



An Analysis of Modalities of the Book “How Children Succeed” by Paul Tough

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Abstract

The study of education book contents has grown in numbers in the last decades. However, the research on the use of modality in the content book is relatively unexplored. Therefore, this research aimed to analyze the content of the book “How Children Succeed” by Paul Tough to find out the types and degree of modalities used. It also shows the most appeared modal used in each chapter and in the book itself. This research was conducted by using the theory of modality by Halliday (2014) in the Systemic Functional Linguistics. The process of data analysis was manually applied without the help of software. Researcher’s concern is how the book is being presented in the area of semantic by the choice of modalities made by the author. The study reveals that the 4 types of modalities are being used which are the probability, usuality, obligation and inclination with all the three degrees of values appeared except for the low degree of inclination. It also revealed the degree of confidence of the author by the choices of modal used in the book. The implication of this study is the book author should pay more attention to the aspect of modality in the education books they write.

Keywords: book; characters; emotional intelligence; modality; SFL

Introduction

In the present time, knowledge and information can easily be accessed by people for many kinds of purposes compare to decades ago. Information and knowledge are no longer only for the consumption of academics only but are now the needs of whoever would like to use it. (Quigley et al., 2002) in their study mentioned that 67.3 % of the respondents from the science faculty at the University of Michigan preferred print journal resource. (Hameed & Osunrinade, 2010) found out in their study that 64.8% of undergraduate students preferred to use text books against 22.1% who used journal.

For the main purpose of self-enrichment to be used in work and daily settings, researcher uses the book “How Children Succeed”(Tough, 2013) as a source of knowledge and information. For researcher, printed resources may not be as easily access as resources from the internet. However, it is considered one of the best resources in term of handiness and details by writer. During the reading process, it intrigues writer of how the author of the book with all the information,

theories and findings conveys its messages. Conveying messages is one goal of communication. Whether it is done in written or verbally, people communicate their messages depend on the degree and value of their choices. (Chen & Shuo, 2018) stated that "the meaning of modal system is also one of the important parts of interpersonal meaning, which is the judgment of the speaker on the success and validity of the proposition he speaks" (p.38).

The book "How Children Succeed" is based on many observations and researches. There are plenty of facts and findings that are objectively presented by professionals and researchers to the author and being used in the book. The database is presented to readers of the book combined with the personal interpretation of writer based on his personal understanding, believes and values.

The book "How Children Succeed" consists of five chapters. Every chapters focuses on how characters play an important role in the succeed of a person whether in academic performances or in life. It also emphasize on how EQ/ EI (Emotional Intelligence) can be a better and more accurate predictor of somebody success compare to IQ or academic test. In the book, language is used by the writer to provide information and to establish interactions; on a deeper level, the interactions will influence the behavior and judgments of other people, in this case the reader of the book "How Children Succeed" and reveal the writer's attitudes.

A study by (Ardiansah, 2015), *An Analysis of Modality in Students' Hortatory Exposition Texts (Systemic Functional Grammar Perspective)* in *Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa dan Sastra*, learned about the use of modality system in students' hortatory exposition text by using the framework of SFG by Halliday and Matthiessen (2004). The researcher analyze the types of modality used in the texts and also the polarity. (Ulfiyah Aprilia & Misnadin, 2021) analyzed the modality in Emma Watson and Michael Kimmel's Speech Texts by using two theories which are Palmer's (1986) and Halliday's (2008) focusing in Epistemic and Deontic modality. Another researcher, (Yu, 2017) in her study *Interpersonal Meaning of Mood and Modality in English Public Service Advertising Texts*, ACSR volume 76-2017 also used the SFG theory by Halliday to analyze the advertisement text for the modal and type of modality used and the choice of modal in order to persuade reader to take positive action. Halliday's SFL theory is also used by (Kristianti, 2020) to discover the interpersonal meanings on Jacinda Ardern's speeches in her research, *Interpersonal Meanings of Modality in Jacinda Arden's Speeches on Covid-19* in *LET journal*, 2020. She focused on the social context when the speeches were delivered to analyze the meaning of modals used. The last research of modality researcher would like to show is the research by (Jannatussholihah & Triyono, 2020) on "Power in Indonesian Presidential Speeches : An Analysis of Linguistic Modality" in *Lingua*, 2020. This research analyzed the modality used in speech of President Joko Widodo and analyze its meaning in order to show the legal authority and power displayed by the president in his speech by the choice of modality.

In this study, researcher explores the types of modalities and the most dominant modality uses by Paul Tough in every chapter and in the book . Researcher used the theories that were used by all of the previous researcher which is the SFL theory in modality by (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014) however researcher conduct the data analysis in more details which is by showing all the

modal, types of modality and degree of value used chapter per chapter and in summary of the whole book. Researcher also counted the most used modal, most used type of modality and most used degree of value in every chapter. The previous researcher presented the data in summary of the types and most used degree but not showing all the modal collected. Even if According to Halliday and Matthiessen in the 4th edition of Halliday's Introduction of Functional Grammar, there are two types of modalities. The first type refers as modalization and the second types as modulation. Modalization is a type of modality showing probability and usuality while modulation shows obligation and inclination. (Halliday, 1994) (p.358) established three basic values which are "attached to the modal judgment: high, median and low". People make a choice of which modalities they would like to use to deliver their messages, depending on how high, median and low the value of messages. The choices of the degree of each type of modalities used by the author of the book show the value he believes in. In interpersonal terms based on (Thompson, 2013), modality is the expression of the speaker's attitude towards the probability or necessity of the proposition which realized by modal verbs. With factual proves and database provided in the book, it is necessary to learn how the author make choices of the use of modalities to express his thought and to present the findings and how confident he is of the knowledge he shares. Just like what (Griffiths, 2006) says that modality is the label given the meaning includes obligation to make situation come about, indications of whether or not it is permissible feasible and also included are signal as to how confident the speaker/writer is regarding knowledge of the situations.

Method

This study uses descriptive qualitative method. According (Miles & Huberman, 1994) qualitative data are a source of well-grounded, rich descriptions and explanations of human processes. In qualitative research, data is obtained from the participant and descriptively explained for the conclusion. Qualitative research focuses on the meaning of the findings. The interpretation of findings can be different in between one researcher to another researcher including the difference of interpretation from the readers.

The data of the study was taken from the book "How Children Succeed" by Paul Tough published by Random House Books 2013, from chapter one to chapter five excluding the introduction, acknowledgements, notes on sources, and the index. Researcher focuses on collecting the data from the main content that describes the essence of the book. There are in total 197 pages of texts for study. Target of the data collection are all the sentences with modalities with concentration in the modalities of four types; probability, usuality, obligation and inclination.

To collect data, researcher uses several steps of procedures :

1. Reading the book carefully concentrating on the 5 main chapters.
2. Targeting on the sentences with modalities in every chapter.
3. Underlining the modal for data collections from each chapter.
4. Categorizing and arranging data to table based on the types and degree of value.

Researcher was very careful and conscious when doing step 1 and step 2 to be

able to target on the modalities and not immersing in the information which researcher found very interesting and enriching. Data collection in step 3 and step 4 was done manually without the help of software. To categorize data, the Systemic Functional Linguistic Theory from Halliday about types of modalities was being used. Each type of modality are being sorted further based on the degree of modals: high, medium and low. Data is presented in the form of numbers and percentage to finally be compared to find the most used modal, the most dominant type and the most used degree of modalities in each chapter and for the whole book. At the same time , researcher explains the meaning of the most dominant modal used in each chapter to show the confidence of the author in presenting his findings

Results and Discussion

The study of the book "How Children Succeed" by Paul Tough found the types of modalities used and the degree of each types of modalities used. There are two types of modalities from the Theory of modalities in Systemic Functional Linguistics by Halliday (2014) which is modalization that consists of probability and usability and modulation that consists of obligation and inclination. Modalization refers to the validity of information and modulation shows the willingness of a speaker or writer in offer and the responsibility on the hearer or reader in command.

Table 1 Modality in chapter 1: HOW TO FAIL (AND HOW TO NOT)

Modality	Type	Degree	Word	Number	Percentage (%)
Modalization	Probability	High	obviously	1	0,5
			certainly	2	0,9
			clearly	1	0,5
			definitely	1	0,5
			impossibly	1	0,5
			unlikely	1	0,5
			can	30	14,8
		can't	3	1,5	
		likely	14	6,9	
		able to	11	5,4	
		will	6	2,9	
		going to	2	0,9	
		not going to	5	2,5	
		maybe	3	1,5	
	might	10	4,9		
	couldn't	3	1,5		
	could	15	7,4		
	would	14	6,9		
	wouldn't	3	1,5		
	may	2	0,9		
	possibly	1	0,5		
always	9	4,4			
consistently	2	0,9			
never	5	2,5			
constantly	2	0,9			
not at all	1	0,5			

Modulation	Usuality	Medium	often	17	8,4
			unusually	1	0,5
			usually	3	1,5
			regularly	1	0,5
			frequently	1	0,5
			rarely	1	0,5
			sometimes	10	4,9
	Obligation	Low	occasionally	2	0,9
			had to	2	0,9
			have to	2	0,9
			has to	1	0,5
			obligated	1	0,5
			required	1	0,5
	Inclination	Medium	should	3	1,5
			supposed	1	0,5
			needed	3	1,5
			allowed	1	0,5
want to			3	1,5	
	High	want to	3	1,5	
	Medium	keenly	1	0,5	
Total			203	100%	

As can be seen from table 1, which put in details all the modalities found in the 1st chapter of the book that shows the type, degree and all the modal used. The word that being used the most is the word or modal ‘can’ which is part of the modalization type. Probability is the most used type of modality in the 1st chapter. (Leech, 2006) in Glossary of English Grammar gives description to modal as a member of a small class of verbs that have meanings relating to modality. The modal ‘can’ which is in the probability group shows possibility or permission . The modal ‘can’ has a medium degree of value.

Let’s take one example of the sentence in the first chapter: How to Fail (And How to Not) that use the modal ‘can’ which shows possibility or permission as what is described in the 2006 Glossary of English Grammar by Geoffrey Leech.

“So if we **can** improve a child’s environment in the specific ways that lead to better executive functioning, we **can** increase his prospects for success in a particularly efficient way.” (chapter 1, p. 21).

Both ‘can’ modal used in the sentence refers to possibility. When we are talking about possibility, it is not something definite but the likelihood for something to happen.

Table 2 Modality in chapter 2: HOW TO BUILD CHARACTER

Modality	Type	Degree	Word	Number	Percentage (%)
		High	certainly	7	3,03
			definitely	1	0,4
			impossibly	1	0,4

		can	32	13,9
		can't	2	0,9
		likely	15	6,5
		able to	11	4,8
		will	24	10,4
	Medium	will not	1	0,4
		going to	8	3,5
		not going to	1	0,4
		probably	4	1,7
		maybe	1	0,4
		might	11	4,8
		couldn't	1	0,4
		could	24	10,4
	Low	would	17	7,4
		wouldn't	1	0,4
		may	1	0,4
		possibly	3	1,3
		perhaps	1	0,4
		always	7	3,07
	High	consistently	1	0,4
		never	5	2,2
	Usuality	constantly	2	0,9
	Medium	often	14	6,1
		unusually	1	0,4
	Low	rarely	1	0,4
		had to	1	0,4
		have to	4	1,7
	High	must	1	0,4
Modulation	Obligation	should	5	2,2
	Medium	supposed	2	0,9
		needed	9	3,9
	Low	allowed	1	0,4

Inclination	High	want to	10	4,4
Total			231	100 %.

The second chapter : How to Build Character also predominantly shows the used of the modal ‘can’ as the most used modal in the chapter with probability as the most used type of modalization. If we refer to the title which start with the wh-question ‘How’, wh-questions allow a large or open-ended number of answers according to Geoffrey Leech in Glossary of English Grammar (2006) which means giving open ended possibilities of the manner and way to do something , unlike yes-no questions , which strictly speaking invite only two possible answers.

Here is one example of the using of modal ‘can’ in one of the sentences in the second chapter that talk about possibility, ability and opportunity for a character building of children.

“She has shown that student’s mindsets predict their academic trajectories: those who believe that people **can** improve their intelligence actually do improve their grades.” (chapter 2, p.97)

The modal ‘can’ here talk more about the ability of people to improve. If people/ students believe that they have the ability to improve their IQ, then they do improve their grades. The author is not using any median probability for the statement of improving grades , in fact, he uses the high value word lead to reader believes that it actually happens. Starting from medium modal ‘can’, the sentence lead to a high probability.

Table 3 Modality in chapter 3: HOW TO THINK

Modality	Type	Degree	Word	Number	Percentage (%)
		High	certainly	1	0,6
			clearly	2	1,2
			can	11	6,6
			can’t	3	1,8
			likely	1	0,6
		Medium	able to	3	1,8
			will	7	4,2
			will not	2	1,2
			going to	5	2,9
			might	6	3,6

			couldn't	5	2,9		
	Probability		could	26	15,6		
Modalization	Low		would	27	16,2		
			may	2	1,2		
			possibly	2	1,2		
			potentially	1	0,6		
			uncertainly	1	0,6		
			always	4	2,4		
			High		never	9	5,4
Usuality	Medium		often	18	10,8		
			usually	3	1,8		
			rarely	2	1,2		
			Low		occasionally	4	2,4
Obligation	High		have to	4	2,4		
			must	1	0,6		
			should	6	3,6		
			Medium		needed	1	0,6
			Low		allowed	3	1,8
Modulation	Inclination	High	want to	7	4,2		
Total				167	100%		

The most used modal in the third chapter is the modal 'would' that represents prediction, intention or hypothesis as described in 2006, A Glossary of English Grammar by Geoffrey Leech. 'Would' has low probability value which suggests low degree of certainty. It is the modality under modalization type. Throughout the 3rd chapter, probability came out as the top using type of modality.

Here is one example of a sentence using the modal 'would' in the 3rd chapter : How to Think.

"When James **would** get downhearted and say that he wasn't any good at analogies and trigonometry, Spiegel **would** reply cheerfully that it was just like chess: a few years earlier, he had been no good at chess, and then he got specialized

training and worked hard and mastered it.” (chapter 3, p.146)

The first ‘would’ is talking about the past event that was going to happen to a student, in this situation it is the state of the student emotion. The second ‘would’ refers to the intention of the other person to encourage the student when he feels bad about himself. Although in the table, the modal would is grouped as part of the low value of probability but when it comes to the interpretation such as shown in the sentence above. The second person indicates a higher probability to act in reaction to the student’s state of negative emotion.

Table 4 Modality in chapter 4: HOW TO SUCCEED

Modality	Type	Degree	Word	Number	Percentage (%)
Modalization	Probability	High	certainly	3	2,7
			unlikely	1	0,8
			can	8	7,1
		Medium	can't	2	1,8
			likely	2	1,8
			able to	7	6,3
			will	3	2,7
			will not	1	0,8
			going to	6	5,4
		Low	not going to	1	0,8
			might	1	0,8
			couldn't	4	3,6
			could	14	12,5
			would	22	19,6
			wouldn't	2	1,8
Usuality	High	possibly	1	0,9	
		always	5	4,5	
		consistently	1	0,9	
			never	5	4,5
			constantly	1	0,9

			often	4	3,6
		Medium	usually	1	0,9
			regularly	4	3,6
			sometimes	2	1,8
		Medium	should	5	4,5
Modulation	Obligation		needed	2	1,8
	Inclination	High	want to	4	3,6
Total				112	100 %

The 4th chapter reveals 'would' as the most used modal which has a low degree of value as part of the probability type. The percentage of it is 19,6 % , close to the second used modal but quite far from the percentage of the other modal used. The author presents more prediction, intention or hypothesis in this chapter.

Here is one example of the sentence:

"In fact, it turned out that, except at the most highly selective public universities, ACT scores revealed very little about whether or not a student **would** graduate from college." (chapter 4, p.152)

As a prediction, the modal 'would; in the sentence above tells how the ACT score has very little prediction whether a student who has enrolled in a college or university strive and make it to the end of the study except at the most selective public universities. ACT score is the score that shows the academic results of English, Math, Reading and Science. The ACT score report provides information about a student's educational needs, extracurricular achievements, and educational plans. It is widely used as the only one factor for admission process in college or university. It also lead to the hypothesis that there is other factor that provides better prediction of a student success in completing college or university. In this book, the other factor is what we called characters or Emotional Intelligence.

Table 5 Modality in chapter 5: A BETTER PATH

Modality	Type	Degree	Word	Number	Percentage (%)
		High	certainly	3	2,2
			impossibly	1	0,7
			can	12	8,95
			can't	5	3,7
			likely	3	2,2

Modalization	Probability	Medium	able to	3	2,2	
			will	15	11,2	
			probably	1	0,7	
		maybe	1	0,7		
		might	7	5,2		
		Low	couldn't	1	0,7	
			could	12	8,95	
	would		15	11,2		
	may		3	2,2		
	Usuality	High	possibly	4	2,98	
			uncertainly	1	0,7	
			always	1	0,7	
			consistently	1	0,7	
			never	9	6,7	
often			12	8,95		
regularly			1	0,7		
Modulation	Obligation	Medium	frequently	1	0,7	
			rarely	1	0,7	
			sometimes	1	0,7	
	Inclination	Medium	Low	should	8	5,97
				needed	3	2,2
		High	Low	allowed	4	2,98
				want to	5	3,7
Total				134	99,18 %	

There are two modal that used at the same proportion in the fifth chapter, A Better Path, the 'will' and 'would' modal. Would is the past form of will. They both talk about prediction, intention and hypothesis. However, 'will' is categorized in the medium value of probability type while 'would' is categorized in the low value of probability type. As the medium value of probability, the modal 'will' tells that the author is confident about his ideas but also open rooms for other possibilities.

These are two examples of the modality used:

"If they could do that, she believed, they **would** do better next time."
(chapter5, p.183)

The modal 'would' here gives a low prediction of the possibility for a group of students to do better in the future. The success of the prediction also depends on

whether they can do the prerequisite action.

"There is no antipoverty tool we can provide for disadvantaged young people that **will** be more valuable than the character strengths that Keitha Jones and KewaunaLerma and James Black possess in such impressive quantities : conscientiousness, grit, resilience, perseverance, and optimism." (chapter 5, p.195)

The author expresses his confidence with the 'will' modality that there is nothing more valuable to equip the disadvantage young people who live under poverty or in distressing environment that can help them to get out of the poverty circle but the character strengths itself.

Table 6 Modality in the book "How Children Succeed" by Paul Tough

Degree	Type of Modality			
	Modalization		Modulation	
	Probability	Usuality	Obligation	Inclination
High	25	70	18	29
Medium	272	82	48	1
Low	269	24	9	-
Total	566 (66.8%)	176 (20.8%)	75 (8.9%)	30 (3.5%)

Table 6 shows summary of modalities used in the book. It captured the whole picture of modality that has been described chapter per chapter previously. We can see from table 7 that the most used modality of the book is the probability type which takes more than half of the modality used, with medium degree of value as the the top using modality. The word/modal 'would' compete with the modal 'can' as the most used word with only 2 numbers of difference in the proportion. Thompson (1996: 57) notes that probability is how likely it is to be true. It means that how the sentence is equivalent to either yes or no, for instance, maybe yes or maybe no, with different degree of likelihood attached. To relate with the questions in introduction part about the connection between the most used modal and degree of value with the confidence of the author in presenting information in the book, we can see that with the medium degree of probability being appeared the most in the book shows that the author has a medium level of certainty. It is more convincing than the low degree but, not convincing enough to use the high degree of modality to convince the reader. It also shows that the author is confident enough of the ideas and findings he presented in his book. In fact, the proportion of the medium and low degree of probability is quite close in numbers.

The similarities of this research with the five previous researches are in the theory used which is the SFL theory of modality by Halliday. All researches are also using qualitative method and analyzing the modalities from the participants and objects. The most distinctive difference of this research is in how the researcher presenting the data which is in more details although all the researchers study about type of modalities. When connected with interpersonal meaning of the modal used, researchers of the previous researches and the researcher of this research has different point of view of interpretation. This research explains the

confidence of the author in presenting his book by the choice of modal, type of modality and degree of values. The journal by Evelina Ayu Kristianti, did present the confidence of the speaker of the speech but she relates the meaning of the modal to the social context and the circumstances when the speech were delivered and not purely analyzing the meaning of each modal used. The other researcher Dian Ardiansah talked about the judgement of the speaker of his text while Huiqun Yu described the meaning in connection with persuasion for reader to take positive action. Siti Jannatus sholihah and SulisTriyono analyze the power showed by the president in his speech by the choice of modalities used. Lulu' UlfiyahApriliaand Misnadin in their journal explain the intention of the speaker when delivering their speeches in order to make the listener of the speeches to act and make positive impact

Conclusion

This study used the modality theory in the Systemic Functional Linguistic (2014) by Halliday. It revealed the most appeared type and degree of modality and uncovered out the most used modal in the book. This research exposed all types of modality found in the book, with specific finding that modalization with the probability type as the most appeared type in the book and the usuality, obligation and inclination type. The medium degree of probability is the top used degree but it competes closely to the low degree value of probability. All four types of modalities with the high, medium and low degree of values appeared in the book with only the absence of the low degree of inclination. It can be inferred that the author of the book conveys the possibility with a medium certainty and confidence of the ideas that he presents in the book. The implication of the study is the education book authors should consider the content of their books, especially the use of modality.

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