

The Use of Modal Auxiliaries in *Pride and Prejudice*

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Modality like volition, attitude, and values is a semantic category which are mainly related with inside and feelings of human beings. In *Pride and Prejudice*, which I shall discuss in this thesis, a lot of modal auxiliaries are used. They are associated with ability, permission, and possibility, such as *can* and *may*. *Can* originally had the mental meaning, while *may* originally had the physical meaning. However, in Present-day English the modal auxiliary *can* had the physical meaning, and the modal auxiliary *may* had the mental meaning. My primary concern here is how the characters' use of the modal auxiliaries *can* and *may* contributes to representing character's personality.

In Chapter I, I shall apply Palmer (2001)'s opinion to define the modality. Moreover, I shall also apply Coates (1983)'s formal characteristics of modal auxiliaries and limit ten modal auxiliaries. Second, I shall apply the basic notion of modality, Root and Epistemic. In addition, Coates (1983)'s opinion 'a fuzzy set' to analyze the modal auxiliaries, and Phillips (1970)'s opinion on Austen's characteristic use of modal auxiliaries shall be introduced as a previous study which I shall refer to in Chapter II. Root modality is associated with the occurrence of situation, while Epistemic modality is associated with the degree of speaker's confidence to the subject.

In Chapter II, I shall analyze the modal auxiliaries *can* and *may* in detail. These two modal auxiliaries have the same semantic area: ability, permission, and possibility. In Present-day English, *can* has three meanings; ability, permission, and possibility. On the other hand, *may* has two meanings; permission and possibility. These two modal auxiliaries have both Root and Epistemic meanings. I applied a fuzzy set to each modal auxiliary to analyze which meaning is core. The core meaning of *can* is ability and permission. *May* and *might* are used in the more formal context than *may*, and these two meanings are mainly used as subjective use.

In Chapter III, according to my analysis in Chapter II, I shall analyze the characteristics on Austen's use of the modal auxiliaries *can* and *may* by each main character in *Pride and Prejudice*: Elizabeth, Jane, Darcy, and Bingley. These two modal auxiliaries illustrate each character's personality and the

background at that time.

Modal expressions, which the speaker uses in their speech and thought, represent how they think and feel. Moreover, these expressions are highly associated with their personalities. As I have examined, modal auxiliaries express not only how they feel and think, but also their characteristics.