with could and might reducing imposition and promoting cooperation. Pragmatic role of modality has a strong connection with speaker stance and cultural politeness strategies as stated by Palmer (2001) and Facchinetti (2003).

A curious observation is made with regard to emerging modal patterns. The two corpora had an increasing trend in use of quasi-modals and adverbial modals, including probably, definitely, and certainly. Nonetheless, they were higher in AmE, which is an indication of adverbial intensification and the substitution of traditional modals with lexical modality (Leech, 2016; Krug, 2000). The retention of must and shall in PakE also indicates the existence of a more conservative modal system, which still has colonial linguistic impact and formality of expression (Mukherjee and Hoffmann, 2006).

These findings have culturally important implications. Should and must prevalence in Pakistani English mirror social expectations and moral conformism where modality is a language tool to social solidarity and respect. American English, on the contrary, shares its modality as the sign of individual agency and subjective judgment, which is in line with the cultural focus on individuality and self-expression (Trosborg, 1995). This is reminiscent of the argument put forward by Wierzbicka (2006) that language allows us to encode the cultural scripts which are a reflection of societal values and communicative conventions. In general, the results verify the fact that the modality difference is a linguistic and a social-cultural one. Although both types have a common grammatical system, their modal usage varies in terms of frequency, distribution as well as pragmatic functionality. These variations are not mere coincidental but

well-organized in accordance with larger cultural orientations- collectivism or individualism, formality or informality and authority or negotiation. According to Leech and Smith (2006), modality is a reflection of the way of thinking, and it shows how linguistic decisions reflect social meaning and culture worldview. Therefore, the comparative study of GloWbE data shows that both Pakistani and American English varieties have developed different modal grammars of value, politeness, and stance due to the sociohistorical and cultural contexts.

6. Conclusion

The current study aimed to explore modality markers in Pakistani and American English on the basis of the data obtained with the help of the GloWbE corpus. Following the goals of determining the most common modal forms and discussing the cultural, stylistic, and pragmatic aspects that lead to their difference, the analysis showed the similarity and difference between the two types of English. The results have shown that even though the core modal system of Standard English is found in both Pakistani and American English, the modal usage patterns are indicative of a different sociolinguistic and cultural orientation. Pakistani English showed more prevalence of deontic modals like *must*, *shall* and *should*, compared to epistemic and pragmatic modals used in American English like *would*, *might* and *could*. These findings support the hypothesis that modality is a grammar, but also a mirror of cultural values and communicative patterns (Collins, 2009; Leech et al., 2016).

On a bigger scale, the research in this study supports the idea that the linguistic diversification of the World Englishes is dependent on the presence of local socio-cultural backgrounds. Modality markers are used to show obligation, power and moral conformity in the Pakistani English and reflect the collectivist and hierarchical culture of the Pakistani society (Hofstede, 2001). On the other hand, the American English language has a tendency towards using epistemic politeness and interpersonal negotiation, which is representative of an individualistic and egalitarian communicative culture (Wierzbicka, 2006). The results of this study are in line with previous corpus-based studies on cross-varietal

Englishes which contend that modality is a cultural reflector that reflects politeness, relationships of power and speaker position (Palmer, 2001; Facchinetti, 2003).

The pedagogical and theoretical implication of this study are both theoretical and pedagogical. In theory, it defends the idea that modality is a dynamic linguistic system that is sensitive to social and cultural difference and not a given grammatical category. The pedagogical significance of such variation has to do with multilingual teachers, curriculum developers and multilingual students. Being aware of the uses of politeness, obligation, and certainty of the modals across varieties can enable cross-cultural communication competence and enable the learners to understand diversity in the use of English around the globe (Mukherjee & Hoffmann, 2006).

Nonetheless, there are also limitations that are identified in the study. The data analysis was based on written materials only of GloWbE corpus; therefore, the results might not be able to reflect spoken modal practices or contextual aspects of the interactional discourse completely. Besides, the study did not investigate the genus-specific differences in modality, which might also shed some light on the stylistic and pragmatic differences. Future studies may also extend this question by adding the use of spoken corpora (ICE-Pak and COCA), using multimodal and diachronic strategies and examining modality development in the context of digital discourse and online communication (Krug, 2000; Leech & Smith, 2006). To sum up, the comparative study of Pakistani and American English has shown that modality markers create an important location of linguistic, cultural, and pragmatic distinction. The research gives a contribution to the existing research on World Englishes by showing how English as a global language can be used to ensure compliance with universal grammatical regulations and localized sociocultural identities. Because such grammatical variety is best described as the issue Leech (2016) described, which is that the appreciation of English as a language in constant negotiation between global standards and local reality becomes even more significant.

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