

## Introduction:

Much work has been done on modality in English, most of which reveals the difficulty and intricacy of the subject. Palmer's work on "Modality and the English Modals": Longman (1979) seems the most clear and specific study done on the subject.

In Arabic only a few works have been executed, most of which, perhaps all, discuss modality in colloquial Arabic. This study discusses modality in Modern Standard Arabic and adopts Palmer's framework for modality and the English modals (above). It is basically a preliminary investigatory study of modality in Arabic. It mainly consists of a semantic explanation of Arabic modals as they occur in real data. Although this study deals with data in a language not widely understood in the West, the writer has endeavoured to make the examples intelligible to a non-Arabic speaking linguist.

It is difficult to draw a syntactic distinction between what we will, later on, call Arabic modals and their ordinary counterparts whether verbs, phrases or particles. Thus this research is an attempt to introduce the Arabic modals and the notions they express through the analysis of written data.

This research on "Arabic Modality" consists of four chapters. The first two are introductory: Chapter One will discuss briefly the concept of modality in general, while Chapter Two will make clear the research methods (the scope, focus, data selection, analysis and organisation). A description of the syntax of the Arabic modals will form the third chapter in which the syntactic structures in which the

modals may occur are discussed with examples. The last chapter is on "Form and Meaning" where the relationship between the modals and the meaning they express is examined. One section will be devoted to explain what we mean by categories of modality: epistemic, deontic and dynamic with examples from both Arabic and English. The rest will be sections discussing the notions of modality: obligation and necessity, possibility, permission and ability. The last section in this chapter will consider negation and how it affects the meaning of the modals. A conclusion is appended.