Modality as a Persuasive tool in English and Arabic Self-Improvement Books

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Abstract:

This paper attempts to explore the patterns of modality in selected English and Arabic self-improvement books. Self-improvement is a new genre of writing that provides readers with information and guidance on how to cope with life, resolve problems, take decisions, and achieve success. The analysis is based on Biber et al's (1999) categorization of modality. The study focuses on the use of modal verbs (i.e. *can, could, will, would, shall, should, may, might, and must*). It shows that different forms of modality have played an important persuasive function in the books under investigation. Prediction modality has been used to emphasize the authors' experience and comment on the positive outcomes in readers' lives as a result of applying their advice. Possibility modality has been used to present those authors' messages as a possible list of options or suggestions, not as authoritative instructions. Readers' abilities to change their inner qualities are addressed directly by the authors through using ability modality.

Keywords: Modality, Modal Verbs, Persuasion, Self-Improvement

1. Introduction

Self-development is a new genre of writing concerned with providing information and guidance and giving instructions on how to cope with life, resolve problems, take decisions, set plans, and make progress.

Over the last few decades, personal development books industry greatly flourished. Wilson and Cash (2000:120) report that millions of people look to self-improvement books as a source of "advice, insights and inspiration in solving personal and interpersonal problems."

Persuasion is a very powerful tool in most types of human interaction. Commercial advertising, propaganda, political speeches, debates, court language and religious sermons are examples of persuasive discourse. Lakoff (1982:11) defines persuasion as the "attempt or intention of one party to change the behavior, feelings, intentions, or viewpoint of another by communicative means."

Authors of personal development books use their linguistic skills to influence and motivate the readers. This study investigates and compares modality as a linguistic persuasive feature in selected English and Arabic books.

2. Aim of the study

This study attempts to explore the patterns of modality in the selected self-improvement books. It is based on Biber et al's (1999) categorization of modality. The analysis aims at recording the predominant functions of modal verbs (*can, could, will, would, shall, should, may, might, and must*).

3. Methodology

3.1. The data

The data collected for this study include some selected Arabic and English personal development books. Around 500 pages from three English books were selected for the study. The word count of these 500 pages (160000 words) corresponds to the word count of seven Arabic books. The English and Arabic books are among the most famous and best-selling books.

The English books are:

1. *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People: Powerful Lessons in Personal Change* by Stephen R. Covey.

2. *The Power of Positive Thinking* by Norman Vincent Peale.

3. *Think and grow rich* by Napoleon Hill.

The Arabic books are:

١- لإبراهيم الفقي (٢٠١٠) المفاتيح العشرة للنجاح

The ten keys to success by Ibrahim Elfiky, published by the Canadian Centre for Human Development, Canada (2010).

٢- أيقظ قدراتك واصنع مستقبلك لإبراهيم الفقي (٢٠٠٨)

Awaken your abilities and make you future by Ibrahim Elfiky, published by Alrayaha, Cairo (2008).

٣ـ أن تكون نفسك لشريف عرفة (٢٠١٢)

<u>To be yourself</u> by Shereef Arafa, published by Al-Dar Al-masrya Allubnanya (2012).

٤ـ لماذا من حولك أغبياء لشريف عرفة (٢٠١٣)

<u>Why are those around ʏᴏᴜ stupid</u> by Shereef Arafa, published by Al-dar ᴀʟ-masrya Al-lubnanya (2013

٥ـ أفكار صغيرة لحياة كبيرة لكريم الشاذلي (٢٠١١)

<u>Small ideas for a great life</u> by Kareem Alshazly, published by Darel- Yaqeen, Cairo, (2011)

٦ـ ما لم يخبرني به أبي عن الحياة لكريم الشاذلي (٢٠١٠)

<u>What father did not tell me about life</u> by Kareem Alshazly, published by Dar Agial, Cairo, (2010).

٧ـ صناعة النجاح لطارق السويدان وفيصل بشراحيل.

<u>Making success</u> by Tareq Al-Suwaidan and Faisal Bashraheel, published by Darul Andalus Alkhadraa, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia (2000).

3.2. Linguistic models and tools.

The current study focuses solely on the presence or absence of overt modal auxiliaries and on their nature and distribution in the texts under study. The study will investigate and analyze the selected data in the light of Biber et al.'s (1999) system of modality.

4. Theoretical background

4.1. Definition of modality

Endley (2010: 320) states that "the simplest way to explain modality is to say that it has to do with the stance the speaker adopts toward some situation expressed in an utterance." Modality, thus, "reflects the speaker's attitude toward the situation being described." Cameron (2007:75) defines modality as "a resource speakers and writers use when they are staking claims to knowledge: it allows them to formulate different kinds of claims (e.g., assertions, opinions, hypotheses, speculations) and indicate how committed they are to those claims."

Modality may be expressed through a wide range of linguistic forms. Modal expressions, thus, can take the following forms:

Modal auxiliaries such as *may, might, must, will, shall, should, needs to, ought to*, and few others.

- Modal adverbs such as *certainly, probably, surely, perhaps, regrettably,* etc.

- Evaluative adjectives and adverbs such as *lucky, luckily, fortunate, regrettably*', and many others.

- Certain types of main verbs like verbs of knowledge, prediction and evaluation such as *seem, believe, guess, foresee, approve, dislike*, etc.

4.2. Modality functions

Different modal forms are used to express various modal meanings among which the following may be the most common:

1- Necessity, probability, possibility and likelihood: To express the extent to which a speaker (or a writer) is certain about a proposition.

2- Judgments and opinions: To show whether a speaker or writer views the state of affairs expressed by the sentence positively or negatively.

3- Obligation and permissibility: To indicate whether an action or state of affairs is necessary, optional, forbidden, etc.

4- Temporal frequency: To show the frequency of the occurrence of an action.

5- Volition, intention and willingness: To show what a speaker/writer is going to do or intends to do.

6- Prediction: To show what a speaker/writer predicts or how he expects things to happen.

7- Promising, warning and threatening: To allow a speaker/writer to give promises, warnings.etc.

8- Ability: To show whether the speaker/writer has the capability to do aparticular action or not. (Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech, and Svartvik: 1985; Palmer:2001; Lee: 2005).4.3. Classifications of modality Modality is classified and categorized in different ways by different scholars. Otto Jesperson (1924: 320),

for example, makes a broad division of modalities into two categories: those that contain an element of *will* and those that contain no element of *will*. According to Mikučionis (2012), a corresponding distinction has become conventional in modern linguistic literature on modality, although there is no consensus on the terminology. Most authors call the two modal domains non-epistemic and epistemic modality, while others prefer terms like deontic vs. epistemic, root vs. epistemic, root vs. non-root, or volitive vs. non-volitive modality.

Palmer (2001) reorganizes categories of modality such that the first division is between Propositional Modality on the one hand, encompassing both epistemic and evidential modality, and Event Modality on the other hand, encompassing both deontic and dynamic modality. Propositional modality is concerned with the speaker's attitude to the truth value or factual status of the proposition, while Event modality refers to events that are not actualized, events that have not taken place but are merely potential (Palmer 2001: 8).

Charteris-Black (2014) categorizes modality into epistemic and deontic. Fowler (1985) proposes five categories of modality which indicate speakers' or writers' attitudes to the proposition they utter. The attitudes fall into the areas of validity, predictability, desirability, obligation, and permission (Fowler 1985: 72).

4.4. Biber et al.'s (1999) system of modality

Biber, Johansson, Leech, Conrad, and Finegan (1999) state that modality can have two types of meaning: intrinsic and extrinsic. They categorize modality into three major types based on their predominant meanings:

a) Permission/possibility/ability

b) Obligation/necessity

c) Volition (or intention)/prediction

Biber et al. (1999, p. 485) relate intrinsic modality to "actions and events that humans (or other agents) directly control: meanings relating to permission, obligation, or volition (or intention)." They relate extrinsic modality to "the logical status of events or states, usually relating to assessments of likelihood: possibility, necessity, or prediction" (p. 485). Even though they mention ability, it is categorised as neither intrinsic nor extrinsic modality. Biber et al.'s (1999) system of modality is summarised in Table 3.

Table 1: Modality according to Biber et al. (1999)

Intrinsic modality (deontic)	Extrinsic modality (epistemic)	
Permission	Possibility	Ability
Obligation	Necessity	
Volition (or intention)	Prediction	

5. The Analysis

5.1. Modality in the English books

5.1.1. The Power of Positive Thinking

(by Norman Vincent Peale)

Peale tries to help readers achieve a happy life and experience an amazing improvement within themselves. He draws on a system of spiritual techniques based on the principles of religious teachings. The following analysis shows that he employs more

instances of extrinsic than intrinsic modality; moreover, the category of ability is more heavily relied upon than intrinsic modality. This strategy of distribution of linguistic elements will be illustrated in the table below:

Table 2: Modality in *The Power of Positive Thinking*

Modality		Frequency	Percentage
Extrinsic	Possibility	126	15.5%
	Prediction	285	34.9%
	Necessity	28	3.4%
	Subtotal	**439**	**53.8%**
Intrinsic	Volition (or Intention)	113	14.%
	Permission	3	0.3%
	Obligation	22	2.7%
	Subtotal	**138**	**17%**
	Ability	238	29.2%
	Subtotal	**238**	**29.2%**
TOTAL		**815**	**100%**

The most recurrent type of extrinsic modality is prediction; it is signaled by such modal verbs as 'will', 'shall' and 'would'. Throughout the book, Peale uses prediction to assert the effectiveness of the book, as in (1) and (2):

(1) "… this book <u>will</u> help you believe in yourself and release your inner powers"

(2) "This book <u>will</u> do the job, and I really mean it."

Similarly, prediction is used to emphasize Peale's experience and to comment on the positive outcomes in his readers' lives as a result of applying his advice:

(3) "Affirm it, visualize it, believe it, and it <u>will</u> actualize itself. The release of power which this procedure stimulates <u>will</u> astonish you."

Peale's reassuring tone of the author is evident in using the pronoun 'you' as the agent of statements of prediction, as in (4):

(4) "You will be amazed at the energy and power you <u>will</u> save. You will be much less tired."

possibility is the second most common modality of extrinsic nature in Peale's book. He avoids being demanding and presents his messages as possibilities and options. A wide variety of modal verbs are signaled to perform such functions. The modal 'may' is predominantly found in describing his steps of mental thinking:

(5) "How you think about a fact may defeat you before you ever do anything about it. You <u>may</u> permit a fact to overwhelm you mentally before you start to deal with it actually. On the other hand, a confident and optimistic thought pattern <u>can</u> modify or overcome the fact altogether."

Even the modal 'can' is used here to refer to the possibility of overcoming one's negative fact. He applies the same strategy, too, to address skeptical readers about his beliefs, as in (6):

(6) "As you read these words you <u>may</u> say, "There is nothing new in that." Indeed, there is something new in it if you have never tried it."

In such a case, 'might' and could' play a vital role in expressing the writer's thoughts as true although not very likely.

Necessity is the least common extrinsic modality in presenting Peale's principles. Necessary actions are referred to as the best thing to do since they are in the reader's best interest. Affected by his own religious background, as a preacher's son, Peale quite often uses 'should' to signal an explicit means of giving advice:

(7) "So the bigger your problem, the bigger your prayer <u>should</u> be."

Sometimes, 'must' is mixed with the inclusive pronoun 'we', which gives the sense of the author's involvement, to express a degree of necessity when emphasizing the benefit of quietness, as in (8):

(8) "We <u>must</u> everlastingly discipline ourselves to quietness if we expect its benefits in our lives."

On the other hand, intrinsic modality rarely occurs except for volition (or intention), which is the most common type. Of course, the modal verbs 'will' and 'shall' are used in most instances (70 out of 113) to express various intentions within the textual layers of address.

Obligation is not recurrent in the self-improvement books under investigation since their authors avoid dictating what readers are obliged to do. However, there are a few cases of obligation in Peale's book. The intrinsic modality of permission infrequently occurs in the book. The author of self-improvement books does not want to be regarded in a position of authority. This helps construct a more equal power relationship between the author and his readers.

Table (2) demonstrates that nearly a third of modality frequency (29.2%) lies in the ability type. They can be categorized in four classes with different layers of discourse. The focus of the Peale's book is centered on the power of God, thereby emphasizing God's ability to protect people:

(9)"'If God be for us, who <u>can</u> be against us?' (Romans 8:31)".

Readers' abilities to change their inner qualities are addressed directly by the author:

(10) "There are other practical ways by which you <u>can</u> develop serenity and quiet attitudes."

The author, therefore, asserts that he has faith in the reader's ability to dispose of worries, i.e.

(11) "You were not born with the worry habit. You acquired it. And because you <u>can</u> change any habit and any acquired attitude, you <u>can</u> cast worry from your mind."

At the same level, the author emphasizes his own ability to help readers in their search of true happiness:

(12) "I can assure you that this will give you the greatest surge of happiness you have ever known. It will stay with you, too, as long as you live a God-centered life."

5.1.2. Think and Grow Rich (by Napoleon Hill)

The table below illustrates that extrinsic modality types are largely relied upon more than any other types of modality in Hill's book, as follows.

Table 3: Modality in *Think and Grow Rich*

Modality		Frequency	Percentage
Extrinsic	Possibility	401	34.3%
	Prediction	419	35.9%
	Necessity	52	4.5%
	Subtotal	**872**	**74.7%**
Intrinsic	Volition (or Intention)	50	4.3%
	Permission	1	0.1%
	Obligation	87	7.4%
	Subtotal	**138**	**11.8%**
	Ability	158	13.5%
	Subtotal	**158**	**13.5%**
TOTAL		**1168**	**100%**

The most common type of extrinsic modality in the present book is prediction; it is used by Hill to comment on the future

course of action that may happen to the reader in the case of adopting his philosophy. Both the modal verb 'will' and its past counterpart 'would' play a vital role in reiterating the success of that author's concepts:

(13) "Observe very closely, as soon as you master the principles of this philosophy, and begin to follow the instructions for applying those principles, your financial status <u>will</u> begin to improve, and everything you touch <u>will</u> begin to transmute itself into an asset for your benefit. Impossible? Not at all!"

Hill employs a wide range of modal verbs to achieve the function of possibility, yet 'may', 'could' and 'might', respectively, still serve well in such a context. He describes his principles as 'instructions':

(14) "You <u>shoul</u>d follow this instruction in the manner described in the preceding paragraph".

Therefore, he makes use of the necessity type of modality to present his ideas as 'necessary' and of great benefit to the reader; the modal verb 'should' is frequently used to offer these words of advice, as in (15):

(15) "Before we begin, you <u>should</u> be reminded again that: FAITH is the "eternal elixir" which gives life, power, and action to the impulse of thought!"

On the other hand, the intrinsic type of modality is surprisingly manifested in obligation. Inasmuch as Hill describes his

principles as 'instructions', he appears here to prescribe them to the reader as if they were rules; he uses the modal verb 'must', sometimes capitalized, to realize this intended function of modality, as in (16):

(16) "Ability to reach, and influence your subconscious mind has its price, and you <u>MUST</u> PAY THAT PRICE."

Volition (or intention) is the second common intrinsic type of modality. The only instance of permission is found in the publisher's letter to the author in order to express his opinion of some of the author's principles; it says:

(17) "If there is any possible way that you can afford to render so great a service, may I offer the suggestion that you include with every book, one of your Personal Analysis Charts, in order that the purchaser of the book may have the benefit of a complete self-inventory, indicating, as you indicated to me years ago, exactly what is standing in the way of success."

Finally, the ability type is utilized to build self-confidence, as intended by the author, on the reader's mind.

5.1.3. <u>The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People (by Stephen R. Covey)</u>

The statistics listed in the following table show that modality types can be arranged in terms of abundant use as extrinsic modality, ability, and intrinsic modality, respectively

Table 4 Modality in *The seven habits*

Modality		Frequency	Percentage
Extrinsic	Possibility	277	34%
	Prediction	213	26%
	Necessity	24	3%
	Subtotal	**514**	**63%**
Intrinsic	Volition (or Intention)	40	4.9%
	Permission	0	0%
	Obligation	15	1.8%
	Subtotal	**55**	**6.7%**
	Ability	248	30.3%
	Subtotal	**248**	**30.3%**
TOTAL		**817**	**100%**

As illustrated above, expressing possibility is the most common type of extrinsic modality. Examples of possibility are manifested by a wide range of modal verbs: 'may', 'might', 'can', 'could', 'will', 'would' 'must', and 'should'.

Similarly, the prediction modality is dominant, too, as Covey relies on the reader's logical reasoning of future events and states. The benefits of applying his philosophy are expressed by means of prediction, as in (18):

(18) "You <u>will</u> come to know yourself in a deeper, more mean-ingful way – your nature, your deepest values and your unique contribution capacity."

The least recurrent extrinsic modality used by Covey is necessity. However, he tries to maintain an effective communication with readers through varying his writing style. He sometimes uses indefinite pronouns 'everyone' or objects 'tool' as agents of his advice, e.g.

(19) "Everyone <u>should</u> participate in a meaningful way -- not just the top strategy planners, but everyone." and "… Your tool <u>should</u> help you to keep balance in your life …"

In terms of abundant use, the ability type of modality prevails throughout Covey's book. Despite being fewer than other types of extrinsic modality, the most common type of intrinsic modality is volition (or intention). A clear case of volition represents the author's intention to invite the reader to read certain parts of the book in quiet environment and without interruption, as in (20):

(20) "Please find a place to read these next few pages where you can be alone and uninterrupted. Clear your mind of everything except what you will read and what I <u>will</u> invite you to do."

The writer rarely uses obligations throughout the book; there are only 15 instances of obligation. Nevertheless, several examples of obligation comprise both the modal verb 'must' and the inclusive pronoun 'we', as in:

(21)"It taught me that we must look at the lens through which we see the world, as well as at the world we see, and that the lens itself shapes how we interpret the world."

5.2. Modality in the Arabic books

5.2.1. <u>The Ten Keys to Success (by Ibrahim Elfiky)</u>

The following table shows that the extrinsic types of modality are relied upon by the writer more than the intrinsic ones. The possibility type comes first as Elfiky refers to what our life dreams could be, as follows:

٢٢- "ربما يكون حلمك هو أن تبدأ عملك الخاص أو أن تسافر حول العالم أو تقوم بتاليف كتاب أو حتى تستطلع إمكانيات اختراع جديد

"Your dream could be to start your own business, to travel around the world, to write a book, or even to explore the possibilities of a new invention."

By doing this, Elfiky attempts to identify the problems to which his solutions are offered in ways of prediction:

٢٣- "أنت أيضاً تحتاج لأن تكون مرناً ومستعداً لأقلمة نفسك وتغيير خطتك، لأنك سوف تواجه تحديات كبيرة في الحياة

"You also need to be flexible and ready to adapt yourself and change your plan, because you will face big challenges in life."

Therefore, the author's philosophy is elaborated by means of extrinsic modality to void imposing his beliefs on the reader.

Table 5: Modality in *The Ten Keys to Success*

Modality		Frequency	Percentage
Extrinsic	Possibility	12	57%
	Prediction	1	4.5%
	Necessity	0	0%
	Subtotal	**13**	**61.5%**
Intrinsic	Volition (or Intention)	2	10.5%
	Permission	0	0%
	Obligation	5	23.5%
	Subtotal	**7**	**34%**
	Ability	1	4.5%
	Subtotal	**1**	**4.5%**
TOTAL		**21**	**100%**

The intrinsic types of modality, on the other hand, are used to perform two major functions. The first one is realized by volition modality in order to demonstrate the organization of the text, as in (24):

٢٤- "في الحديث عن الطاقة الجسمانية سنتناول التنفس ونظـام التغذية والتمرينـات الرياضية تباعاً".

"In talking about physical energy, we will discuss breathing, nutrition and exercise, respectively.

It also reveals the author's intention to guide the reader through life. The other function of intrinsic modality is to show what is necessary for the reader to do to achieve his/her goals:

٢٥- وللوصول لأهدافك يجب عليك ان تكون على دراية مقدماً بما يمكن أن يواجهك

لتحقيق ذلك، ومن الواجب أن تجد الحل مقدما"

"In order to reach your goals, you must be aware in advance of what you may face to achieve this, and you must find the solution in advance."

In Addition, stressing the readers' ability to manage their time, as an example, and to improve themselves is another strategy of convincing the readers of the significance of the author's principles:

٢٦- " يمكنك استخدام الوقت الذي تقضي في السيارة بطريقة منتجة "

"You can use the time you spend in the car in a productive way.").

5.2.2. <u>Awaken Your Abilities and Make Your Future (by Ibrahim Elfiky)</u>

It can be noticed that a counter linguistic strategy is used by Elfiky in this book, namely the predominant use of the intrinsic types of modality, particularly the obligation subtype. As the title suggests, it is most probably the author's way of 'awakening' reader's abilities as in:

٢٧- "فلابد وأن تتقبل نفسك"

"You must accept yourself."

٢٨- "يجب أن تعطي الناس ما يريدون وليس ما أنت تريد "

"You must give people what they want, not what you want."

Even the permission type is used once in addressing the audience directly,

٢٩- "إذا كنت تريد أن تشاهد التلفاز فلا مانع من أن تشتريه وتشاهده"

" If you want to watch TV, you can definitely buy it and watch it."

Thirdly, the volition type of modality is frequently employed to organize the author's talk, e.g.

٣٠- "ونحن سوف نتكلم بالتفصيل عن ذلك عندما نتكلم عن موضوع: "كيف تصنع مستقبلك". "

" We will talk in detail about that when we talk about the topic of 'How to Create your Own Future."

So far, this use of intrinsic modality represents the author as someone's personal mentor in order to draw the reader's reaction in favor of his beliefs.

Table (6) illustrates that the extrinsic types of modality are not overlooked altogether. The prediction type is also employed to show the positive consequences of adopting the author's viewpoint,

٣١- " فأي شيء تقوله لنفسك سوف تصدقه، وبعد ذلك يصبح ذلك الشيء جزءاً منك. "

"You will believe in anything which you keep telling yourself, and then that thing becomes a part of you."

This technique further demonstrates the author's life experience and, hence, presents him as a credible advice-giver. Moreover, the possibility type is recurrently used to mitigate the intensity of the imperative form of his instructions, e.g.

٣٢- قرر الآن وتحرك، فمن الممكن أن يكون هذا اليوم هو آخر يوم في حياتك. "

"Decide now and act; this could be the last day of your life.").

Accordingly, it is characteristic of the author's style to emphasize the reader's ability, but here it is accompanied by the inclusive pronoun 'we':

٣٣- "إن الرغبة المشتعلة تكون دائماً في عيني الشخص الناجح، وجميعنا نستطيع أن نحقق هذا النجاح، ولكن لو استطعنا أن نفعل ذلك. "

"The burning desire is always in the eyes of the successful person, and all of us can achieve this success, but only if we can do that."

This feature allows for a more intimate relationship between the author and his readers.

Table 6: Modality in *Awaken Your Abilities*

Modality		Frequency	Percentage
Extrinsic	Possibility	8	7%
	Prediction	13	11%
	Necessity	1	1%
	Subtotal	**22**	**19%**

Modality		Frequency	Percentage
Intrinsic	Volition (or Intention)	6	5%
	Permission	1	1%
	Obligation	78	67%
	Subtotal	**85**	**73%**
	Ability	9	8%
	Subtotal	**9**	**8%**
TOTAL		**116**	**100%**

5.2.3. What Father Didn't Tell Me About Life! (by Karim Al-Shazly)

Table (7) below indicates that expressing possibility is the most common type of modality in Al-Shazly's book, for instance,

٣٤– " قد تخدع كل الناس بعض الوقت، وقد تخدع بعض الناس كل الوقت. "

"You could fool all the people for some time, and you might fool some people all the time."

Al-Shazly formulates his advice as options or possibilities to construct an equal power relationship with his readers. He also uses the same strategy to describe the possible scenarios of not following his advice.

٣٥– استمتع بما وهبك الله من نِعم، ولا تكن شحيحًا فتحرم نفسك ومن تعول من رزق
ساقه الله إليك، فربما يذهب عنك أو تذهب عنه. "

"Enjoy the blessings that God has given you, and do not be stingy, depriving yourself and those depending on you of the provision that God has given you; it may go away from you or you may go away from it."

Table 7 Modality in *What Father Didn't Tell Me*

Modality		Frequency	Percentage
Extrinsic	Possibility	32	60%
	Prediction	0	0%
	Necessity	0	0%
	Subtotal	**32**	**60%**
Intrinsic	Volition (or Intention)	0	0%
	Permission	0	0%
	Obligation	19	36%
	Subtotal	**19**	**36%**
	Ability	2	4%
	Subtotal	**2**	**4%**
TOTAL		**53**	**100%**

However, expressing obligation is clearly evident, too, throughout Al-Shazly's book, even in the author's conclusions, as in (36):

٣٦- "والخلاصة .. يجب أن تتيقن من أن التغيير سيجلب لك المتاعب."

"In conclusion, you must be sure that change will bring you trouble."

In his direct address to the reader, using the second-person pronoun, the author presents his advice as necessary or very important to happen, as in (37):

"٣٧- ودعني أصارحك بأنك إذا ما أحببت أن تقبل تحدي الحياه وتكون ندا لها، فلابد لك أن تتخلـي وفـورا عـن كـل التبريـرات التـي تعلـق عليهـا مشـاكلك وإخفاقاتك، وتقرر أن تتحمل نتيجة حياتك بكل ثقه وشجاعة."

"And let me tell you honestly that if you want to accept the challenge of life and be up to the challenge, you must immediately abandon all the justifications to which your problems and failures are attached, and you must decide to bear the results of your life with confidence and courage."

The collective ability of both the writer and the reader is emphasized to show our ability to fulfill higher ambitions, as in (38):

"٣٨- الخطر أن نرضى بالأحلام والأهداف المتواضـعة، بالرغم من أن قدرة معظمنا كبيرة، ونستطيع بقليل أو كثير من الجهد أن نحقق ما ظنناه يوما ما شيئا خياليا غير قابل للتحقيق ".

"The danger is that we will be satisfied with dreams and humble goals although most of us have a great ability, and with little or much effort we can achieve what we once thought of as imaginary or unattainable."

It can be interpreted that this method is employed to portray the author as a lay person who shares his experience with the reader; it thus minimizes the gap between both participants.

5.2.4. <u>Small Ideas for a Great Life! (by Karim Al-Shazly)</u>

It is worth mentioning here that previous works maintain that authors of self-improvement books rarely use obligation to avoid dictating what readers are obliged to do. This book, however, comprises a counter strategy since the intrinsic type of obligation is predominant. In such a way, the author's principles are presented as the most proper or best thing to do, as in (39):

٣٩– " يلزمك أن تُقدر قيمة حياتك، وتستشعر هدف وجودك على سطح هذه الحياة، كي تكون رقمًا صعبًا فيها. "

"You must appreciate the value of your life and feel the purpose of your presence on the surface of this earth in order to be number one in it."

Other examples of obligation are sometimes mitigated via the inclusive pronoun 'we', e.g.

٤٠– "يجب أن نتعلم كيف نتعامل بهدوء وسكينة أمام ضغوطات الحياة. "

"We must learn to deal calmly and serenely in the face of life's pressure."

On the other hand, expressing prediction is not commonly used, compared to expressing obligation. Some of the examples are used to depict the author as having the expertise to predict the outcomes of current events, as in (41):

٤١– " أنجز مهامك الصعبة أولاً... أما السهل منها فسوف يتم من تلقاء نفسه. "

"Complete your difficult tasks first. As for the easy ones, they will be done by themselves."

Table (8) indicates that the ability type of modality is, moreover, drawn upon in this text. The phrase (" ... تستطيع" / "You can …") in Arabic is repeated to demonstrate the sole ability of the reader to overcome the difficulties of life, as in (42):

٤٢– "هدفك الواضـح، تصـميمك الراسـخ، صـبرك الجميـل، إيمانـك بـالله، ثقتك فـي قدراتك هي أدواتك كي تصبح مليونيرا إن أحببت ومهما كان موضـعك أو موقفك من الحياه تستطيع أن تفعلها. "

"Your clear goal, firm determination, proper patience, faith in God, and confidence in your abilities are your tools to become a millionaire if you like, and whatever your position in life is, you can do it."

This technique helps inspire the reader's confidence and build trust between both the author and his readers.

Table 8: Modality in *Small ideas for a great life*

Modality		Frequency	%
Extrinsic	Possibility	0	0%
	Prediction	1	4.5%
	Necessity	0	0%
	Subtotal	**1**	**4.5%**
Intrinsic	Volition (or Intention)	0	0%
	Permission	0	0%
	Obligation	18	85.5%

Modality		Frequency	%
	Subtotal	18	85.5%
	Ability	2	10%
	Subtotal	2	10%
TOTAL		21	100%

5.2.5. To Be Yourself! (by Shereef Arafa)

Table (9) reveals that the most common type of modality in Arafa's book is the extrinsic one, namely expressing prediction. It serves to construct the outcomes of adopting the author's beliefs and thereby stressing the author's experience, as in (43):

٤٣– "لعب دور السعيد سيجعلك سعيدًا بالفعل".

"Playing the role of being happy will make you really happy."

Arafa also relies on this type of modality to formulate his own concepts, as in:(44)

"الانغماس في العمل الخيري ومساعدة الغير، سيجعلك تتعرف على أناس مختلفين، عندهم رسالة إيجابية في حياتهم وتقدير عال لذواتهم."

" Indulging in charitable work and helping others will make you get to know different people who have a positive message in their lives and high self-esteem."

It can be said that the cases of expressing prediction imply the author's certainty about the future course of action in the event of holding his beliefs.

Table 9: Modality in to be yourself

Modality		Frequency	Percentage
Extrinsic	Possibility	0	0%
	Prediction	28	62.5%
	Necessity	0	0%
	Subtotal	**28**	**62.5%**
Intrinsic	Volition (or Intention)	3	6.5%
	Permission	0	0%
	Obligation	9	20%
	Subtotal	**12**	**26.5%**
	Ability	5	11%
	Subtotal	**5**	**11%**
TOTAL		**45**	**100%**

The intrinsic types of modality are expressed through both obligation and volition (or intention). Firstly, the prepositional phrase in Arabic (" ... عليك" / "You must …") is employed many times to signal obligation, as in (45) and (46):

(45)   "عليك أن تدرك الأمور بطريقة مختلفة".

"You must perceive things differently."

(46) "عليك أن تنظر للموضوع كنشاط ممتع ومفيد"

"You must consider the topic as an interesting and useful activity."

These instances can be seen as a way of establishing authority over the reader. However, they can also be interpreted as constructive advice that acts in the reader's best interest. Secondly, the volition (or intention) type is employed to guide the reader through the organizational patterns of the text, e.g.

(47) "لقد قام العلماء بدراسة كل هذا وهو ما سنتكلم عنه في هذا الفصل".

"Scientists have studied all this, and we will talk about it in this chapter."

Additionally, the author's willingness to reveal and share scientific information with readers is clear in (48):

(48) "سأذكر لك الحقيقة المدعومة بالأدلة العلمية والدراسات الحديثة."

"I will tell you the truth which is supported by scientific evidence and recent studies.".

The linguistic function of ability is performed several times; however, it is always related to the reader's ability to change his/her reality, as in:

(49) "إن بامكانك التحكم في مخك وأن تشكله كيف تشاء".

"You can control your brain and shape it however you want.".

Arafa's concept of being 'lucky' is quite different from the one we may think. According to his view, readers are able to make their own luck:

"يمكنك أن تكون محظوظا... فطريقة تفكيرك وسلوكك، هما ما يصنعان الحظ". (50)

"You can be lucky; the way you think and behave is what makes luck."

Building trust in reader's ability can create a degree of intimacy with them.

5.2.6. Why Are Those Around You Stupid? (by Shereef | Arafa)

Table (10) below shows that the most recurrent type of extrinsic modality is expressing possibility. This pattern begins with Arafa's comment on the title of his book, i.e.

"قد يبدو لك هذا العنوان غريبا بعض الشي". (51)

"This title may seem a little strange to you.".

Other examples outline Arafa's philosophy as a series of possibilities, e.g.

"جرب قراءة هذا الكتاب فقد يغير حياتك..." (52)

"Try reading this book, it may change your life."

The use of the particle ("قد" /"may / might/ could") to express possibility is intended to alleviate the intensity of the imperative form of the preceding clause. The occurrence of another

extrinsic modality is manifested in the prediction type. Most of the time prediction is used to reinforce the communicative purpose of this genre of writing, e.g.

(53)   "اطمن هاتحس براحة بعد ثوان."

"Rest assured as you will feel comfortable in a few seconds."

This colloquial style of Arabic writing makes the whole interaction between the author and the reader more informal and, therefore, more intimate.

Table 10 Modality in *Why are those around you stupid*

Modality		Frequency	Percentage
Extrinsic	Possibility	18	45%
	Prediction	8	20%
	Necessity	0	0%
	Subtotal	**26**	**65%**
Intrinsic	Volition (or Intention)	0	0%
	Permission	7	17.5%
	Obligation	7	17.5%
	Subtotal	**14**	**35%**
	Ability	0	0%
	Subtotal	**0**	**0%**
TOTAL		**40**	**100%**

Nevertheless, there are numerous cases of intrinsic modality types such as permission and, even, obligation. Although both of them occur infrequently in self-improvement books to avoid being in a position of authority, they exist in Arafa's direct address to the reader. Permission is evident in allowing the reader to select any part of his book to read, e.g.

(54) أنت ... يمكنك قراءة أي فصل تختار... أو تقرأ الكتاب كاملا بترتيب الفصول...

"حر تماما".

"You can read any chapter you choose or read the entire book in the order of the chapters. You are completely free."

Another example of permission gives options with the conjunctive particle ("أو" / "or") to soften the impact of this permission on the reader's mind, i.e.

(55) "اكتب إجابتك هنا إن أردت... أو احتفظ بها في ذهنك".

"You can write your answer here if you like or keep it in your mind."

Likewise, the obligation type is expressed in his direct address to the reader, too, as in (56):

(56) "كي تكون قائدا حقيقيا لابد ان تكون مقنعا".

"To be a real leader, you must be persuasive."

It can be inferred from these examples that making the readers' presence visible is central to this genre of writing.

5.2.7. Making Success by Tareq Al-Suwaidan and Faisal Bashraheel

A recurrent feature of self-improvement writing genre is that certain extrinsic types of modality are employed far more than intrinsic ones. Table (11) below indicates that the authors of this book make use of the prediction type more than other types of extrinsic modality. The expression of prediction prevails when the authors try to comment on the reader's future actions:

"مهما ضحكت على الآخرين فإنك لن تستمر، وسوف تنهار علاقتك معهم"   (57)

"No matter how much you deceive others, you will not continue, and your relationship with them will collapse."

This method is drawn upon to construct authors as having the sufficient expertise to predict potential outcomes.

Table 11: Modality in *Making Success*

Modality		Frequency	%
Extrinsic	Possibility	1	1%
	Prediction	45	45.4%
	Necessity	2	2%
	Subtotal	**48**	**48.4%**
Intrinsic	Volition (or Intention)	2	2%
	Permission	2	2 %
	Obligation	34	34.4%
	Subtotal	**38**	**38.4%**
	Ability	13	13.2%
	Subtotal	**13**	**13.2%**
TOTAL		**99**	**100%**

Another extrinsic type of modality is the expression of necessity, even though it is traced only twice, e.g.

(58)   فاسمح للناس أن يتصرفوا، وعندها سيخطئون، وبلا شك عندها سيتعلمون من "أخطائهم".

"Allow people to act, so they will make mistakes, and then they will undoubtedly learn from their mistakes."

Accompanied by prediction, expressing necessity reflects the authors' judgment about the most typical behavior of people as interacting participants. The least common extrinsic type of modality is expressing possibility; it is traced only once in this text:

(59)   "أصعب سؤال علي الإنسان ... عندما يسأل نفسه: هل أنا سعيد؟ قد يكون وصل إلى أعلى المناصب، ... ولكن هل هو سعيد"

"The hardest question for a person... is when he asks himself: Am I happy? He may have reached the highest positions ..., but is he happy?"

 Contrary to the English dataset, it is found out that there is an infrequent occurrence of the possibility type in this genre of Arabic writing. It means that Arabic writers do not tend to construct their advice as a list of possibilities to their readers.

The former explanation is supported by another finding, which is that the most common type of intrinsic modality obligation; it is the second most common type of modality of all kinds. For example, the authors describe independence as follows:

(60) "ومما ينبغي أن نلتفت إليه أن الاستقلالية هدف ومرحلة للانتقال إلى المرحلة الثالثة."

"It should be noted that independence is a goal and a stage for moving to the third phase." Permissions are rarely found, and there is only a case of permission in the book that involves the reader as an addressee:

(61) "عندها يُسمح لك بالتجوال السياحي والتحويل الإدراكي في العقل الآخر"

"You may then be allowed to wander and perceptively transform in the other mind."

Finally comes the authors' volition (or intention) to guide the reader's understanding through the organization of the text, e.g.

(62) "وسوف أتناول الأول والثاني هنا".

"I will address the first and second here."

As in the English dataset, the modality of ability is evident in all Arabic books. In this book, the function of ability is expressed in various ways. Sometimes, the readers' ability is stressed to improve their methods of communication with others and develop the basic relationships necessary for success, as in (63):

(63) "النجاح هو شيء تستطيع أن تفعله وتتمرن عليه"

"Success is something that you can do and practice."

In other cases, the ability of other interacting participants in the selected examples from the book is referred to, e.g.

<div dir="rtl">

(64)   بعض الناس عنده الكسب المالي هو عصب الحياة، فتستطيع شراء ظهور

"الناس وأيديهم بالمال".

</div>

"For some people, financial gain is the backbone of life so that they can buy people's backs and hands with money."

It can be deduced that the ability function is a common type of modality widely traced in both kinds of datasets, English and Arabic.

6. Findings

The preceding analysis underlined the effect of the linguistic realizations of modality patterns on the interpersonal relationship between authors and readers. It was also directed to explore the most typical linguistic features of this genre of writing in both English and Arabic datasets. Statistics on the following tables has shown some similarities and differences between these two datasets.

Table 12 Modality statistics in the English books

Modality		The Power of Thinking		Think & Grow Rich		The Seven Habits		Total	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Extrinsic	Possibility	126	15.5%	401	34.3%	277	34%	804	28.7%
	Prediction	285	34.9%	419	35.9%	213	26%	917	32.7%
	Necessity	28	3.4%	52	4.5%	24	3%	104	3.7%
	Total	**439**	**53.8%**	**872**	**74.7%**	**514**	**63%**	**1825**	**65.2%**
Intrinsic	Volition (or Intention)	113	14.%	50	4.3%	40	4.9%	203	7.3%
	Permission	3	0.3%	1	0.1%	0	0%	4	0.1%
	Obligation	22	2.7%	87	7.4%	15	1.8%	124	4.4%
	Total	**138**	**17%**	**138**	**11.8%**	**55**	**6.7%**	**331**	**11.8%**
Ability	Ability	238	29.2%	158	13.5%	248	30.3%	644	23%
	Total	**238**	**29.2%**	**158**	**13.5%**	**248**	**30.3%**	**644**	**23%**
TOTAL		**815**	**100%**	**1168**	**100%**	**817**	**100%**	**2800**	**100%**

Table 13 modality statistics in the Arabic books

Modality		The Ten Keys		Awaken your Abilities		What Father didn't Tell Me		Tiny Thoughts		To Be Yourself		Why Are Those		Success Making		Total	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Extrinsic	Possibility	12	57%	8	7%	32	60%	0	0%	0	0%	18	45%	1	1%	71	18%
	Prediction	1	4.5%	13	11%	0	0%	1	4.5%	28	62.5%	8	20%	45	45.4%	96	24.3%
	Necessity	0	0%	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	2	2%	3	0.7%
	Total	13	61.5%	22	19%	32	60%	1	4.5%	28	62.5%	26	65%	48	48.4%	170	43%
Intrinsic	Volition (or Intention)	2	10.5%	6	5%	0	0%	0	0%	3	6.5%	0	0%	2	2%	13	3.3%
	Permission	0	0%	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	7	17.5%	2	2%	10	2.5%
	Obligation	5	23.5%	78	67%	19	36%	18	85.5%	9	20%	7	17.5%	34	34.4%	170	43%
	Total	7	34%	85	73%	19	36%	18	85.5%	12	26.5%	14	35%	38	38.4%	193	48.9%
Ability	Ability	1	4.5%	9	8%	2	4%	2	10%	5	11%	0	0%	13	13.2%	32	8.1%
	Total	1	4.5%	9	8%	2	4%	2	10%	5	11%	0	0%	13	13.2%	32	8.1%
TOTAL		21	100%	116	100%	53	100%	21	100%	45	100%	40	100%	99	100%	395	100%

Firstly, in both datasets a wide range of the ability type of modality has been demonstrated. Readers' ability to improve themselves and change their own reality is stressed in both English and Arabic datasets. However, English texts provide much more details about their authors' personal experience by means of narrating real-life situations including constructed dialogues. Hence, other interacting participants' abilities have come to the surface within the analysis. Another result is that the authors' individual abilities are emphasized in the English books, too, while the Arabic counterparts show only the collective ability of both the authors and the readers through the inclusive pronouns.

On the contrary, the major difference between English and Arabic datasets is that English books rely more heavily on the

extrinsic modality (65.2%) than the intrinsic modality (11.8%). Arabic books, on the other hand, show nearly equal instances of occurrence of both types, but the intrinsic type of modality is employed (48.9%) more than the extrinsic one (43%). They are distributed as follows:

1- The possibility type of modality is not relatively equal in both datasets, namely (28.7%) in English books and (18%) in Arabic ones. Authors of this genre tend to present their message as possibilities and options to be less confrontational, thereby constructing equal power author-reader relationship. It can be concluded that fewer instances of the existence of the function of possibility are traced in Arabic dataset.

2- Arabic writers make use of relatively more prediction expressions (24.3%) than do English writers (17.2%). This type of modality asserts authors' credibility as they should be more experienced advice-givers; it also sheds light on the positive outcomes of adopting their stated philosophy.

3- Necessity is the least common type of extrinsic modality in both English and Arabic datasets. However, in English datasets it is sometimes expressed explicitly, using the modal verb 'should', in order to give direct advice to the reader.

4- The most controversial intrinsic subtype of modality is obligation; it is heavily relied upon by Arabic writers (43%), much more than what English writers typically do (4.4%). Although this type of modality is considered a face-threatening act to the reader, Arabic authors regard their written interaction as a matter of urgency; it is, therefore, directed to the benefit of the readers. Hence, it can be said that the expression of obligation is considered a feature of this genre in Arabic writing.

5- Expressing volition (or intention) is the second most common type of intrinsic modality in both datasets (3.7% in English books and 3.3% in Arabic texts). It is always a characteristic of this genre for authors to express their willingness and, at the same time, eagerness to find solutions for readers' apparent problems.

6- Both datasets demonstrate minimal use of the permission modality. Expressing permission is rare in this genre since its authors tend to share information rather than being authoritative in their manner of address.

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