

## **A Framework for the Description and Analysis of Modality in Standard Arabic**

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### **Abstract**

Modality has so far received scant attention in theoretical and pedagogical grammars of Standard Arabic. The meager literature available on this grammatical operation often consists of unpublished dissertations alternating between a prevailing traditional grammar, which has reduced speaker visibility in language to emphatic markers and "the styles of corroboration", and contemporary approaches formulated from introspective and artificial data investigated in the light of current research on modality in European languages. This lacuna has induced cohorts of frustrated learners and translation trainees to automatically engage the metalanguage deployed and the analysis given to elucidate the working of foreign languages' modal markers in order to account for the working of the Arabic ones. The paper aims to reveal that modality is not only richly exteriorized at the surface of Arabic, but also describable in a systematic, teachable and learnable method. This richness is discernible in eight forms, morpho-grammatical and rhetorical, approached from an utterer-centered perspective and derived from naturally-occurring written discourse. Driven by a pressing pedagogical concern, the study calls for updating a prevailing pedagogical grammar of Arabic dating back to many centuries ago and still adhering to prescriptivism, taxonomy, semanticity and insensitivity to context.

**Key words:** modal value, processing strategy, metalinguistic status, utterer visibility