An Analysis on the BRICS TALK from the Perspective of Modality System

MI Cheng-fei
Guangdong University of Foreign Studies, Guangzhou, China

The tenth BRICS Summit was held in Johannesburg, South Africa in 2018, which attracted attention from the whole world. Especially, it is of great importance to the BRICS nations, for it is the first ten years of BRICS, which marks its growth. Meanwhile, this year the Trump administration imposed more strict policies on protectionism. Particularly, the trade war between China and the United States is so intensive. China, as the core member of BRICS has great clout on BRICS, so the trade war between China and US also arouse a heat discussion among the BRICS nations. During the Summit, CGTN invited experts from the five BRICS nations to discuss related topics. Systemic Functional Linguistics, as one of the most influential branches of Linguistics, was firstly established by M. A. K. Halliday, and it has been greatly developed over the past decades. Interpersonal meaning is one of the three meta-functions, which focuses on how addressers use language to communicate, establish and maintain relationships with addressees, and express their opinions. Mood and modality are two basic resources to the realization of interpersonal meaning. Mood is used to represent the interaction of the language users, while modality reflects the utterers’ attitudes and judgments. The paper discusses the three aspects of modality: modal operators, modal adjuncts and metaphors of modality. The paper applies the modality system to the analysis of the transcript of BRICS TALK. The author selects the experts’ speeches on the trade war between China and US as the data. The research questions are as followed: (1) the characteristics of the modality resources appeared in their talks; (2) the BRICS nations attitudes and stance on trade war and America’s protectionism.

Keywords: BRICS TALK, modal operators, modal adjuncts, metaphors of modality

1 Introduction

Since BRICS was established in 2008, it is the tenth year of BRICS. Because this year the Trump administration imposed many restrictions on the trade with China, trade war becomes a hot topic of the BRICS Summit. All the BRICS nation are very concerned about this issue. In the BIRCS TALK, held by CNGT (a Chinese TV channel), five experts from the BRICS nations were invited to discuss the issue concerning BRICS Summit. One part of their discussion is about trade war, so the paper excerpts the experts’ discussion on this
topic to analyze and to explore the BRICS nations attitude on the trade war and America’s protectionism under the guidance of modality system.

It was Lyons (1977) who firstly defined modality as the resource that is used to express the utterers attitudes from the perspective of semantics. Meanwhile, Palmer (1986) suggested that modality meaning can be realized by using the devices such as, modal verbs, the inflections of verbs, etc. He mainly put forward the systemically analysis of modal verbs from the aspects of its forms and semantic meanings. Modality system appeared in the Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), which was firstly put forward by Halliday (1985). Modality, as a basic resource to realize interpersonal meaning, focuses on the utterers’ attitude and judgement. It includes three aspects: modal operators, modal adjuncts and metaphors of modality.

In the domestic research, Liao Qiuzhong (1989) introduced mood and modality. Since then, there are more and more scholars started researches from this aspect. The theory is applied to various discourses, such as news, literature and legal discourse. Li Zhanzi (2001) applied the methodology of interpersonal meaning to make a research on the discourse level. He started the researches on the discourses from the perspective of modality. Gradually, many scholars did some researches on discourse level from this aspect. For example, Yang Xinzhang (2006) discussed the structure of modality and pointed out that central modals were distributed in both legal and academic texts based on the corpus approach. At the same time, it was also found that the corpus-based approach to analyzing the modality in some text types could well reflect the characteristics of modals.

For news and political discourses, they are highly conceptualized. Van Dijk (1988) and Fowler (1991) have studied the language structure and characteristics of news media comprehensively and systematically. Meanwhile, some people choose sentences or paragraphs from different newspapers as examples to illustrate their stylistic features one by one, such as Brook (1979); others analyze the full text or excerpts of a report to find the stylistic features, such as Crystal & Davy (1969).

Setting modality as the key words, it can be easily found that over thousands of relative researches have been made, and nowadays an increasing number of scholars apply modality to the analysis of news discourses and political discourses. Sun Aizhen and Zhao Jiangrong (2014) collected 3 inaugural speeches to count up the modal auxiliaries to discuss the speakers’ tendency and attitudes.

This paper will be divided into parts. The first part is the introduction as it is given above. The second section is a brief introduction of the theoretical frame work. The third part is concerned about the method. The fourth chapter deals with the discussion. The last part summarizes the findings and illustrates the limitations, and the conclusion is drawn.

2 The Theoretical Foundation

According to Halliday, there are three meta-functions of language: ideational function, interpersonal function and textual function. Interpersonal meaning is how we use language to interact and maintain relationship with others. The meaning of interpersonal function is realized through mood system and modality system.

2.1 Modality System

Modality system is essential to interpersonal meaning. Modality is used by speakers to express their opinions or attitude. Modality system includes modal expression, modal orientation and modal value. Halliday (2004)
defined modality as the area of meaning between positive and negative polarity. Two categories of modality are modalization and modulation. They are concerned with propositions and proposals, which are related to the commodities being exchanged: goods & services and information. If the commodity being exchanged is information, it can be taken as a proposition, which can be argued about its validity of the information. Besides the polarity, yes or no, there are many choices of degree of usuality or probability like possibly, sometimes and so on. These intermediate positions are referred to modalization. If the commodity being exchanged is goods & services, it can be regard as proposal, which will involve the obligation or inclination of proposals. Modality resources, like should, ought to, want to, etc., often refer to modulation.

![Figure 1. The types of modality.](image)

### 2.2 The Realization of Modality

Traditionally, modality is realized by finite modal operator. However, modal adjuncts and metaphors of modality also play a role in expressing interpersonal meaning, therefore, they have been widely discussed as the modality resources.

Modal adjuncts add interpersonal meanings to the clause and help the expression of attitudes. Halliday divides modal adjuncts into mood adjuncts and comments adjunct. While Eggins divides it more specifically. He (2004) classifies it into four types: mood adjuncts, polarity adjuncts, comment adjuncts and vocative adjuncts. Based on the research data, the paper adopts Eggins classification.

Modal operators are the most recognizable realization of modality. They are often used to express probability, usuality, obligation and inclination. For example, “might” indicates possibility. “Will” can either represent inclination and probability. Meanwhile, all modal operators show different degrees of modal value, which reflect the utterers’ opinions and attitudes.

Metaphors of modality are also regarded as a way of realization of modality. It is usually related to the modal orientation. It is further divided into two types: objective and subjective. For example, “I believe” and “on my view” stand for subjective explicit. “it is said” is an example of objective explicit.

### 2.3 Modal Value

As it is mentioned, modality is the intermediate area of the positive and negative polarity. Halliday classified modal value into high, median and low. Different degrees facilitate the utterers to express their attitudes. As Thompson (2000, p. 59) mentions that “the speaker may signal a higher or lower degree of certainty about the validity of a proposition; or higher or lower degree of pressure on the other person carry out a command.” The following table is his classification.
Table 1
The Value of Modality Resources

| Value  | Modal adjuncts | Modal operator | Metaphors of modality |
|--------|----------------|----------------|-----------------------|
| High   | certainly, definitely; no way, always... | must, ought to, need, has/had to... | I’m sure, I believe... |
| Median | probably, usually... | will, would, should, is/was to... | I think |
| Low    | possibly, perhaps, maybe, sometimes... | can, may, could, might... | I guess, I feel... |

3 Method

In this part, the research questions, research methods and data collection will be demonstrated.

In this paper, the author excerpts the five experts’ speeches from the transcript of the BRICS TALK. The research question will focus on the following two aspects:

(1) the characteristics of the modality resources appeared in their talks

(2) the BRICS nations attitudes and stance on trade war and America’s protectionism

By analyzing the modality resources in their speaking, this paper plans to discuss the BRICS nations’ attitudes towards trade war between US and China. To answer the research questions, a research instrument is employed in this study. The research instrument is UAM Corpus Tool, which is used for the analysis of linguistic annotation of discourses.

The BRICS TALK lasts about one hour. The discussion can be briefly divided into three parts. The first block is centered on the trade war and America’s protectionism. The second part is concerned about Africa continent. In other words, what BRICS nations can help Africa’s development. The last section is about the expectation of the BRICS. The five experts’ opinions on the trade war are taken as the research data. By using the UAM Corpus Tool, the modality resources in the discourses are marked out.

4 Results and Discussion

In this section, the results are detailly analyzed. The realization of modality resources in each expert’s speech are analyzed from three aspects: the modal operators, modal adjuncts and metaphors of modality.

As we have mentioned, the modality resources are realized through modal operators, modal adjuncts and metaphor of modality. The results will be discussed from two aspect. First is an overview of all the five discourse, and second is a detailed analysis according to different countries. Here are the results of modality resources in all experts’ discourses.

Table 2
The Distribution of Modality Resources in Five Experts’ Speech

| Feature             | Brazil N=15 | China N=12 | India N=16 | Russia N=20 | South Africa N=22 |
|---------------------|-------------|------------|------------|-------------|-------------------|
| Total               | N=15        | N=12       | N=16       | N=20        | N=22              |
| Modal adjuncts      | 11 73.33%   | 4 33.33%   | 2 12.50%   | 6 30%        | 4 18.18%          |
| Modal operators     | 4 26.67%    | 6 50.00%   | 8 50.00%   | 10 50%       | 13 59.09%         |
| Metaphors of modality | 0 0.00%    | 2 16.67%   | 6 37.50%   | 4 20%        | 5 22.73%          |
As shown in figure 2, the distribution of modality resources in the five discourses are different. Generally speaking, modal operators are commonly used in the five discourses. The modal operator plays a vital role in expressing utterers’ tendency and attitudes. Except Brazil, the modal operators take up about 50% in all other nation’s discourses. The proportion of modal adjuncts is slightly lower than that of modal operator. However, it occupies the largest proportion in the Brazilian discourse. Meanwhile, there is no metaphor of modality in the Brazilian discourse. While metaphor of modality can be found in other four discourses.

4.1 Analysis on Brazil’s Discourses

We will start from the Brazil, which is directly related to the trade war. For instance, China has taken soya-bean as the target to retaliate America’s protectionism, and China chooses to import soya-bean from Brazil, which means it will have direct impact on Brazil’s agricultural economy. Therefore, Brazil’s attitude towards US protectionism is of great importance.

Table 3

| Modality Resources in Brazil’s Discourse | Wordings | N  | Percent |
|----------------------------------------|----------|----|---------|
| Modal adjuncts                         | Polarity adjuncts | yes | 2  | 13.33% |
|                                       |           | no  | 1  | 6.67%  |
| Mood adjuncts                          | definitely | 1   |   | 6.67%  |
|                                       | quite    | 1   |   | 6.67%  |
|                                       | indirectly | 5   |   | 13.33% |
| Modal operators                        | Probability | might | 2  | 13.33% |
|                                       | will     | 2   |   | 13.33% |

In Brazil’s discourse, modal adjuncts are widely used, including polarity and mood adjuncts. Mood adjuncts mainly used for intensification. Modal operator in the discourse are only two, which express the possibility. No metaphor of modality is found in this text. It indicates that the Brazil is telling the truth based on the real situation that Brazil is going to face instead of just subjective predication. Following are some examples in Brazil’s discourse;

Example (1) For Brazil, it’s a yes and no (polarity adjunct) answer for that.

Example (2) And in short term, Brazil will definitely (mood adjunct) benefit from the issue because we replaced import from the US to Brazil.

Example (3) We’re very questioning to that Brazil produce very questions. Yes, at the very beginning, the short term, it’s very beneficial. But there is a very issue to be concerned in the long term.

Example (4) the meat production and animal protein might (modal operator) be affected indirectly

“Yes” and “no” belong to the polarity adjuncts. They stress the Brazil’s attitude towards trade. He used “yes” and “no” at the same time, which indicates that Brazil’s uncertainty of what the trade war will bring to Brazil. On the one hand, they are quite sure that they will gain some benefits. Just as it is shown in Example (2), Brazil expert used a mood adjunct, “definitely”, to intensify his tone to express his opinion. On the other hand, they are very worried about the future bad influence on their economy. We could see in Example (3), up to five
“very” are employed to stress his concern. As for modal operator, only “will” and “might” appear in the discourse. Here both of them express probability meaning. In Example (4), the Brazilian expert used “might” to talk about the effect of trade war. The modal value of “might” is low, which reflects his uncertainty about the trade war. In a word, Brazil holds an uncertain attitude towards US protectionism. Brazil is happy about the benefits it will bring, but also worry about its long-term effect.

4.2 Analysis on China’s Discourse

As the target of US protectionism, China is directly involved in the trade war, which will have a great impact on its economic development. Thus, China’s attitude is critical. In BRICS TALK, Chinese expert, Zhao Hai openly expressed his opinion on the issue. The following table is the realization of modality resources in his speaking:

**Table 4**

| Modality Resources in China’s Discourse |
| Wordings | N | Percent |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Modal adjuncts** | Mood adjuncts |  |
| definitely | 1 | 8.33% |
| only | 2 | 16.67% |
| particularly | 1 | 8.33% |
| **Modal operator** | Obligation |  |
| need | 1 | 8.33% |
| should | 4 | 33.33% |
| Inclination | want to | 1 | 8.33% |
| Metaphors of modality | Subjective |  |
| I think | 2 | 16.67% |

In China’s text, all three types of modality are employed. For modal adjuncts, only mood adjuncts appear in the discourse. Unlike Brazil, modal operators are widely used in the discourse. Meanwhile, metaphor of modality also pays a role in express the utterer’s idea.

Example (5) *we need to* (modal operator: obligation) *unite against the rising tide of protectionism and unilateralism from the United States. I want to* (modal operator: inclination) *emphasize this... And we should* (modal operator: obligation) *unite not only among ourselves... and we should* (modal operator: obligation) *unite against the idea within the United States, and particularly* (mood adjuncts) *within the Trump administration.*

Example (6) However, *I think* (metaphor of modality: subjective) this is not an either-or question

Words like “definitely” and “particularly” are mood adjuncts for intensification. As we can see in Example (6), “particularly” is used to emphasize the Trump Administration, which shows China is strongly against US protectionism imposed by Trump and believe the free trade is still the hope of many other American. China adheres to the free trade. Modal operators take up half of the modality resources, and they express the obligation and inclination. It is clearly shown in Example (6). “Need to” reflects China’s determinacy to fight against protectionism. “Want to” indicates that China is inclined to unite BRICS nations to deal with the trade war. Meanwhile, totally four “should” are adopted in the short discourse, which reflect China’s strong opposition to the protectionism. What’s more, the modal operators employed in the discourse are with median or high value (need to: high; want to & should: median), which imply comparatively Based on the result, we
could draw a conclusion that China strongly opposes to US protectionism and suggests BRICS nations unite together to fight against US protectionism.

4.3 Analysis on Russia’s Discourse

Russia has always been a formidable rival to the United States no matter in politics or in economy. In the meantime, Russia keeps a very delicate relationship with China. As a powerful country, Russia always holds a unique style for international affairs. Hence, Russia’s attitude towards trade war and US protectionism is also intriguing.

Table 5

| Modality Resources in Russia’s Discourse | Wordings | N | Percent |
|-----------------------------------------|----------|---|---------|
| **Modal adjuncts**                      |          |   |         |
| Mood adjuncts                           | really   | 1 | 5.00%   |
|                                        | definitely | 2 | 10.00%  |
|                                        | very     | 1 | 5.00%   |
|                                        | approximately | 1 | 5.00%   |
| Comment adjuncts                        | clearly  | 1 | 5.00%   |
| **Modal operators**                     |          |   |         |
| Probability                             | will     | 2 | 10.00%  |
|                                        | can      | 2 | 10.00%  |
| Obligation                              | should   | 1 | 5.00%   |
| Inclination                             | will     | 1 | 5.00%   |
|                                        | is trying to | 2 | 10.00%  |
|                                        | is ready to | 1 | 5.00%   |
|                                        | would like | 1 | 5.00%   |
| **Metaphors of modality**               |          |   |         |
| Subjective                              | I think  | 4 | 20.00%  |

Modality resources in Russia’s discourse are rich. Comment adjuncts first appear in the text. What’s more, modal operators cover three types: probability, inclination and obligation, which facilitate the expression of his viewpoint. We also find “will” is used for expressing both inclination and probability in the discourse. Here we will see two specific examples, which clearly reflect Russia’s stance.

Example (7) **I think** *(metaphors of modality: subjective)* that the catastrophe **really** *(mood adjuncts)* comes about the US sanctions

Example (8) **The big issue is whether the United States is trying to** *(modal operators: inclination)* impose additional sanctions on European partners sort of Russian federation, whether the United States **is ready to** *(modal operator: inclination)* apply their sanctions extraterritorially...the United States **is trying to** *(modal operator: inclination)* kill a new Russian-German by pipeline project in the North Sea.

At the very beginning, the Russia expert adopted “I think” to outspoke his inner word, and meanwhile he employed “really” to modify “catastrophe”, which greatly intensifies his opposition to US sanction. In other word, Russia openly expressed his disagreement and opposition to US protectionism. In Example (8), Russia described American intention to impose economic sanctions. The modal operators used in the text all belong to inclination, which shows that the Trump Administration’s tendency to impose protectionism. Especially, we could see that “is trying to” is followed by “kill”, which is a word usually implying derogatory sense. The
metaphorical use of “kill” indicates that US sanctions is unjust and deadly. On the other hand, it also reflects that Russia is warning the other BRICS nations or even the rest of the world that US will impose protectionism on them not only on China or Russia. In general, Russia vehemently opposes to US protectionism and warns all nations of the US protectionism.

4.4 Analysis on India’s Discourse

India is a strong competitor as well as a cooperator of China in the economic world. The trade war also aroused India’s great interest. It may bring a chance to its economy, and the Indian expert also expressed his view on this topic. The modality realization in his speech is as followed.

Table 6

| Modality Resources in India’s Discourse |
|----------------------------------------|
| **Wordings** | **N** | **Percent** |
|----------------|-------|-------------|
| Modal adjuncts | Comment adjuncts | easily | 1 | 6.25% |
| Mood adjuncts | all | 1 | 6.25% |
| Modal operators | Probability | can | 1 | 6.25% |
| | would | 1 | 6.25% |
| | Obligation | should | 4 | 25.00% |
| | | have to | 2 | 12.50% |
| Metaphors of modality | Subjective | I think | 3 | 18.75% |
| | on my view | 1 | 6.25% |
| | Objective | that is to say | 2 | 12.50% |

The distribution of modality resources in India’s discourse is slightly different from that of other BRICS nations. More metaphors of modality are realized in the discourse. Totally 37.5% of metaphors of modality exists in India’s discourse and both subjective and objective metaphors of modality are employed. Similarly, modal operators occupy the largest proportion in the modality resources. Modal adjuncts are least used in the discourse, but it also pays a role in demonstrating India’s stance.

Example (8) I think(metaphors of modality: subjective)we have to(modal operators: obligation)look at it in two separate perspectives.

Example (9) The (BRICS) countries should(modal operators: obligation)look at how we can help each other, and to the extent to which our own policies are not in consonance with the principle of openness of transparency or free trade, we should(modal operators: obligation)see how we can adjust this, and in that context we should(modal operators: obligation)try and give preference to the interests of other BRICS members, so that our own respective markets are more easily (comment adjuncts)accessible by other BRICS members.

“I think”, in example 8, is a subjective metaphor of modality, which introduces India’s opinion on trade. Unlike China and Russia, who demonstrate their clear-cut position, India assumes an ambiguous attitude. Meanwhile, “have to” implies India does not regard US protectionism or the trade war as a totally bad thing. Instead of directly criticizing US protectionism, he just mentioned that protectionism did not help the development, and turned his point to some policy within BRICS as it is shown in Example (9). He used four “should” to stress and the economic market within BRICS countries requires more openness, meanwhile he
used “easily” to strengthen his tone. Based on the modal resources in India’s discourse, conclusions can be
drawn: firstly, India is not firmly against the US protectionism or the trade war; secondly, Brazil takes it a
chance to develop its own economy. One the one hand, India hopes that the market within BRICS countries can
be more accessible, so India could seek more chance to cooperate with China in some field, like agriculture,
during the trade war. On the other hand, India wants to fill the gap once China is forced to withdraw from the
US market.

4.5 Analysis on South Africa’s Discourse

South Africa, as the least powerful economy, has a close watch on the trade war between China and US.
Meanwhile, China has always been the largest economic cooperator of Africa, therefore, China’s economic
development do have deep influence on Africa. South Africa also talked about their ideas on the BRICS TALK.

Table 7

| Modality Resources in South Africa’s Discourse | Wordings | N  | Percent |
|-----------------------------|---------|----|---------|
| Modal adjuncts | Mood adjuncts | very | 2    | 9.09% |
|                         |         | merely | 1    | 4.55% |
|                         |         | exactly | 1    | 4.55% |
| Modal operators | Probability | maybe | 1    | 4.55% |
|                         |         | will | 4    | 18.18% |
|                         |         | be able to | 1    | 4.55% |
|                         | Obligation | should | 5    | 22.73% |
|                         | Inclination | tries to | 2    | 9.09% |
| Metaphors of modality | Subjective | look...as | 4    | 18.18% |
|                         |         | I don’t think | 1    | 4.55% |

Modality resources are diverse in South Africa’s discourse. The South African experts used more modality
resources than the other four. Modal adjuncts in the discourse is also mainly for intensification. However, the
type of modality operators is very colorful. Totally, it takes up 59.09% over that of all other nations’ discourses.
For Metaphors of modality, only they are all subjective and we find “look as” is frequently employed.

Example (10) I’m looking **BRICS** as **(metaphors of modality: subjective)** a very coherent arm of
south-south cooperation...So I don’t think**(metaphors of modality: subjective)** it’s a
problem.

Example (11) *What should*(modal operators: obligation) *be in question is how ready is south-south
cooperaon and BRICS be able to use the institution that they have established. So the
situation that we have at present, the one of rising unilateralism, the one of protectionism
offers us opportunity for BRICS to attest itself because BRICS is designed to cover inferior
regions of the world and these regions of the world **should**(modal operators: obligation) 
now converge together through the institutions that they have. The new development bank the
contingency reserve arrangement and the African regional center of the BRICS bank. So this
is the time that these institutions **should**(modal operators: obligation) test themselves.

As we can see in Example (10), “don’t think” hereby announces how South Africa thinks of the trade war.
The South African expert does not regard it as a problem. The reason why South Africa say so is that it pins hope
on BRICS. In example, we could see that “should” is used several times to emphasize that BRICS is a coherent and strong organization and it is BRICS that have to face the challenge. In other words, South Africa cannot do much in the trade war. South Africa does not see many opportunities and threats to its economy, thus, South Africa hopes BRICS could deal with the issue and help the development of Africa.

5 Findings and Limitations

The present study focuses on two questions: (1) the characteristics of the modality resources appeared in their talks; (2) the BRICS nations attitudes and stance on trade war and America’s protectionism. These two questions are answered through detailed analysis of each discourse. Base on the analysis of the modality resources, the findings are as followed.

Firstly, in the five discourses, modal operators can be easily found, which facilitate the experts to express their tendency and attitudes towards the trade war and US protectionism. The proportion of modal adjuncts is slightly lower than that of modal operator while in Brazil’s discourse, it takes the largest proportion. However, metaphor of modality can be found in four discourses, except Brazil. Secondly, generally speaking, the modal values in the discourses are mostly median and low, which indicate the experts’ prudence. Thirdly, it is found that the BRICS nations all expressed their stance on the issue of trade war explicitly or implicitly.

Brazil is happy about the benefits it will bring, but also worry about its long-term effect after US and China reach an agreement in the future. China strongly opposes to US protectionism and suggests BRICS nations unite together to fight against US protectionism. Russia also holds the same opinion as China. As for India, its attitude is relatively ambiguous because it is likely India could gain some benefits from both China and US. South Africa does not have much power in dealing with the trade war and US protectionism, so it turns to BRICS and hope that BRICS could take advantage the trade war to develop itself and Africa.

Despite the careful analysis of the data, there are some limitations, which shed a light on further studies. First of all, all the data is just a small piece of the BRICS TALK and the experts only gave brief responses to the host’s question. In other words, the data are not quantitative enough. Later researchers could try to collect more valid data to explore the BRICS nations’ attitudes towards trade war and US protectionism. Second, the paper just employs the modality system, so further studies can try to analyze from other theoretical perspective.

Conclusion

It can be drawn that modality is a useful linguistic resource for the addresser to express his attitude and stance. The different choice of sub-categories of modality indicate different attitude of the addresser towards certain topic. Based on different background, the BRACS nations adopt different stance and their experts carefully chose their words to express their attitude.

References

Brook, G. L. (1979). Varieties of English (2nd ed). London: Macmillan.
Crystal, D., & Davy, D. (1969). Investigating English style. London: Longman.
Eggins, S. (2004). An Introduction to systemic functional linguistics (2nd ed). London: Continuum.
Fowler, R. (1991). Language in the news: A case study of the world’s press. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.
Halliday, M. A. K. (1985). An Introduction to Functional Grammar (1st ed.). London: Edward Arnold.
Halliday, M. A. K. (2004). An introduction to functional grammar (3rd ed). London: Edward Arnold.
Li, Z. (2001). Interpersonal meanings of epistemic modality in academic discourse. Foreign Language Teaching and Research, (05), 353-358, 399-400.

Liao, Q. (1989). A review on mood and modality. Linguistic Aboard, (04), 157-163.

Lyons, J. (1977). Semantics. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Palmer, F. R. (1986). Mood and modality. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ren, K., & Wang, Z. (2017). A comparative study of Chinese and English modality in political news discourse: A perspective of systemic functional linguistics. Contemporary Foreign Languages Studies, (02), 20-26+45+109-110.

Sun, A., & Zhao, J. (2014). The computation of modality in presidents’ inaugural address. Journal of PLA University of Foreign Languages, 37(04), 95-102.

Thompson, G. (2000). Introducing functional grammar. Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Publiching.

vanDijk, T. (1988). News analysis: Case studies of international and national news in the press. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Yang, X. (2006). Modality in English and the test types. Foreign languages and Their Teaching, (1), 1-4.

Zhang, D. (2004). New developments in systemic functional linguistics. Contemporary Linguistics, 6(1), 57-65.