Abstract
This research investigated Malaysian English as a second language (ESL) learners’ use of modals in two written tasks, which were obtained from the EMAS Corpus. The aim of the study was to investigate if any compensation strategies and simplification features are employed by the learners in relation to the use of English modals. The research design comprised a qualitative technique through discourse analysis supplemented with some descriptive statistics derived from a concordance. The concordance identified modals used by the students at the two different levels. The research findings showed that simplification features were used more by Malaysian ESL learners than compensation strategies to overcome limitation in the English language.

Introduction
Grammar is a set of rules that say how words at the sentential level combine, arrange and change to produce different meanings (Swan, 1996). The Ministry of Education Malaysia (MoE, 1991) defines grammar as the rules which speakers of a language use to male meaning. Modals, the focus of this study, are part if grammar and their expressions have always formed an important part of the grammar and semantics of all languages, including English.

Modals are a complex entity and it is not easy to package the complexity into meaningful chunks of information to be presented to students (Thompson, 2002). If this were possible, that is reducing the complexity of the modals, this would make learning modals less problematic to second language learners of English.

The complexity of the English modal auxiliary system is one of the main problems in learning and teaching of English as the second language. In the standard formal English the same modals express different notions, ranging from probability through permission to obligation. Modals are not auxiliaries in the grammatical sense but they also appear to contribute to the semantics of communication. Since communication is an integral part of the society, and the most important means of human communication is language, the mechanic of language has to be
understood in terms of how it facilitates communication.

Celce-Murcia and Larson-Freeman (1983) state that the modal auxiliary is one of the most difficult structures that ESL/EFL learners have to deal with. This is especially true with the structure of a modal. Learners have tendency to incorrectly generalize basic rules to modals. Also, modal auxiliaries are distinguished from other auxiliary verbs and from lexical verbs by their lack of tense with accompanying subject-verb agreement.

Weaver (1996) in his study of errors made by students writers who are L1 speakers of English highlights issues such as punctuation of sentences, clauses, pronoun references, and other grammatical items made by L1 users of English in their written work. Thus, it is possible for L2 speakers to make similar errors, as well as other grammatical errors. Ferris (2002), also states that is it crucial for an ESL learners to know why the error is made and for an ESL teacher to know how to correct it. This is where explicit and implicit knowledge are required in grammar learning, which has always been a challenging task for ESL learners, and in this study, the Malaysian ESL learners.

Moreover, the Malaysian ESL teachers, being L2 speakers themselves, are often not certain as to how to go about teaching grammar to their students (Hawanum, 2004). They are not sure how much detail should go into explaining grammatical items. In 1988, when the Malaysian New English Language Curriculum, based on a communicative model of language teaching and learning, was implemented, the teaching of grammar emerged as problematic (Pillay & North, 1997). Vethamani (2001) states that having students if mixed abilities and mixed interests in a classroom has resulted in difficulties for some language teachers. Teachers are unclear of the role of grammar in the new curriculum and are uncertain how grammar should be integrated into the lesson plan.

It is a challenging task for teachers of ESL learners to impart knowledge on modal auxiliaries and for the learners to be able to learn and use the knowledge in their written work. DeCarrico (1986) and Hinkel (1995), in their respective studies, stress that L2 learners use modals differently from L1 learners. The current study, which focuses on how Malaysian ESL learners’ use of modals in their written work, will contribute to the data on how Malaysian L2 learners use modal verbs.

Objective of the Study

The objective of this study is to investigate if any compensation strategies and simplification features are employed by the learners in relation to the use of English modals from data made available by the EMAS Corpus. This study has focused on examining the use of modals in two written tasks of ESL learners from Form 1 and Form 4.

Research Questions

This research attempts to answer the following research question:
- What compensation strategies and simplification features are used in relation to the use of English modals by Malaysian ESL learners from Form 1 and Form 4 in two written tasks in sentences where modals are normally expected?

Literature Review

Modality
The study of modality in the English language remains one of the most pervasive and intriguing areas of philosophical and linguistic inquiry (Hoye, 1997). He states that modal auxiliary verbs in general are used not to express statements of fact but events or actions which exist only as conceptions of the mind and which may or may not happen in the future. Thus, learning how to use the modal auxiliary system is part of the complex mechanism in the English language, and Reppen et al. (2002) state that part of the difficulty of English modal verbs for linguists and language learner is that although the modals are few, they have similar core meanings. Thompson (2002) and other linguists agree that learning modals can be confusing due to the meanings that each modal is depicted. Thus, ESL teachers need to really understand modals verbs so that they are able to impart the knowledge adequately to ESL learners and avoid confusion and misunderstanding throughout the process of learning modal verbs.

Halliday (1970), on the other hand, defines modality as a form of participation by the speaker in the speech event. Through modality, the speaker associates with the thesis, an indication of its status and validity in his own judgment: he intrudes and takes up a position. Modality thus derives from what we call the ‘interpersonal’ function as an expression of role.

Shaffer (2004) defines modal and modality as the conceptual domains of necessity and possibility. It is also expressed in a given language by modals (lexemes of auxiliaries) or grammatical mood (inflectional coding on the verb). Despite the attention received on the study of modality in the recent years, linguists have not agreed on what constitutes the modality domain. Consequently, how the researcher delimits and defines modality affect what is studied and, therefore, what surfaces in the description of the language is under investigation. Whatever the categories each linguist puts to a modal depends on what the researcher wants out of the outcome.

Simplification Features

Wong’s (1983) simplification features (based on de Silva, 1981) of colloquial Malaysian English is very relevant to ESL learners. She discusses five features and they are over-generalization, which Tongue (1979) agrees to, omission, reduction, substitution, and restructuring. These features are sometimes overlapping making it not mutually exclusive.

Over-generalization is seen as reducing the target language to a simpler system. Auxiliaries required by Standard English may often be deleted in the process, for example in the sentence “Where can he go now?” becomes “Where he go now?” or “How will you get here?” becomes “How you get here?” Some of these features may not involve modals directly but in restructuring, a possible sentence could be as in the example “That George, ah?” for “Would that be George at the door?” (de Silva, 1981).

Omission is when a constituent of Standard English has been left out in the structure of the equivalent sentence in colloquial Malaysian English. Certain items are left out resulting in fewer items to manage in the structure of the sentence. Omission of certain modals is also possible in the Malaysian English where certain items are left out. However, when items are omitted, the basic information must be retained.
In **reduction**, however, the colloquial Malaysian English has reduced the complex system of the Standard English to a more simplified and manageable one. It involves omission, where, for example, reduction of the question tag, as in “She will remember me, won’t she?” becomes “She will remember me, isn’t it?” Reduction simplifies a sentence that is complex, for instance, in the formation of a tag question, “Can lend me your bike or not?” and “Must tell the truth, ah?” The modals *can* and *must* are used mostly in colloquial Malaysian English in place of all the modal auxiliary system of Standard English (Wong, 1983).

In **substitution**, the complex system has been reduced to a simpler and manageable (Wong, 1983). Alternatives are used to replace the complex system, where simpler alternatives are used to replace modals to convey meaning.

**Restructuring** is the last simplification features posted by Wong (1983). As mentioned earlier, the simplification features have elements of overlapping in the processes as restructuring involves the use of alternatives and substitutes considered easier than Standard English. In avoiding modals, change in structure as well as meaning is possible.

**Compensation Strategies**

Teaching Malaysian ESL learners is a very challenging process with students of mixed abilities and interests (Vethamani, 2001). The low proficiency levels among Malaysians in the English language are due to the limited exposure to the language. Motivation is also another factor that affects learning and when motivation level is low, students are not interested and not much learning can then take place. Students will resort to any way to overcome their limitation in the target language. Oxford’s (1990) Compensation Strategies is made up of two sets of strategies. One is guessing intelligently (G) and the other is overcoming limitations in speaking and writing (O), which can be remembered by the acronym GO where “language learners can GO far with compensation strategies.”

Another factor that affects Malaysian ESL learners is the tendency for these students to use their mother tongue (interference) in order to overcome their lack of knowledge in the second language (Chitravellu et al., 1995; Oxford, 1990; Tongue, 1979). Oxford (1990) refers to these interferences as compensation strategies. New learners of a language will resort to using all kinds of ways and means in order to get their message across despite their limitations in the knowledge of the new language. Compensation strategies help learners to continue using and practicing the language more.

Advanced learners and even first language speakers would resort to these strategies to help them understand and be understood (Oxford, 1990). These strategies will lead learners to new information that is appropriate and permissible in the target language. These new skills will help them become better communicators.

Malaysian ESL learners, with interferences from the mother tongue, will probably resort to these strategies to overcome their problems in learning the second language. Thus, this study hopes to find out if there is any trace of compensation strategies and simplification features from the data.
Corpus Linguistics and the Learner Corpora

According to O’keeffe, McCarthy, and Carter (2007), a corpus is a collection of texts, written or spoken, which is stored on a computer. In the past, he term was more associated with a body of work. However, since the advent of computers, large amounts of texts can be stored and analyzed using analytical software.

Corpus linguistics deals with the principles and practice of using corpora in a language study (Crystal, 1992). Linguists have discovered that corpora can be a very resourceful tool for pursuing various research agenda (Meyer, 2002). Lexicographers have created many dictionaries through using very large linguistic corpora. Works on historical linguistics were made possible by the existence of these large corpora. Corpora permit systematic study that enables linguists to do all kinds of analyses, and it has opened up new areas of research and bringing new insights to traditional research questions (Meyer, 2002). Learner corpora can enhance the quality of teaching and learning in second or foreign language classrooms (Yu, 2004). Analysis using data from a corpus allows linguists to discover what typical speakers and writers actually do with the grammatical resources of English (Biber & Reppen, 1998).

These indicators show that a corpus enables one to study all kinds of performances; it has proven to be a valuable resource in the creation of dictionaries, study of language change, language variation, and many others. Language pedagogy can benefit a lot from studying a corpus. The use of learner corpora will allow teachers to examine the kind of language their students are using. This in turn will make them aware and decide on the appropriate ways and solutions to overcome students’ linguistics problems (Meyer, 2002).

There are also researchers like Hunston and Gill (1998) who believe that corpora will enable grammarians to study describe language quantitatively and qualitatively while allowing more comprehensive and authoritative descriptions of the language for examination. In this regard, the EMAS Corpus then will allow the researcher to analyze the use of modals in students writing and other linguistic aspects that will help in improving the Malaysians ESL school learners’ proficiency levels in English language.

Methodology

Hunston and Gill (1998) state that the presence of a very large, electronically-stored corpora provides an opportunity to study and describe language quantitatively and qualitatively, and offer more comprehensive and authoritative descriptions of the language since there are more data available for examination. Thus, the use of data from the EMAS Corpus for this study will hope to unravel some patterns on the use of modals in Malaysian ESL students’ writing. For the purpose of this study, data from Form 1 and Form 4 students in the Malaysian school system will be used. This study employs discourse analysis with some descriptive statistics using the MonoConc Pro 2.2 (Barlow, 2003).

The use of the concordancing program helped to generate statistical description that aided the analysis. Descriptive statistics enabled the researcher to summarize the most vital properties of the observed data, where
the abstracted data can be used in inferential statistics which answers question or formulated as hypothesis (Oakes, 1998).

**The EMAS Corpus**

The EMAS (The English Language of Malaysian School Students) Corpus was developed by seven researchers from the Faculty of Educational Studies in Universiti Putra Malaysian (UPM).

The data in the EMAS Corpus consists of Malaysian students’ written and spoken work; thus it was thought to be appropriate for the researchers to use the corpus to investigate how Malaysian ESL learners use modals in their written work. The main purpose of the EMAS Corpus was to establish baseline data of the English language proficiency of Malaysian students in both written and spoken forms as well as to examine developmental patterns through the data obtained.

The written data consisted of three essays which the students had to write. The first essay was based on a series of pictures, where students were given a time limit to write the essay. The second essay was titled “The Happiest Day of My Life” and written by the students. The third essay was selected by their teachers from a series of homework done by the students throughout their schooling year and was thought to be aided. A portion of the data from the EMAS Corpus was extracted for this study, where the first two essay, the “Picture-Based” and “The happiest Day of My Life” essay were used while the third essay was not for they may be aided since it was done as homework.

**Sub-Corpus Sampling**

According to Oakes (1998), it is not practical to study the entire corpus. The texts from the corpus need to be of certain size to enable analyses and the size of the corpus depends on what is being investigated. Therefore, a sub-corpus was compiled for the purpose of the study. The written tasks selected for the sub-corpus was based on purposive sampling, because the tasks were selected with some purpose in mind (Creswell, 2002); that is to examine language development and also to establish benchmarks of students’ English language proficiency. For this study, the purpose is to discover, understand and gain insight as to how students from the two different levels used modals in their written work and also to examine any language patterns that might suggest the use of any linguistics skills.

A table by Krejcie and Morgan (1970) was used to decide on the sample. Therefore, for this study 84 “The Happiest Day of My Life” compositions and 126 “Picture-Based” compositions, giving a total of 210 narrative compositions were selected and analyzed.

**Results and Discussion**

**Strategies Used to Indicate Modality in the Absence of Modals**

Oxford (1990), states that ESL learners will resort to linguistic and non-linguistic strategies to overcome their limitations in the target language when communicating. This presupposes that the lack of modals in sentences where the former could be found is a language limitation. Students may or may not use modals for a number of reasons, one being the lack of knowledge of modals, and second it could be a matter of preference not to use modals. Both
imply varying degrees of language proficiency, or lack of it. Therefore, according to Wong (1983), Malaysian ESL learners, in particular, will resort to any forms in order to be understood, may it be spoken or written. Both Oxford and Wong constructed a list of features and strategies students use to overcome any linguistic limitations. These strategies are:

A) Simplification Features (Wong, 1983)


In the analysis of the data, these two strategies were relied on to determine modality in sentences where the researchers perceived could have been written with a modal explicitly present but with the meaning remaining the same.

Wong (1983) further mentioned that one the features of colloquial Malaysian English is the reduction of the modal auxiliary system of standard formal English to simpler systems of expressing modality. To her, Malaysian users have developed this instead of using explicit modal of Standard British English. One good example of this is use of ‘maybe’ to indicate possibility or probability and ‘must be’ or ‘surely’ to express certainty (Wong, 1982: 278-279). Wong described these as simplification features, adapting from de Silva (1981). The Simplification Features were proposed, among others as alternatives used by ESL learners to overcome their inadequacy in L2 in relation to the use of modals. The features are over-generalization, omission, reduction, restructuring, and substitution. In this study, these five features were examined to identify what students would use in place of ad explicit modal to express modality.

Oxford (1990) also indicates that students have limitation in the target language and, due to this, suggests that learners would adapt strategies to overcome the limitations. Out of the 10 strategies proposed by Oxford the researchers identified 4 strategies that were observed present in the Malaysian ESL students’ writing and possibly could be observed across the writings in the chosen corpus. These are avoiding communication or writing, adjusting or approximating messages, and using circumlocution or synonym. Therefore, a total of nine strategies were used to categorize modal compensation strategies identified in the students’ essays.

A checklist was designed, based on Wong’s and Oxford’s strategies, and used to identify the alternatives students used in their essays to express modality. It includes the five features identified by Wong (1983) and the four strategies by Oxford (1990), to overcome their limitations in the target language. They are: over-generalization, omission, reduction, restructuring, substitution, switching to the mother tongue, avoiding communication or writing, adjusting or approximating messages, and using circumlocution or synonym.

Out of this list, only 4 were identified in the data of this research, and they are: (1) substitution, (2) restructuring, (3) omission, and (4) avoiding communication or writing. The findings are reported in Table 1 (Appendix) this is a discussion on the distribution of the strategies according to the levels.

In general, the most used compensation strategy in sentences that could have contained a modal verb is substitution for two levels. This is followed by restructuring strategy,
omission and avoiding communication or writing. The total number of strategies shows the preference of strategies according to the rank: substitution (65 instances), restructuring (52 instances), omission (5) and avoiding communication (1).

**Substitution**

Table 1 indicates 25 instances of this strategy identified at the Form 1 level and 40 at the Form 4 level in the essays. Substitution is a strategy where modals are not used in sentences which could have been written to include a modal, rendering them to be equally correct as those sentences without the modal. In other words, an explicit modal is used to indicate modality in the sentences. Below are some examples of substitution identified at the Form 1 level.

**Form 1**

Using the verb form is a strategy that has been used to substitute lack of knowledge in modals to express modality as shown in the following example:

a) “The girls screamed to get help. Osman, Khalid and Abu heard the girl screamed.”

In this sentence, the verb is more preferred than the modal verb phrase, and the former may have been used to substitute for the latter. If a modal is to be used, the sentence could have been written as follows:

b) “The girls screamed to get help. Khalid and Abu could hear the girl screamed.”

Another example that shows the Substitution strategy used by the students to indicate modality is shown below:

c) “But Nicholas and I did not give up.”

The student seemed to be very certain of the action, but a modal could have been used instead in the sentence as in the example below:

d) “But Nicholas and I would not give up”

Nevertheless, the sentence in c) is acceptable without the modal.

**Form 4**

There were 40 instances of substitution identified at this level. Look at the following examples:

a) “Maybe Carol is trying to scare me”

b) “Beware! Maybe Sandy likes you here and eat you up”

c) “Oh well. Maybe she likes to keep you in his stomach”

All the sentences above show the use of ‘may be’ as a substitution for a modal to indicate possibility or probability. The sentences if rewritten to include a modal would have been as follows:

a) “Carol may be trying to scare me”

b) “Beware! Sandy may like you here and eat you up”

c) “Oh well! She may like to keep you in his stomach”

The first three sentences are examples of substitution where the phrase maybe is used as an alternative to a modal. Wong (1983) has that this alternative is simpler for the ESL learners and conveys meaning more directly and overtly.

**Restructuring**

Restructuring refers to the situation where the complex standard formal English verb system in the sentence is simplified. In other words, what appears to be a complex structure is changed to a simpler one (Wong, 1983). The restructuring strategy
employed by Malaysians usually results in the alteration to the meaning of a sentence. It also involves the use of alternatives and substitutes of words and phrases that may be considered easier by the students than Standard English. Restructuring, according to de Siva (1981), on the part of the Malaysian language user, sees the user avoiding modal altogether. Therefore, alongside that of reduction and substitution, contributes to informal use of the language (Wong, 1983:144). Based on that, the following examples show the restructuring strategy used by the students with discussion below.

**Form 1**

There were 24 instances restructuring identified at this level. Students may perceive the use of verb forms as a simpler structure and prefer to use them instead of modals, as in the example below:

a) “Unfortunately she doesn’t know how to swim and so did Lily”

The student may perceive the phrases “doesn’t know how to swim” and “so did Lily” as simpler structures to use than modal. De Silva’s (1981) research in modal auxiliary system in colloquial ME revealed instances of restructuring by the Malaysian language user to avoid using modals altogether and sticking to simpler phrases in their written and spoken form. Therefore, the sentence in (1a) could have been written with a modal instead as show below:

b) “Unfortunately she could not swim and neither could Lily”

This is also an attempt by the student at constructing an elliptical sentence. In all the samples analyzed, student appeared uncertain of the correct verb forms to use. Most of the sentences were written in the present tense form using present tense forms modals and this could be the result of preference for certain lexical items or a style of writing.

**Form 4**

The two examples below show the restructuring strategies used by the students at the Form 4 level.

c) “My mother always yelled at me for not taking care of Cutie but I still didn’t change”

d) “My confidence soared and I continued answering the question asked…”

Sentences c) and d) can be categorized as restructuring strategies. There may be some overlapping in the simplification features by Wong (1983) and in the process of substitution; it also involves using alternative word or substitutes, which may be considered easier and more manageable by the students, and almost equivalent to the standard formal English. Sentence c) show the use of the past tense form “didn’t change” which could have been modal verb phrase wouldn’t/couldn’t change, while sentence d) used the phrase “continued answering”, which when a modal is used instead, the phrase becomes could answer.

Not using explicit modals in sentences could be a matter of preference on the students’ part. Other examples of restructuring strategies are of similar form, i.e., verb in the place of explicit modal, where the same pattern of usage has emerged.

**Omission**

The next strategy identified in the essays used by the students is omission. Modals are omitted in sentences where there could be one, thus resulting in fewer items for the students to manage.
The tense system of standard formal English has been simplified through reduction but under the feature of omission there is the lack of the -s inflectional suffix to show verb agreement in the present tense. However, the basic information is normally retained. There are some similarities and difference found with restructuring strategy where the modals are totally avoided and the fact that the meaning may be altered without the modal in each sentence. The subsequent sections describe the occurrences of this strategy at the two levels.

**Form 1**

There were only three instances of omission at the Form 1 level. One of the sentences is as follows:

a) “The day so happiest for me and I never remember it”

The sentence is poorly constructed but an element of omission can be detected here where the sentence could have been written as in b):

b) “This is the happiest day for me and I will never forget it”

The meaning assumed from the sentence is that the character in the story found that day to be unforgettable. Another example of omission is show below:

c) “Amin and their friends hear the shout”

When a modal is added, the sentence becomes:

d) “Amin and their friends could hear the shout”

The sentence produced by the students could be restructured also since a modal can be used instead in the sentences. Another example that does not show the use of a modal in the sentence is:

e) “Ramu, Ah Chong and Jamal hear and run to the girls”

When the modal is inserted in the sentence, it is written as:

f) “Ramu, Ah Chong and Jamal could hear and ran to the girls”

These are the examples of the sentences produced by Form 1 student in the absence of modals.

**Form 4**

There were only two instances of omission found and one of the sentences is give below:

g) “I hear that shout and we quickly go to them”

Here again, the modal could is possibly omitted from the sentence, which could be read as:

h) “I could hear the shout and we quickly go to them”

Most of the students show a similar omission strategy in their sentences. This strategy also appeared to produce errors which seemed to indicate an incomplete application of the rules. The errors are probably due to the modal having been taught in a haphazard way as discussed by Bose (2005). As a result, students’ knowledge of the modal auxiliary may not be complete and this affects their writing ability. Since one of the essays describes an incident that happened by the river, phrases or modals like “could not/can hear”, “could/can scream out loud” could be identified in most of the sentences.

**Avoiding Communication or Writing**

Another compensation strategy used by ESL learners in overcoming their limitations in the knowledge of the language is avoidance. Learners use the avoidance strategy in both speaking and writing. In this study, there was only one instance of avoidance found in a very short essay consisting of six sentences.
The extremely overall low occurrence of this strategy at the Form 4 level shows that the student may have almost acquired the knowledge of modal auxiliary. However, the sixth sentence was written with a blank which is a clear indication that the student could not produce the correct word/words or phrases to complete the sentence at the point of writing the essay. The paragraph is reproduced below:

“One day I and my sister so to the Taman Sungai Pelangi. My sister want to cutting some flowers and the flowers in there was a beautiful. When my sister’s want to cutting the flowers, suddenly she foul in the water. My sister don’t know to swim. I am very panic and I don’t know what to do. I…to help”.

This student’s proficiency is poor, despite being a fourth former and the many years of learning the English language. The student has not acquired much of the language, more so of the modal auxiliary system. There are a few possibilities to complete the last sentence “I…to help” such as:

i) “I couldn’t do anything to help” or
j) “I couldn’t afford to help”

Both sentences are well-formed and the use of the modal could in the negative. Form is to indicate inability. The student was unable to recall the appropriate words and the uncertainty is show in the incomplete sentence and the way the sentences in the essay were constructed.

Summary and Conclusion

Compensation Strategies and Simplification Features were detected in the students’ writing and these could have been used by students in overcoming their limitations in the target language, among others. When the sentences were examined it was found that students used whatever they felt comfortable in using when writing, simplicity of sentence being one of the motivating factors. The compensation strategies may be the outcomes of uncertainties in the use of modals or used according to the students’ preference.

Bose (2005) reported in his study that Indian high school students have difficulties with the English modal auxiliary. He said that after a certain level students should have acquired some level of proficiency that would help them to become better writer and speakers. However, students may face problems in either not getting sufficient knowledge, particularly on modal auxiliary, or receiving the knowledge in a haphazard way adding to the confusion. Most linguists and grammarians have agreed that complexities and difficulties do occur in the learning of the English modals among SL/ELF learners.

Students’ lack of use of modals may indicate their actual inability in using them and this has resulted in the use of compensation strategies to indicate modality in their writing, as analyzed in this research. The findings have shown that the occurrences of strategies that appeared in both the essays are almost the same in number. This indicates strategies are used at both levels in order to overcome limitations in the target language, particularly on modality. Out of the 9 strategies listed, only 4 were identified in these essays. Only one instance of avoidance was found where the student either left blanks in the sentence to indicate his/her general uncertainty in using the language or wrote nothing. In speech, avoidance also happened when speakers are not
sure of what to say and would stay silent, perhaps to avoid saying the wrong thing. Thus, avoiding communication would be the best strategy for these people.

The results show that simplification features were used more by Malaysian ESL learners than compensation strategies to overcome limitations in the English language. Modality is indicated either by the explicit presence of modals or by other forms employed by the students to help them get the meanings across.

In conclusion, the problems faced by Malaysian ESL learners in using modal auxiliary have resulted in the presence of strategies used to overcome their inadequacies in the target language. These strategies are in the forms of Simplification Features by Wong (1983) and Compensation Strategies by Oxford (1990). These two alternatives were found to be used by the students to overcome their limitations in the English language. However, the students relied more on the Simplification Features of Wong (1983) than the Compensation Strategies of Oxford (1990).

References
Psychological Measurement 30: 608.
### Appendix

Table 1: Strategies of Modality at F1 and F4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategies</th>
<th>Form 1</th>
<th>Form 4</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Substitution (SS)</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Restructuring (SS)</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Omission (SS)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Avoiding communication or writing (CS)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: SS = Simplification Strategies        CS = Compensation Strategies