

# Modals in Hebrew

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(created for the UKRI FLF project “Logic in Semantic Universals” based on Vander Klok 2021  
“Revised modal questionnaire for cross-linguistic use”)

Language name: Modern Hebrew  
ISO 639-3: heb  
Glottolog: hebr1245  
Consultant demographics: A female speaker of modern Hebrew.  
Elicitation dates: 2 May 2022, 3 Ma 2022

## BODY OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

### A. EPISTEMIC

#### A1 Epistemic Necessity

**Target: epistemic vs. deontic necessity.**

**(3) and (4) target only epistemic necessity.**

(1) Ben goes swimming every day. Ben is not obliged or required to go swimming; it is just a habit of his.  
It is now time for Ben to be swimming... so Ben **MUST** be swimming (right now).

Ben     *(batuakh)*     *sokhe.*  
Ben     **MOD**         swims

Ben     *khayav*         *liskhot (akhsav).*  
Ben     **MOD**         swim     (now)

Comment:

- Deontic interpretation seems to be more natural for the above example.

(1') Ben must be rich.

Ben     *batuakh*         *asheer.*  
Ben     **MOD**         be.rich

Ben     **khayav**             lihiyot asheer.  
 Ben     **MOD**                be        rich  
 (not as common anymore)

Comment:

- Original gloss for *batuakh* was for.sure

(2) You know that John goes to school at 9am every day. You look at the clock and see it is 9am, therefore John MUST be at school.

(3) The math teacher says: The ball is in A or in B or in C. It is not in A. It is not in B. So, it MUST be in C. (Adapted from von Fintel & Gillies 2007.)

Hakadoor     **khayav** lihiyot be-C.  
 the.ball        **MOD**    be        in-C

(4) Tim is calling for his dog. The dog is not coming. Tim looks for the dog in the kitchen, bedroom, living room, (in every room in the house) but the dog is not in any of those rooms. Therefore, Tim thinks/concludes that the dog MUST not be in the house.

Hakelev        **batuakh**             lo        baba-eit.  
 dog             MOD                not        in.the.house

**Batuakh**             hakelev lo             baba-eit.  
**MOD**                dog        not        in.the.house  
 (felicitous as an answer to a question )

Hakelev        **khayav** lo             lihiyot baba-eit.  
 the.dog        **MOD**    not        be        in.the.house

**\*khayav**             hakelev lo             lihiyot baba-eit.  
**MOD**                dog        not        be        in.the.house

## A2 Epistemic Weak Necessity

**Target: epistemic weak necessity vs. deontic weak necessity**

**(6) is also compatible with testing for epistemic possibility.**

(5) You know that Ann goes hiking from 7am until 8am every day. Most of the time Ann goes to the lake, but sometimes she goes to the mountains. It is now 7:30am. You say to your friend: Ann SHOULD be at the lake right now.

Ann        **amoora** lihiyot ba-agam             akhshav.

Ann    **MOD**   be        at-lake            now

Ann    ***tzrikha*** *lihiyot*   *ba-agam*        *akhshav.*

Ann    **MOD**   be        at-lake            now

Comment:

- less ‘correct’; *tzrikha* literally can be translated as “need”, so it is “less correct” in the sense that the literal translation does not match the weak necessity interpretation

(6) (Imagine that) you used to live in Goa. You are not living in Goa anymore. You notice how different the weather is in the UK, where you live right now. You know that it often rains in Goa, especially in the afternoon, but not necessarily every day. Now it’s the afternoon, so you think it SHOULD be raining now in Goa.

- Not elicited

(7) When the light is on at Mary’s house, it usually means that she is home. You want to visit Mary. You walk past Mary’s house and notice that the light is on. However, there is no car in the driveway. You think to yourself: Mary SHOULD be at home, but it’s not certain.

Mary    ***amoora*** *lihiyot*   *baba-eit.*

Mary    **MOD**   be        in.the.house

Mary    ***tzrikha*** *lihiyot*   *baba-eit.*

Mary    **MOD**   be        in.the.house

Comment:

- *amoora* fits better in this context. “Most people would use *amoora* in this context”
- Original glosses: *tzrikha* = should(need), *amoora* = need
- *Amoora* and *tzrikha* cannot be in the sentence-initial position. It is “technically” grammatical, but has an archaic feel to it. They are similar to *khayav* in the syntactic restriction.

## A3 Epistemic Possibility

**Target: epistemic possibility vs. epistemic necessity**

**(11) targets epistemic possibility vs. deontic possibility**

(8) The teacher is not consistent. The students never know if he’s going to come or not to teach class. Today, it’s time to start class and the students are waiting again. He MIGHT be coming to school today.

Hamoreh        ***oolay***   *yavoh*   *hayom.*

Teacher        **MOD**   come    today

<b>Yitakhen</b>	<i>sheh-ha-moreh</i>	<i>yavoh</i>	<i>hayom.</i>
<b>MOD</b>	Comp-D-teacher	come	today

Comment:

- *Oolay* original gloss: “may”
- *Yitakhen* original gloss: “it.could.be”

(9) Grace is looking for her necklace. She looks in her wardrobe and on top of the wardrobe. It’s not there. She looks on top of the TV. It’s not there. She looks in her backpack. It’s not there. Wait! She didn’t check her sister’s wardrobe yet. Grace’s necklace MIGHT / #must be lost.

- Not elicited

(10) Charles is looking for his pet cat, but cannot find it. He knows that his cat is very elusive/mysterious. Charles tells his sister: The cat MAY be inside. The cat MAY also be outside.

<i>Ha-khatool</i>	<b>oolay</b>	<i>baba-eit.</i>
D-Cat	<b>MOD</b>	in.the.house

<i>Ha-khatool</i>	<b>oolay</b>	<i>bakhootz.</i>
D-Cat	<b>MOD</b>	outside

<b>Yitakhen</b>	<i>sheh-ha-khatool</i>	<i>baba-eit</i>	<i>o</i>	<i>bakhutz.</i>
<b>MOD</b>	Comp-D-cat	in.the.house	or	outside

<i>*ha-khatool</i>	<b>yitakhen</b>	<i>baba-eit.</i>
D-cat	<b>MOD</b>	in.the.house

[ok]	<b>Oolay</b>	<i>ha-khatool</i>	<i>baba-eit.</i>
	<b>MOD</b>	D-cat	in.the.house

Also possible:

<i>Ha-khatool</i>	<b>yakhol</b>	<i>lihiyot</i>	<i>baba-eit.</i>
D-cat	<b>MOD</b>	be	in.the.house

(11) Daniel lives in London and his friend has recently moved to New York. Daniel’s parents told him that he is not allowed to go and see his friend in New York because it is too far away. You heard that Daniel is leaving London next week but you don’t know where he will go. Daniel usually does things that he is not permitted to do. You think Daniel MAY / MIGHT / #is allowed to go to New York.

- Note elicited

## A4 Epistemic Non-necessity

(7') When the light is on at Mary's house, it usually means that she is home. You want to visit Mary. You walk past Mary's house and notice that the light is on. However, there is no car in the driveway. You think to yourself: Mary should be at home, but it is NOT NECESSARILY THE CASE THAT she is / she MAY NOT be / it is NOT CERTAIN that she is.

Mary	<b>amoorah</b>	lihiyot	baba-eit	aval	lo	<b>batuakh.</b>
Mary	<b>MOD</b>	be	in.the.house	but	neg	<b>MOD</b>

## A5 Epistemic impossibility

(1') Ben goes swimming every day. Ben is not obliged or required to go swimming; it is just a habit of his. It is now time for Ben to be swimming... so Ben CAN'T be at home.

Ben lo	<b>yakhol</b>	lihiyot	baba-eit.
Ben neg	<b>MOD</b>	be	in.the.house

(3') The math teacher says: The ball is in A or in B or in C. We opened box A, and the ball is there. There is only one ball. So, it MUST NOT / CAN'T be in C.

- Not elicited

## B. DEONTIC

### B1 Deontic Necessity

**Target: deontic necessity**

(12) In Indonesia, the law states that when you ride a motor bike... You MUST wear a helmet.

Ata	<b>khayav</b>	lakhvosh	kasdah.
You	<b>MOD</b>	put.on.head	helmet

(13) You are going to visit your friend in the hospital. When you enter into the hospital, you stop at the information desk to inquire what room your friend is in. But the woman at the information desk tells you that you can't visit your friend now because it's already 8pm. She says, "I'm sorry, the hospital regulations say that... Visitors MUST leave by 6pm."

Orkhim	<b>mekhuyavim</b>	laazov	ad	6	ba-erev.
visitors	<b>MOD.plural.pass</b>	leave	by	6	in.the.evening

## B2 Deontic Weak Necessity

### Target: deontic weak necessity

(16) Your friend is having a birthday party. She tells you that she would like it if everyone invited wore formal clothes, but that it is not necessary to wear formal clothes to attend. You think to yourself... I OUGHT TO wear formal clothes to the party.

**Kedai/Ratsuy** *she-elbash* *bgadim yafim* *la-mesibah.*  
**MOD** Comp-I.wear.fut clothes pretty to.the.party

Comment:

- *Ra-tsuy* more “correct”, slightly more formal; *kedai* more common
- *Ra-tsuy* comes from “want”. More general, used to describe general requirements.

(17) Your friend tells you that the rules of the restaurant state that employees must wash their hands after going to the bathroom. You reply to your friend:... Non-employees OUGHT TO wash their hands too!

**Kedai/Ratsuy** *she-gam* *lo-ovdim* *yitlu* *yadayim.*  
**MOD** Comp-also non-workers washing hands

(18) In England, it is recommended that face coverings be worn in stores, but it is not a legal requirement. You plan on going shopping, and you think to yourself... I OUGHT TO wear a face covering.

**Kedai** *she-hu* *yilbash masekhah.*  
**MOD** Comp-he wear mask

# *Ratsuy she-hu yilbash masekhah.*

(if you have this specific person in mind)

- If we are talking about a specific person entering a hospital without a face covering: *kedai* ok, but *ratsuy* #

## B3 Deontic Possibility

### Target: deontic possibility vs. deontic necessity

#### (22) and (23) target deontic possibility vs. circumstantial possibility

(19) The ferris wheel ride is only for children under 12 years of age. Martin is 10 years of age. It is not obligatory for Martin to go on the ride if he doesn't want to. Martin MAY / #must ride the ferris wheel.

*Martin yakhol la-alot la-galgal-ha-anak.*  
Martin **MOD** go.up ferris.wheel

# **yitakhen** she Martin yaale la-galgal-ha-anak

# **oolay**

(20) According to the rules of the hospital, only family members are allowed to enter the patient's room during visiting hours. You came to visit your sister, but it was after visiting hours. But the really nice nurse says... You MAY / #must enter.

At        **yekholah**        le-hikanes.  
you      **MOD.F**        enter

(21) You are making plans for tomorrow night to meet up with your friend. Your friend says:  
You can stay overnight and you can go home.  
You can stay overnight. You can also go home.

- Not elicited

(22) Alice fell down the stairs and broke her arm a while ago. She hasn't been lifting her baby while her arm was hurt because the baby is heavy. Finally, she has recovered, and she went to the doctor for a final check-up. The doctor gave her permission to lift her baby. But when she got home after her visit to the doctor, Alice found that she is still too weak to lift her baby... Alice CAN lift her baby.

- Not elicited

(23) Beth's teacher told her class that it was okay to go swimming, but Beth doesn't want to because she cannot swim! Beth CAN go swimming.  
i.e. Beth COULD go swimming, Beth is ALLOWED/PERMITTED to go swimming, but she can't swim.

- Not elicited

## B4 Deontic non-necessity

(16') Your friend is having a birthday party. She tells you that she would like it if everyone invited wore formal clothes, but that it is not necessary to wear formal clothes to attend. You think to yourself... I ought to wear formal clothes to the party, but I DON'T HAVE TO / NEEDN'T wear formal clothes.

Ani      lo        **tsarikh** lilvosh bgadim yafim.  
I        neg      **MOD** wear clothes pretty

Ani      lo        **khayav** lilvosh bgadim yafim.  
I        neg      **MOD** wear clothes pretty

(18') In England, it is recommended that face coverings be worn in stores, but it is not a legal requirement. You plan on going shopping, and you think to yourself... I OUGHT TO wear a face covering, but I DON'T HAVE TO / NEEDN'T.

- Not elicited

## B5 Deontic impossibility

(12') In Indonesia, the law states that when you ride a motor bike... You MUST NOT / MAY NOT ride a motor bike without a helmet.

<i>Asur</i>	<i>lirkav</i>	<i>ofanayim</i>	<i>le-lo</i>	<i>kasdah.</i>
MOD	ride	bike	without	helmet

- (*Asur* cannot be used to express epistemic impossibility.)

<i>Asur</i>	<i>le-Martin</i>	<i>lirkav</i>	<i>ofanayim</i>	<i>le-lo</i>	<i>kasdah.</i>
MOD	Martin	ride	bike	without	helmet

*Le-Martin asur lirkav ofanayim le-lo kasdah.*

Comment:

- Original gloss for *asur* was “not.allowed”

(13') You are going to visit your friend in the hospital. When you enter into the hospital, you stop at the information desk to inquire what room your friend is in. But the woman at the information desk tells you that you can't visit your friend now because it's already 8pm. She says, “I'm sorry, the hospital regulations say that... Visitors MUST NOT / MAY NOT stay after 6pm.”

- Not elicited

## C. TELEOLOGICAL

### C1 Teleological Necessity

**Target: teleological necessity**

(24) There is only one main road from Location A to Location B... If you go from Location A to Location B, you HAVE TO take this road.

<i>Ata</i>	<i>khayav</i>	<i>lakakhat</i>	<i>et</i>	<i>ha-kvish</i>	<i>ha-ze.</i>
You	MOD	take	demonstrative	road	this

*Ata tzrikh lakakhat et ha-kvish ha-ze.*



(grammatical but a bit weaker)

(25) Team A are playing in a tournament/competition/championship. In order to advance... Team A HAS TO beat Team B.

- Not elicited

(26) The best pizza in town is sold at Gino's. You have invited your sister for dinner, and you decide to order pizza. You tell your sister: We HAVE TO order from Gino's to eat the best pizza.

- Not elicited

## C2 Teleological Weak Necessity

**Target: teleological weak necessity**

(27) There are different ways to get to the shopping centre. You can go by foot, by tram/horse-carriage/truck/train/bus/public van, or drive/motorcycle/bicycle yourself. You are not sure how to go. Your friend advises you to get the bus because it is cheaper... To get to the shopping centre, you SHOULD take the bus.

*Kedai she ata tikakh et ha-otobus.*  
**MOD** Comp you take D bus

*Ratsuy she (ata) tikakh et ha-otobus.*

Comment:

- *khayav* is too strong. *tzrikh* is also too strong

(28) There are 3 ways to get to the seaside: a direct road, taking smaller roads, or a combination. Your friend says that taking the smaller roads is very beautiful. According to him, you SHOULD go via the smaller roads.

- Not elicited

(29) Your friend wants to buy a new shirt for her job at a reasonable price. There are many nice shops for professional clothes in the area, and you work at one of them and think it offers good prices. You say: You SHOULD go to my shop to buy a new shirt.

- Not elicited

## C3 Teleological Possibility

**Target: teleological possibility**

(30) There are two different ways to get to the mountains from the city centre. Way 1 is inland and way 2 goes around via the coast. Both take around 7 hours by bus and they are equally beautiful... You CAN take way 1.

*Ata      yakhol   lakakhat et      ha-derekh      ha-rishonah.*  
You      MOD   take      C      way      the.first

# *yitakhen*

# *oolay*

(31) There are two swimming pools in the town with the exact same design and both are an equal distance from your house. You plan to go swimming later on but have no specific desire for which pool to go to. You tell your sister... We CAN go to the swimming pool to the west.

- Not elicited

(32) Your friend wants to buy a new shirt for her job. Since there are many nice shops for professional clothes in the area, you say... You CAN go to this boutique.

- Not elicited

## C4 Teleological non-necessity

(27') There are different ways to get to the shopping centre. You can go by foot, by tram/horse-carriage/truck/train/bus/public van, or drive/motorcycle/bicycle yourself. You are not sure how to go. Your friend advises you to get the bus because it is cheaper... To get to the shopping centre, you should take the bus, but you DON'T NEED TO / NEEDN'T do so.

*Ata      lo-tzarikh      lakakhat      et      ha-otobus.*  
You      neg-MOD      take      C      bus

## C5 Teleological impossibility

(24') There is only one main road from Location A to Location B... If you are going from Location A to Location B, you CAN'T take another road.

*Ata      lo-yakhol      lakakhat      kvish      akher.*  
You      neg-MOD      take      road      another

# *asur* (it sounds like a warning)

(25') Team A are playing in a tournament/competition/championship. In order to advance... Team A CAN'T lose to Team B.

- Not elicited

## D. CIRCUMSTANTIAL

### D1 Circumstantial Necessity

**Target: circumstantial necessity; (35) with inanimate subject**

(33) You are on a bus. You have not had a chance to go to the toilet for 4 hours, and your bladder is full. You text your friend... I HAVE to pee so badly!

- Not elicited

(34) In the middle of a conversation, you feel a sneeze coming on... Excuse me! I HAVE to sneeze.

Ani      *khayav le-hitatesh.*

I        **MOD** sneeze

(35') Water is entering a pipe, which has two outputs: the left output and the right output. But, you know that the left output is blocked. And the water is coming out from the right output. You say: the water must come out from the right output.

- Not elicited

### D3 Circumstantial Possibility

**Target: (36) & (37) circumstantial possibility vs. epistemic possibility**

**(38) circumstantial possibility**

**(39) & (40) circumstantial possibility vs. deontic possibility**

(36) Ani came to visit a small island in the Philippines. She noticed that the climate and many of the plants are similar to some places she visited in Indonesia. The temperature is the same, the rainfall is the same, the types of rocks and the soil are the same. But when she looked around, she didn't find any *duku* trees anywhere. But because the temperature, rainfall, and soil are the same, she thinks that... *duku* trees CAN grow here.

Etzei    *duku yekholim*      *ligdol kan.*  
Trees    *duku MOD.pl*      grow    here

Etzei    *duku mesugolim*      *ligdol kan.*  
Trees    *duku MOD.pl*      grow    here

(37) Amy knows how to make traditional Italian pasta. Now Amy is back in the country she lives in, and she wants to make traditional pasta, but the right kind of ingredients are not sold where she lives. So, she is unhappy because she wanted to show her parents how to make traditional pasta... Amy CAN make traditional Italian pasta (but she does not have the ingredients).

Amy **yekholah** lehakhin pasta.  
Amy MOD.F make/prepare pasta

Amy **mesugelet** lehakhin pasta.  
Amy MOD.F make/prepare pasta

(38) Ben was in a motorbike accident 3 weeks ago, and he sprained his ankle. Ben is able to walk now. However, the doctor told Ben that he is not allowed to walk until 5 weeks after the accident... Ben CAN walk now.

- Not elicited

(39) Paul is quite old now, but he is still strong. His children are scared he will hurt his back if he does any intense labour, so they told him that he is forbidden to lift heavy things. But one day, his friend Rob asked to help him in the field, because Rob knows Paul is still strong. So when Rob saw a large rock that had to be moved, he asked P straightaway for help (but he didn't tell Paul's children!). Rob knew that... Paul CAN lift that rock.

- Not elicited

(40) The travel vans have a limit of 13 people by law. But the drivers don't care, and stop for more than 13 people. Also, the vans are bigger than you think... Travel vans CAN fit 20 people.

- Not elicited

#### D4. Circumstantial non-necessity

(44) Given the way this volcano has been active in the past 100 years, it is LIKELY BUT NOT CERTAIN that it will erupt in the next 5 years.

**Yitakhen** she-havolvano itparetz.  
MOD C-volcano erupt

Rov hasikuyim avl lo-behekhrah/lo-batuakh.  
? neg-MOD

#### D5. Circumstantial impossibility

(34') In the middle of a conversation, you feel a sneeze coming on... Excuse me! I CAN'T help sneezing!

*Ani lo-yakhol lehafsik.*  
 I neg-**MOD** sneeze

(35') Water is entering a pipe, which has two outputs: the left output and the right output. But, you know that the left output is blocked. And the water is coming out from the right output. You say: the water CAN'T come out from the left output.

- Not elicited

## E. BOULETIC

### E1 Bouletic Necessity

**Target: bouletic necessity**

**(42) targets bouletic necessity vs. deontic necessity**

(41) You love handbags. You see a really nice handbag in a window and you say... I WANT/NEED TO buy it.

*Ani tzarikh liknot et ha-tik.*  
 I **MOD** buy C thing/it

(42) Your friend asks you what you desire/want to do today since it is a holiday and you both are not required to do any tasks today. You say... I WANT to go to the cinema.

- Not elicited

(43) A daughter tells her parent... My friend WANTS to come visit me.

- Not elicited

Table of Hebrew Modals:

MODALS	EPISTEMIC	ROOT/NON-EPISTEMIC			
		PARTICIPANT-EXTERNAL		PARTICIPANT-INTERNAL	
	Epistemic	Deontic	Teleological	Circumstantial	Bouletic
<b>Necessity</b>	<i>batuakh</i>  <i>khayav</i>	<i>khayav</i>	<i>khayav</i>  <i>tzrikh</i>	<i>khayav</i>	<i>tzarikh</i>
<b>Weak Necessity</b>	<i>amoorah</i>  <i>(tzrikha)</i>	<i>kedai</i>  <i>ratsuy</i>	<i>kedai</i>  <i>ratsuy</i>	--	...
<b>Possibility</b>	<i>oolay/</i> <i>yitakhen/</i> <i>yakhol</i>	<i>yakhol</i>	<i>yakhol</i>	<i>yakhol</i>  <i>mesugelet</i> <i>(variations thereof)</i>	...
<b>Non necessity</b>	<i>amoorah ...</i> <i>NEG +</i> <i>batuakh</i>	<i>NEG +</i> <i>khayav</i>  <i>lo +</i> <i>tzarikh</i>	<i>NEG-tzarikh</i>	<i>NEG-batuakh</i> <i>(yitakhen;</i> <i>non-necessity</i> <i>may be due to</i> <i>scalar</i> <i>implicature)</i>	...
<b>Impossibility</b>	<i>NEG + yakhol</i> <i>(lihiyot)</i>	<i>asur</i>	<i>NEG-yakhol</i>	<i>NEG-yakhol</i>	...