

## **Modals Used By the Speech Community of *Bahasa Kualuh* In Interpersonal Interactions**

Nuzwaty

*Islamic University of Sumatera Utara (UISU) Medan, Indonesia*

---

**Abstract:** *Bahasa Kualuh is a vernacular language used by a speech community in Kualuh. Kualuh is a small region on the coast of Malacca. It is one part of North Sumatera Province, Indonesia. The majority population in Kualuh is Malay. They call their language, bahasa Kualuh or cakap Kualuh. This study aims at describing modals of Bahasa Kualuh which commonly used by the speech community. The focus is on semantic field, refers to modals relating to aspect of meaning of utterances which convey alternative possibilities for how things could happen. Modals which come up for discussion are deontic and epistemic modals. The data was utterances which expressed modals in interpersonal interaction. The utterances obtained were from 6 native speakers as the informants. They were born in Kualuh, the range of the ages was from 35 to 45 years and they also married the locals.*

*This language inventories modals which can be expressed through three grammatical categories; adverbs "harus, mesti, sukat, the adjectives pasti, and pastilah" and verbs "biso, sanggup, kuaso, raso, kuraso, rasonyo, and kuagak". The adverbs of harus, and mesti are used to express order or command. The adverbs of biso, sanggup and kuaso are used to show responsibilities, while the adverb sukat is used to express obligatory. All of the modals mentioned above are classified as deontic modals. The adjectives pasti, and pastilah used to express degree of reality. The verbs raso, rasonyo, kuraso and kuagak used to express belief, these modals are characterized as epistemic modals. These two kinds of modals are commonly exist in the utterances of bahasa Kualuh in interpersonal interaction.*

**Keywords:** *modals, epistemic, deontic, bahasa kualuh*

---

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

*Bahasa Kualuh is the language that is being used in Kualuh.. Kualuh is a small region on the coast of Malacca, the one part of North Sumatera Province, Indonesia. The majority population in Kualuh is Malay. Sahril (2007:156) promotes by theoretical proof that Bahasa Kualuh is one of the dialects of Bahasa Melayu (Malay language) used in North Sumatera, where the grammatical constructions of its sentences are really close to Malay. But the speech communities name their code as Bahasa Kualuh and they do not recognize it as Malay. Generally, the speech communities are bilingual, the languages that being used are Bahasa Indonesia (Indonesian language) and Bahasa Kualuh (Kualuh language) or Cakap Kualuh as what the language community name it conventionally. Bahasa Indonesia is only used on formal situations and has never been used on any daily communications. Unlike Bahasa Indonesia, Bahasa Kualuh is the local vernacular, which is used by all of the language communities, from younger generation up to the eldest in every single social interaction. Therefore, it is not only used on informal situations but sometimes used on formal situations as well. Like other speakers of any languages in common, speakers of Bahasa Kualuh express their assessment or likelihood by using modals. These speakers are really aware of determining the appropriate alternative forms of modals to express their assessment based on possibilities, necessities.*

### **II. LITERATURE REVIEWS**

Modals, linguistically are discussed on semantic domain and they refer to aspect of meaning caused sentences or utterances to be about alternative possibilities for how things happen. A Modal is used when a language user intrudes his/her messages expressing attitude and judgment of various kinds. Like the expression of probability, where the speaker expresses judgment as to the likelihood or probability of something happening or being, where the speaker expresses judgment as to the frequency with which something happens or is, as Eggins says (1998:178-180). Cruse (2000-266) gives an expression example like in a sentence, *it is probably the case that imported version are cheaper*. The words *it is probably the case that* indicate the speaker's assessment of likelihood of the proposition *imported version are cheaper* being true. Cruse says that modal expressions are those which signal a particular attitude on the part of the speaker to the proposition expressed, and regards modality with its two function, epistemic and deontic modals.

According to Lyon (1996:328), modality is recognized in semantics which has to do with the notion of necessity and possibility in so far as they relate to the truth or falsity. And further Lyon (1996) identifies two kind of modality which are recognized as epistemic and deontic. In terms of epistemic, modal is based on possibility for how thing could be, whereas deontic modality is necessity-based. Like Lyon (1996), Cruse (2000) Saeed (2000:126-127) categorizes modals into epistemic and deontic modals. Epistemic modals show that the speaker is signaling degrees of knowledge over the judgment about the way of the world is. Furthermore he says (2000), these modals allow the language speaker to set up hypothetical situation and express different strengths of prediction of their match with the real world. He identifies deontic modals as the modals which are about how people should behave in the world. It means that there is a close relationship between the deontics with all kinds of social knowledge, such as the speaker's belief about his/her estimation of power and authority, obligatory, morality, and so forth.

### III. METHODS

The focus of this study is on semantic field, refers to modals that related to aspect of meaning of utterances which convey alternative possibilities for how things could happen. Modals which come up for discussion are deontic and epistemic modals. The data was utterances which expressed modals in interpersonal interaction. The utterances obtained were from 6 native speakers as the informants. They were born in Kualuh, the range of the ages was from 35 to 45 years and they also married the locals.

This study is consulted with modality of *Bahasa Indonesia* study that has been done by Alwi (1992). Firstly his study could be applied in *Bahasa Kualuh*, for Indonesian language and *Bahasa Kualuh* derived from the same source, *Malay*. Therefore the syntactic pattern of both languages might be identical. And secondly any written textbook of *Bahasa Kualuh* has not been found yet.

### IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

It has been mentioned earlier, modality occurs when the language users intend to express their assessment and judgment of various situations. In this respect modality is considered as epistemic and deontic modals. Epistemic modal is about possibility which involves reference to facts that one knows such as reality, belief, and so on. While deontic modal is necessity-based which is more about rules, procedures, right or wrong obligations and responsibilities, and so on. Modality in *Bahasa Kualuh* can be expressed through various kinds of grammatical categories, such as modal verbs are *raso*, *rasonyo*, *kuagak*, *kuaso*, *biso*, and *sanggup*. Modal adjectives are *pasti*, *pastilah*. Modal adverbs are *mosti*, *harus*, and *sukat* in order to get the clear look, the existence of modality of *bahasa Kualuh* will be discussed below:

#### 4.1 Epistemic Modals

As it is said, epistemic modality is about possibility which involved reference to facts that one knows such as reality, belief and others. *Bahasa Kualuh* with regarded to this modality provides the language community with modal adjective and modal verb. Modals used to represent reality are the adjectives, *pasti* and *pastilah*. As in the following examples:

- |      |   |              |                 |                                |               |
|------|---|--------------|-----------------|--------------------------------|---------------|
| (1)  | <i>Pasti</i>                                  | <i>dio</i>   | <i>dah tibo</i> | <i>di Ranto</i>                | <i>kinin.</i> |
|      | Surely  | he           | has arrived     | at Ranto (the name of a place) | now           |
| (1a) | <i>Dio</i>                                    | <i>pasti</i> | <i>dah tibo</i> | <i>di Ranto</i>                | <i>kinin.</i> |
|      | He  | surely       | has arrived     | at Ranto                       | now           |
|      | (I'm sure, this time he has arrived in Ranto) |              |                 |                                |               |
| (2)  | <i>Pastilah</i>                               | <i>dio</i>   | <i>dah tibo</i> | <i>di Ranto</i>                | <i>kinin.</i> |
|      | Really sure                                   | he           | has arrived     | at Ranto                       | now.          |

In utterance (1), the speaker's assessment basically comes from common empirical evidence of the exact time spent to touch the destination (*Ranto*). By calculating upon the amount of time taken, the traffic density or the situation along the journey, and the distance between the starting point with the destination, and also how long *dio* is known to similar journey in the past. By doing these all, the speaker is able to assess his statement accurate. Utterance (1a) is equal to (1) in meanings, where *pasti dio dah tiba di Ranto kinin* and *dio pasti dah tibo di Ranto kinin* are just different ways of saying the same thing. The adjectival form *pasti* is optionally placed, either preceded or after the subject of the sentences.

In utterance (2), the speaker's certainty comes from his/her repeated and regular experiences about the amount of time spent regarding with the distance to *Ranto*. The speaker attaches the word *lah* to the word *pasti*, in *pastilah dio dah tibo (di Ranto) kinin* shows his/ her firm opinion. The form *pastilah* is regularly put in

preceding position of an utterance. In this occasion the speaker doesn't only try stressing his assessment being accurate but tends to influence the hearer to accept his/her statement as well. Hearing these, the hearer will realize that the speaker wants to ensure the hearer about the truth. To express belief or certainty, the language provides modal verbs, they are: *raso*, *rasonyo*, and *kuagak*, like the following examples.

The Utterance:

- |     |  |                                |                      |                         |  |
|-----|--|--------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|--|
| (3) | <i>Rasonyo</i><br>It is certain                    | <i>lupo</i><br>forgot          | <i>dio</i><br>he     | <i>janji</i><br>promise | <i>nyo</i><br>his/her.                   |
| (4) | <i>Ku raso</i><br>I'm certain                      | <i>lupo</i><br>forgot          | <i>dio</i><br>he     | <i>janji</i><br>promise | <i>nyo</i><br>his/her                    |
| (5) | <i>Kuagak</i><br>I suppose<br>I suppose she forgot | <i>lupo</i><br>forgot (forgot) | <i>dio</i><br>he/she | <i>janji</i><br>promise | <i>nyo</i><br>his/her<br>his/her promise |

*Rasonyo lupo dio* (certainly he forgot or it is certain, he forgot) in utterance (3) and utterance (4) *ku raso lupo dio* (I'm certain he forgot) cover the same meaning. But in utterance (4) the words *ku raso* (I'm certain); the speaker is explicitly expressing the source of the conviction as a subjective judgment on the speaker's part. By contrast with these, the word *rasonyo* (it is certain) in utterance (3) leaves implicit the source of conviction and being said to be objective. But both of these utterances (3) and (4) are optionally used. In uttering the statement (5), *kuagak lupo dio janjinyo* (I suppose, he forgot his promise): the speaker as the source agent expresses his/her own belief on the existence of *janji* (the promise) that has been forgotten. The verbal form *kuagak* firmly stands as a subjective form.

#### 4.2 Deontic Modals

As it is said, deontic modals as the modals which are about how people should behave in the world which concerned with rules, procedures, right or wrong, obligations, responsibilities, and so on. The utterances:

- |      |                            |   |  |  |  |
|------|----------------------------|---|--|--|--|
| (6)  | <i>Ko</i><br>You           | <i>mosti/harus</i><br>must                        | <i>pogi ka</i><br>go to (to see)               | <i>ocik</i><br>aunt                          | <i>Jenab</i><br>Jenab  |
| (7)  | <i>Dio</i><br>She/he       | <i>mosti/harus</i><br>must                        | <i>botul-botul balajar,</i><br>seriously study | <i>biar</i><br>in order                      | <i>lulus ujian.</i><br>to pass the exams.<br>She/he must study hard, in order to pass the exams. |
| (8)  | <i>Ko</i><br>You           | <i>mosti/harus</i><br>must                        | <i>botul-botul balajar,</i><br>seriously study | <i>biar</i><br>in order                      | <i>lulus ujian.</i><br>to pass the exams.  |
| (9)  | <i>Mosti/harus</i><br>Must | <i>botul-botul balajar</i><br>seriously study     | <i>ko dulu,</i><br>you                         | <i>barulah lulus.</i><br>surely you pass.    |  |
| (10) | <i>Sukat</i><br>Must       | <i>botul-botul</i><br>seriously                   | <i>balajar ko dulu,</i><br>study you           | <i>barulah ko lulus.</i><br>surely you pass. |  |
|      | <i>Sukat</i><br>Must       | <i>botul-botul balajar dio</i><br>seriously study | <i>dio dulu, barulah</i><br>he surely          | <i>dio lulus.</i><br>he passes               |  |

It is noted, that modals *mosti* and *harus* are synonym and both of them can mutually be substituted. In utterance (6), the speaker, as the deontic resource uses the adverbs *mosti/harus* to demonstrate his/her own authority to the addressee (*ko* = you) and to insist the addressee *pogi ka ocik Jenab* (to go and to see aunt Jenab) as soon as possible. In this occasion the addressee will not be able to avoid the speaker's command or order. In sentence (7), the words *dio mosti botul-botul balajar* (he must study seriously) indicate the speaker's hope of *biar lulus ujian*. (in other to pass the exams) will come true. In utterance (8) the words *ko mosti botul-botul balajar* (you must study hard) is a kind of commitment to denote command. This utterance conveys the speaker's attitude and his/her own authority, directly insisted to the addressee to do about. When the speaker wants to emphasize or to stress his command the adverbs *mosti/harus* are preceded, as in utterance (9). *mosti/harus botul-botul balajar ko dulu*. This time the speaker is quite sure If the addressee doesn't concern with the speaker's statement, and ignores this instruction he will fail.

In utterance (10) the speaker conceive of the quality of the addressee's knowledge (*ko, dio*), as being not smart. It then becomes possible to think of *Sukat botul-botul balajar dio dulu* (he must study extremely hard), and *barulah dio lulus* (then he can pass). The modal *sukat* is obligatory preceded in the sentences, and has never been in other positions. This modal is identified as obligatory one.

Verbal forms *sanggup kuaso, and biso* are recognized as deontic modality which are used to construe responsibilities, judgment of abilities. As the following examples:

The utterances:

(11) *Aku sanggup mambolo budak-budak tu.*

I able to take good care/ to bring up the children.

(12) *Aku tak sanggup mambolo budak-budak tu.*

I not able take good care/bring up the children

(12a) *Tak sanggup aku mambolobudak-budak tu.*

Not able me to take good care/ to bring up the children.

(I'm not able to take good care of the children).

(13) *Tak kuaso aku mambolo budak-budak tu.*

Not able me to take good care/ to bring up the children

(13a) *Aku tak kuaso mambolo budak-budak tu*

I not able to take good care the children

(14) *Aku biso mambolo budak-budak tu.*

I can take good care the children

(15) *Aku tak biso mambolo budak-budak tu*

I not can take good care the children

(15a) *Tak biso aku mambolo budak-budak tu.*

No can I take good care the children.

In utterance (11), the speaker intends to express his/ her ability to bring the children up herself. In this occasion the words *aku sanggup* mean, she/he doesn't need any help from others and it has been his/ her responsibilities to do so, and this statement (11) is construed responsibility. The speaker represents his/her refusal, *mambolo budak-budak tu* (to take good care of the children) as in utterances (12) and (12a), by using verb *sanggup* preceded by *tak*, indicate the speaker being lack of ability to take good care of the children. The denial might be caused of finance or of health problems of the speaker in this respect. The verb *kuaso* is obligatory preceded by *tak*, as in utterance (13). The words *tak kuaso aku* (13) or *aku tak kuaso* (13a) produce similar interpretation and have equal quality to utterance (12) *aku tak sanggup* and (12a) *tak sanggup aku*. Utterance (14) the words *aku biso* show that the speaker makes effort to *mambolo budak-budak tu*. So it is a statement of inclination made by speaker in respect of his capability to take good care of the children. Unlike the messages of utterance (14), the utterance (15) *aku tak biso* and (15) *tak biso aku* (I can't) carry the speaker's explicitly denial to take care good of the children or to bring the children up.

## V. CONCLUSION

As other languages, *Bahasa Kualuh* provides modals with regard to how a speaker of the language community describes or expresses in terms of the notion of possible world as epistemic modals or necessity situation as deontic modals. These modals are commonly used in interpersonal interaction. Modality in *Bahasa Kualuh* can be expressed through various kinds of grammatical categories, such as modal verbs are *kuraso, rasonyo, kuagak, kuaso, biso, and sanggup*. Modal adjectives are *pasti, pastilah*. Modal adverbs are *mosti, harus, and sukat*. Modal verbs *kuraso, rasonyo, kuagak* and modal adjectives *pasti* and *pastilah* are identified as epistemic modality.

Modal verbs *kuaso, biso* and *sanggup*, and modal adverbs *mosti, harus, and sukat* are recognized as deontic modality. The verbs *raso, rasonyo, kuraso* and *kuagak* are used to express belief. The verbs *biso, sanggup* and *kuaso* are used to show responsibilities. The adjectives *pasti, and pastilah* used to express degree of reality.

Adverbs *mosti*, and *harus* are used to express order or command, while the adverb *sukap* is used to express obligatory.

#### **VI. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

This article had been presented in The 3<sup>rd</sup> International Conference on Multidisciplinary Research in Medan 2014, with the title; *Modality of The Dialect of The Malay Language: Bahasa Kualuh*

I sincerely thanks to all of the participants who had given high contribution to the article.

#### **REFERENCES**

- [1] Sahril, *Bahasa Melayu di SUMUT, Menelusuri Sejarah dalam Pembelajaran Budaya Lokal. Kajian Linguistik Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Bahasa*,4(1), 2007 ,155-164.
- [2] Suzanne, Eggins, *An Introduction to Systemic Functional Linguistics* (London: Pinter Publishers Ltd, 1996).
- [3] D Alan, Cruse, *Meaning in Language: An Introduction to Semantics and Pragmatics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).
- [4] John, Lyons, *Linguistic Semantics, An Introduction* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996).
- [5] John, I Saeed, *Semantics* (China: Blackwell, 2000).
- [6] Keith, Allan, *Linguistic Meaning* ( London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986).
- [7] M.A.K. Halliday, *An Introduction to Functional Grammar* (London: Edward Arnold, 2004).