

**Epistemic and Deontic Modality in National and International News
of the MV Putri Sakinah Tragedy**

THESIS

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THESIS

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2026

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I state that the thesis entitled “**Epistemic and Deontic Modality in National and International News of the MV Putri Sakinah Tragedy**” is my original work. I do not include any materials previously written or published by another person, except those cited as references and written in the bibliography. Hereby, if there is any objection or claim, I am the only person who is responsible for that.

Malang, 15 May 2026

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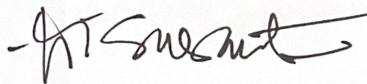
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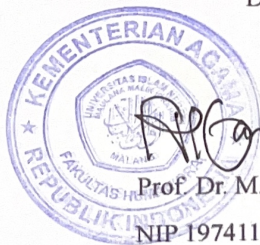


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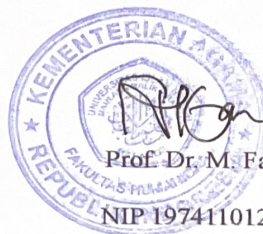
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MOTTO

“Tetap melangkah walaupun masa depan belum tentu indah, jangan menoleh ke belakang tapi fokuslah ke depan”

Keep moving even though the future is not necessarily beautiful, don't look back but focus on the future

DEDICATION

I convey my deepest gratitude to my beloved parents, who always provided support, encouragement and prayers throughout my journey through education to college. For all your struggles and sacrifices, may Allah reward you abundantly.

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ABSTRACT

Hidayat, Anwar (2026). *Epistemic and Deontic Modality In National And International News Of The Mv Putri Sakinah Tragedy*. Department of English Literature, Faculty of Humanities, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang. Advisor: Drs. H. Djoko Susanto, M.Ed., Ph.D.

Keywords: *Epistemic Modality, Deontic Modality, News Discourse, Disaster Reporting, MV Putri Sakinah*

Online news often reports the same disaster differently, and these differences can shape how readers understand who is certain and who is responsible. However, previous studies on modality mostly examined political news in Western media, and they rarely compared national and international coverage of a disaster in Indonesia. This study examines how epistemic and deontic modality are used in online news reporting of the MV Putri Sakinah tragedy, which sank in Labuan Bajo on December 26, 2025. It compares national media (The Jakarta Post and Tempo English) and international media (CBS News and Channel News Asia). This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach with discourse analysis. The data are words, phrases, and sentences containing modal markers collected from seventeen news articles published between December 26, 2025, and January 15, 2026, through reading, screenshotting, and note-taking. The data were analyzed using Palmer's (2001) framework by identifying, classifying, and interpreting epistemic markers (high certainty, medium probability, low possibility) and deontic markers (strong obligation, weak obligation, permission, rhetorical questions). The findings show that national media use more high certainty markers and strong obligation, while international media use more low possibility markers and rhetorical questions. These differences are influenced by geographical, institutional, and cultural factors. This study matters because it helps journalists write more balanced disaster news and helps readers read news more critically.

ABSTRAK

Hidayat, Anwar (2026). *Modalitas Epistemik dan Deontik Dalam Berita Nasional Dan Internasional Tentang Tragedi Mv Putri Sakinah*. Departemen Sastra Inggris, Fakultas Humaniora, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang. Penasihat: Drs. H. Djoko Susanto, M.Ed., Ph.D.

Kata kunci: *Modalitas Epistemik, Modalitas Deontik, Wacana Berita, Berita Pelaporan Bencana, MV Putri Sakinah*

Berita daring sering melaporkan bencana yang sama dengan cara yang berbeda, dan perbedaan ini dapat membentuk cara pembaca memahami siapa yang pasti dan siapa yang bertanggung jawab. Namun, studi sebelumnya tentang modalitas sebagian besar meneliti berita politik di media Barat, dan jarang membandingkan liputan nasional dan internasional tentang bencana di Indonesia. Studi ini meneliti bagaimana modalitas epistemik dan deontik digunakan dalam pelaporan berita daring tragedi MV Putri Sakinah, yang tenggelam di Labuan Bajo pada 26 Desember 2025. Studi ini membandingkan media nasional (The Jakarta Post dan Tempo English) dan media internasional (CBS News dan Channel News Asia). Studi ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif dengan analisis wacana. Data tersebut berupa kata-kata, frasa, dan kalimat yang mengandung penanda modal yang dikumpulkan dari tujuh belas artikel berita yang diterbitkan antara 26 Desember 2025 dan 15 Januari 2026, melalui pembacaan, tangkapan layar, dan pencatatan. Data dianalisis menggunakan kerangka kerja Palmer (2001) dengan mengidentifikasi, mengklasifikasikan, dan menafsirkan penanda epistemik (kepastian tinggi, probabilitas sedang, kemungkinan rendah) dan penanda deontik (kewajiban kuat, kewajiban lemah, izin, pertanyaan retorik). Temuan menunjukkan bahwa media nasional menggunakan lebih banyak penanda kepastian tinggi dan kewajiban kuat, sementara media internasional menggunakan lebih banyak penanda kemungkinan rendah dan pertanyaan retorik. Perbedaan ini dipengaruhi oleh faktor geografis, institusional, dan budaya. Studi ini penting karena membantu jurnalis menulis berita bencana yang lebih seimbang dan membantu pembaca membaca berita dengan lebih kritis.

الملخص

هدايات، أنور. (2026) *الأسلوب المعرفي والديوني في الأخبار الوطنية والدولية لمأساة إم في بوتري سكينه*. قسم الأدب الإنجليزي، كلية العلوم الإنسانية، جامعة الإسلام المولانا مالك إبراهيم مالانغ. المستشار: الدكتور ه. دجوكو سوسانتو، ماجستير في التربية، دكتوراه.

الكلمات المفتاحية: *الأسلوب المعرفي، الأسلوب الوحي، خطاب الأخبار، تغطية الكوارث، MV Putri*

Sakinah

غالبًا ما تنتقل الأخبار الإلكترونية نفس الكارثة بشكل مختلف، ويمكن لهذه الاختلافات أن تشكل كيف يفهم القراء من هو متأكد ومن هو المسؤول. ومع ذلك، فإن الدراسات السابقة حول الأسلوب في الغالب تناولت الأخبار السياسية في الإعلام الغربي، ونادراً ما قارنت التغطية الوطنية والدولية لكارثة في إندونيسيا. تفحص هذه الدراسة كيفية استخدام الأسلوب المعرفي والديواني في تغطية الأخبار الإلكترونية لمأساة MV بوتري ساكيناه، التي غرقت في لابوان باجو في 26 ديسمبر 2025. تقارن بين الإعلام الوطني (جاكرتا بوست وتيمبو الإنكليزية) والإعلام الدولي (CBS News وقناة نيوز آسيا). تستخدم هذه الدراسة نهجاً وصفيًا نوعيًا مع تحليل الخطاب. البيانات هي كلمات وعبارات وجمل تحتوي على علامات نمطية جمعت من سبعة عشر مقالة إخبارية نشرت بين 26 ديسمبر 2025 و15 يناير 2026، من خلال القراءة، والتقاط لقطات الشاشة، وتدوين الملاحظات. تم تحليل البيانات باستخدام إطار عمل بالمر (2001) من خلال تحديد وتصنيف وتفسير العلامات المعرفية (اليقين العالي، الاحتمال المتوسط، الاحتمال المنخفض) والمؤشرات الإلزامية (الالتزام القوي، الالتزام الضعيف، الإذن، الأسئلة البلاغية). تظهر النتائج أن وسائل الإعلام الوطنية تستخدم مؤشرات أكثر يقيناً والتزاماً قوياً، بينما تستخدم وسائل الإعلام الدولية مؤشرات منخفضة الاحتمالات وأسئلة بلاغية أكثر. تتأثر هذه الاختلافات بالعوامل الجغرافية والمؤسسية والثقافية. تعد هذه الدراسة مهمة لأنها تساعد الصحفيين على كتابة أخبار الكوارث بشكل أكثر توازناً وتساعد القراء على قراءة الأخبار بشكل أكثر نقداً.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter consists of important points related to the study. The writer would explain the background of the study, research questions, significance of the study, scope and limitations, and the definitions of key terms.

A. Background of The Study

Online news has become the primary source of information for people around the world, enabling events to cross borders within seconds. However, the notion that news reporting is purely objective has been increasingly challenged by linguistic studies demonstrating that media outlets often report the same event differently through their strategic linguistic choices (Wahl & Weiland, 2023). Among the various linguistic features that contribute to this phenomenon, modality plays a particularly crucial role in shaping how journalists present information. Modality enables writers to express their attitudes toward propositions by indicating degrees of certainty, possibility, obligation, or permission. Palmer (2001) establishes the foundational framework for understanding modality, while Chuey et al. (2024) demonstrate how epistemic language shapes readers' perceptions of objectivity

Modality is a grammatical category that allows speakers and writers to express their subjective attitudes toward the propositions they convey (Palmer, 2001). For instance, the sentence "the boat may have sunk" conveys a certain

degree of confidence, whereas modifying it to "the boat must have sunk" conveys a higher degree of certainty. Although both sentences describe the same occurrence, the second statement implies that the speaker is more certain that the event actually happened. This distinction can significantly affect how readers perceive the event and whom they hold responsible. Modality is therefore not merely a matter of lexical choice but a fundamental linguistic characteristic that enables authors to communicate varying degrees of conviction (Ermakova, 2021).

Modality can be broadly classified into two main categories: propositional modality and event modality. Propositional modality, which encompasses epistemic and evidential modality, concerns the speaker's attitude toward the truth or reality of a proposition. Event modality, which encompasses deontic and dynamic modality, concerns the speaker's attitude toward events that have not yet transpired or are predicted to happen (Palmer, 2001). Epistemic modality expresses the speaker's degree of certainty or belief about information, ranging from high certainty to low possibility (Tanirverdiyeva, 2025). Deontic modality, in contrast, expresses obligation, permission, or advice, ranging from strong obligation to rhetorical questions (Rantsudu & Bartlett, 2024). Riccioni et al. (2025) extend this framework by showing how rhetorical questions can also convey deontic meaning.

This study focuses specifically on epistemic and deontic modality because of their direct relevance to how journalists construct certainty and accountability in disaster reporting. Epistemic modality is particularly significant in news discourse because it enables journalists to manage the presentation of factual information. Carretero (2023) demonstrates this function in pandemic reporting, while Koivunen et al. (2021) show how epistemic markers also carry affective meaning. Similarly, deontic modality is crucial in disaster reporting because it enables journalists to express evaluations of institutional responsibility without explicitly stating their own opinions. Rantsudu and Bartlett (2024) identify this evaluative function in hard news, and Matseliukh (2024) demonstrates its strategic use in international conflict reporting. Through deontic markers, journalists can shape readers' judgments about accountability while maintaining an appearance of objectivity.

The MV Putri Sakinah tragedy, which occurred on December 26, 2025, in Labuan Bajo, East Nusa Tenggara, presents an especially compelling case for studying modality in disaster reporting. The incident involved a tourist boat carrying six Spanish tourists, one local guide, and four Indonesian crew members, resulting in four fatalities and one child still missing (Basarnas, 2026). The search and rescue operation lasted from December 26, 2025, to January 9, 2026, attracting extensive media coverage from both national and international outlets. This tragedy is particularly suitable for modality analysis because its international dimension creates a context where media framing can significantly influence

public perception. Furthermore, the availability of coverage from both national media (The Jakarta Post and Tempo English) and international media (CBS News and Channel News Asia) enables a meaningful comparative analysis.

Previous research on modality in news discourse can be grouped into three main types. The first type comprises studies on epistemic modality in news reporting. Koivunen et al. (2021) examined how epistemic modal expressions contribute to affective meaning in Finnish journalism. Carretero (2023) analyzed epistemicity in 400 articles from The Guardian during two stages of the COVID-19 pandemic. Mor-Lan et al. (2025) conducted a computational analysis of factual appeals in partisan news, revealing that different news organizations vary in their boldness when reporting factual information. These studies collectively demonstrate that epistemic modality serves as a crucial linguistic resource for managing certainty and uncertainty in news discourse.

The second type focuses on deontic modality in news reporting. Rantsudu and Bartlett (2024) developed a systems network for analyzing deontic modality in hard news reporting, finding that deontic modality enables journalists to express strong evaluations while maintaining an appearance of objectivity. Their study, however, focused exclusively on South African news and did not compare national versus international media. Matseliukh (2024) examined how deontic modality functions in international news coverage of Russia's war on Ukraine. This cluster of studies establishes that deontic modality is not merely a

grammatical feature but a powerful discursive tool for constructing accountability and institutional critique.

The third type encompasses comparative and cross-cultural studies of modality in news discourse. Dong et al. (2024) analyzed British and Chinese media discourse in English, discovering considerable disparities in the use of stance nouns. Chendei (2025) examined authorial stance in English migration newspaper discourse and found that epistemic and deontic modality are used to construct ideological meanings. Laliberté (2022) examined changes in the frequency of modals and semi-modals in Indian English newspaper texts from 1939 to the early 2000s. These comparative studies reveal that modality usage in news discourse is shaped by cultural, institutional, and historical factors.

This study addresses these gaps by providing the first systematic comparative analysis of epistemic and deontic modality in national and international English-language coverage of the MV Putri Sakinah maritime tragedy. Specifically, it examines how The Jakarta Post and Tempo English compare with CBS News and Channel News Asia in their use of modal markers to convey certainty and obligation. By applying Palmer's (2001) theoretical framework to this comparative analysis, the study aims to illuminate how geographical, institutional, and cultural factors influence journalists' linguistic choices. This study is therefore expected to contribute to the understanding of how media shape public perception of disaster events through language.

B. Research Questions

Based on the background above, this study answered the following questions:

1. What types of epistemic and deontic modality appear in online news reporting of the MV Putri Sakinah tragedy in national and international media?
2. How do national and international media differ in their use of epistemic and deontic modality when reporting this tragedy?

C. Significance of The study

The study makes both theoretical and practical contributions. Theoretically, this study contributes to the field of linguistics by extending the application of Palmer's (2001) framework of modality to disaster reporting. Previous studies that have employed this framework have mostly focused on political news, general news, or conflict reporting in Western media contexts (Koivunen et al., 2021; Ermakova, 2021; Carretero, 2023; Matseliukh, 2024). This study explores the use of epistemic and deontic modality in describing a maritime disaster through the analysis of the MV Putri Sakinah incident. It also contributes to comparative discourse analysis by examining how geographical, institutional, and cultural factors influence journalists' linguistic choices. Furthermore, it addresses the gap identified by Rantsudu and Bartlett (2024) regarding the underexplored role of deontic modality in news evaluation.

Practically, this study provides valuable insights for multiple stakeholders. For journalism practitioners, the findings highlight the importance of conscious linguistic choices in maintaining ethical and balanced reporting. The study demonstrates that even subtle modal changes have a strong effect on how audiences interpret information and attribute responsibility. For media consumers, the study provides tools for critical media literacy, enabling readers to recognize how modal markers influence their interpretation of news events (Chuey et al., 2024). For policymakers and regulatory bodies, the findings may inform discussions about journalistic standards and linguistic transparency in disaster reporting. For future researchers, this study offers a replicable methodology for examining modality in other disaster contexts, media samples, or multilingual corpora (Matseliukh, 2024; Rantsudu & Bartlett, 2024).

D. Scope and Limitation

This study examines epistemic and deontic modality in online news coverage of the MV Putri Sakinah disaster. The choice of these two types of modality is motivated by their role in explaining how journalists communicate certainty and accountability in disaster reporting. To keep the study focused, other types of modality, such as evidential modality and dynamic modality, are not included.

The data are obtained from four online news providers: The Jakarta Post, Tempo English, CBS News, and Channel News Asia. These outlets were chosen

because they provide comprehensive coverage of the tragedy and represent different perspectives. The Jakarta Post and Tempo English represent national English-language media based in Indonesia, while CBS News from the United States and Channel News Asia from Singapore represent international media based outside Indonesia. The study examines approximately 15–20 news articles published between December 26, 2025, and January 15, 2026, covering the main search and rescue operation period. The analysis evaluates only textual news materials and does not include photographs, videos, or readers' comments.

There are several limitations to this study. First, it restricts itself to sentence-level modal signals, including modal verbs, modal adverbs, and other linguistic expressions that convey epistemic or deontic meaning. Second, the findings cannot be generalized to all news sources and all types of disaster reporting because of its qualitative approach and relatively small sample size. Third, the study focuses exclusively on English-language coverage, which necessarily excludes the perspective of Indonesian-language reporting that might provide additional insights. Fourth, other types of modality, including evidential and dynamic modality, are not analyzed. Fifth, the study does not examine multimodal elements such as photographs, videos, or infographics that may also contribute to meaning-making in news discourse. Despite these limitations, as Bros and Gatica-Perez (2025) demonstrate, even limited comparative samples can yield significant insights into discourse patterns when analyzed systematically.

E. Definition of Key Terms

To avoid ambiguity and ensure clarity, the following key terms are defined as they used in this study:

1. **Modality:** Modality refers to the grammatical category that expresses a writer's attitude toward a proposition or event, particularly in terms of certainty and obligation. It is analyzed through the modal markers found in the news articles.

2. **Epistemic modality:** Epistemic modality refers to the expression of a writer's degree of certainty or belief about information in disaster reporting. It is categorized into high certainty (must, certainly, definitely), medium probability (may, probably, likely), and low possibility (might, could, perhaps, possibly).

3. **Deontic modality:** Deontic modality refers to the expression of obligation, permission, or advice in disaster reporting. It is categorized into strong obligation (must, have to, need to), weak obligation or advice (should, ought to), permission (may, can, could), and deontic rhetorical questions.

4. **MV Putri Sakinah:** MV Putri Sakinah refers to the motor vessel that sank in Labuan Bajo, East Nusa Tenggara, on December 26, 2025. The tragedy is the focus of the news articles analyzed in this study.

5. **National media:** National media refers to The Jakarta Post and Tempo English, which are Indonesian media outlets publishing in English.

6. **International media:** International media refers to CBS News (United States) and Channel News Asia (Singapore), which are media outlets based outside Indonesia that covered the MV Putri Sakinah tragedy.

7. **Online news:** Online news refers to news articles published on the official websites of the four media outlets and accessible to the public via the internet.

8. **Modal Markers:** Modal markers refer to linguistic expressions that convey modality, including modal verbs (must, may, might, could, should, have to), modal adverbs (certainly, probably, possibly, perhaps), and other constructions that express epistemic or deontic meaning in the news articles.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter discusses in more detail the theoretical framework and the previous study used in this research.

A. Modality

Modality is a semantic category that expresses a speaker's or writer's attitude toward a proposition, indicating degrees of certainty, possibility, obligation, or necessity (Palmer, 2001). It enables language users to qualify states of affairs by signaling how committed they are to the truth of what they are saying. For example, the sentence "the boat may have sunk" conveys a certain degree of confidence, whereas "the boat must have sunk" conveys a higher degree of certainty. Although both sentences describe the same occurrence, the second statement implies that the speaker is more certain that the event actually happened. This distinction can significantly affect how readers perceive the event and whom they hold responsible.

Modality can be broadly classified into two main categories: propositional modality and event modality. Propositional modality, which encompasses epistemic and evidential modality, concerns the speaker's attitude toward the truth or reality of a proposition. Event modality, which encompasses deontic and dynamic modality, concerns the speaker's attitude toward events that have not yet transpired or are predicted to happen (Palmer, 2001). Epistemic modality

expresses the speaker's degree of certainty or belief about information, ranging from high certainty (*must, certainly, definitely*) through medium probability (*may, probably, likely*) to low possibility (*might, could, perhaps, possibly*) (Palmer, 2001). Deontic modality, in contrast, expresses obligation, permission, or advice, ranging from strong obligation (*must, have to, need to*) through weak obligation or advice (*should, ought to*) to permission (*may, can, could*) and rhetorical questions that imply obligation without making direct assertions (Rantsudu & Bartlett, 2024; Riccioni et al., 2025).

This study focuses specifically on epistemic and deontic modality because of their direct relevance to how journalists construct certainty and accountability in disaster reporting. Epistemic modality is particularly significant in news discourse because it enables journalists to manage the presentation of factual information, indicating what is known with certainty, what is probable, and what remains speculative. Carretero (2023) demonstrates this function in pandemic reporting, while Koivunen et al. (2021) show how epistemic markers also carry affective meaning. Similarly, deontic modality is crucial in disaster reporting because it enables journalists to express evaluations of institutional responsibility and call for action without explicitly stating their own opinions. Rantsudu and Bartlett (2024) identify this evaluative function in hard news, and Matseliukh (2024) demonstrates its strategic use in international conflict reporting. Through deontic markers, journalists can indicate what authorities *must* do, what *should*

have been done, or what *needs* to change, thereby shaping readers' judgments about accountability while maintaining an appearance of objectivity.

B. Types of Epistemic Modality

Epistemic modality expresses the speaker's degree of certainty or belief about information, indicating how confident they are in the truth of a proposition (Palmer, 2001). In news discourse, epistemic markers enable journalists to manage the presentation of factual information, distinguishing between what is known with certainty, what is probable, and what remains speculative. Previous research applying Palmer's approach to news discourse divides epistemic markers into three categories: high certainty, medium probability, and low possibility.

High certainty epistemic markers are used when journalists present information as factual or highly reliable. Words such as *must*, *certainly*, and *definitely* can communicate this level of assurance (Palmer, 2001). It can also be shown by factive verbs like *know* and *confirm*, which imply that the information is taken as true. Chuey et al. (2024) found that news headlines with factive verbs increase the likelihood that readers perceive the content as objective and trustworthy. Mor-Lan et al. (2025) further discovered that some news organizations are more bold than others in reporting factual information, demonstrating variation in epistemic confidence across media outlets.

Medium probability epistemic markers are used when journalists report information as probable but not entirely certain. This level of assurance is

communicated by the use of terms such as *may*, *might*, *probably*, and *likely* (Palmer, 2001). These statements indicate that the writer considers something to be possible but does not state it as an established fact. For example, a journalist may write "the bad weather may have caused the accident" or "the captain probably made a navigational error." Riccioni et al. (2025) demonstrated that journalists can also indicate varied degrees of assurance through rhetorical inquiries. Dong et al. (2024) elaborated that reliability markers are often employed to convey epistemic modality in online news, highlighting the consistent application of these terms across various news settings.

Low possibility epistemic markers are used when the information is unknown or speculative. Such a degree of ambiguity can be indicated by the phrases *could*, *might*, *perhaps*, and *possibly* (Palmer, 2001). These terms indicate the writer's uncertainty and offer opportunity for various possible answers. A reporter may write, "There may be other factors involved," or "The search team may find more survivors." In both cases, the information is presented as a possibility rather than as an established fact. Carretero (2023) found that epistemic expressions such as *might*, *perhaps*, *know*, and *surely* were more frequent in the first stage of the COVID-19 pandemic when uncertainty was high. Koivunen et al. (2021) further demonstrated that epistemic markers in news journalism serve not only to express certainty but also to create emotional connection with readers.

C. Types of Deontic Modality

Deontic modality expresses obligation, permission, or advice, indicating what a person has to do, may do, or should do (Palmer, 2001). In news discourse, deontic modality enables journalists to express evaluations of institutional responsibility and call for action while maintaining an appearance of objectivity. Previous studies applying Palmer's theory to news items categorize deontic markers into four categories: strong obligation, weak obligation, permission, and rhetorical questions.

Strong obligation markers indicate that an action is required or necessary. This high degree of urgency is expressed by expressions such as *must*, *have to*, and *need to* (Palmer, 2001). In their study of hard news reporting, Rantsudu and Bartlett (2024) discovered that deontic modality enables journalists to make strong judgments while appearing objective. For example, in a story about a disaster, a reporter may say the government "must investigate" or that the captain "has to be held accountable." These are calls to action, and they leave no space for argument. Matseliukh (2024) demonstrated that deontic markers are strategically used for different purposes depending on the institutional context in international conflict reporting.

Weak obligation markers are only recommendations, not mandates. The major markers of this category are *should* and *ought to* (Palmer, 2001). Rantsudu and Bartlett (2024) found that journalists employ these expressions to soften

evaluations, making recommendations on what should be done without placing clear demands. Such phrases as "safety procedures should be reviewed" or "authorities ought to consider new regulations" offer remedies, but allow for various outcomes. Understanding the distinction between strong and weak obligation is essential for recognizing how media organizations manage responsibility and authority.

Permission markers indicate that an action is allowed or permitted. Palmer (2001) notes that such words as *may* and *can* can communicate this meaning. These indicators are less common in disaster news, but they frequently surface when authorities talk about what they are allowed to do, or what families of victims are allowed to access. Matseliukh (2024) analyses the function of deontic modality in international news reporting and shows how journalists employ such indicators strategically in the institutional framework. A reporter might say, for example, "families may visit the site tomorrow" or "investigators can access the wreckage now." Such statements explain what is authorized, not what is required.

Deontic rhetorical questions express obligation as questions, typically with a critical or demanding tone for action, rather than as direct affirmations. Riccioni et al. (2025) demonstrate that these formulations represent obligation as questions, suggesting criticism without making explicit assertions. For example, in disaster coverage, a journalist may inquire, "Shouldn't someone be held

responsible for this tragedy?" This question is a way to say, "Who should take responsibility?" without actually saying it. The questioning softens the message but does not dilute its impact, making deontic rhetorical questions a powerful tool for indirect critique.

D. Previous Studies on Modality in News Discourse

There has been a lot of research on modality in news reporting, but much of it has been on political or general news, not on disaster reporting. The emotional meaning-making of epistemic modals in journalism was studied by Koivunen et al. (2021). They observed that journalists employ words such as “must” and “may” not only to show certainty but also emotional connection with readers. But their research was on Finnish media, and did not do comparisons between other channels. This study fills this vacuum by looking at Indonesian disaster reportage and comparing national media with international news organizations.

(Ermakova, 2021) analyzed how modality is expressed through various linguistic means in news discourse. Her study identified modal verbs, adverbs, and lexical constructions as the main markers of modality in Russian news. However, she only looked at one language and did not distinguish between epistemic and deontic functions clearly. This study builds on her work by using Palmer's (2001) framework to separate epistemic and deontic modality more systematically.

(Kim, 2021) examined how news discourse has evolved from print to digital and multisemiotic forms. She analyzed the interconnection between verbal output and visuals in news reporting and conducted a case study of The New York Times coverage of the European Union. Her study showed how media perspective is conveyed through the dynamic interplay between different semiotic modes. Her work is relevant because it addresses how news media construct and disseminate perspective through linguistic choices. However, she focused on multimodality rather than specifically on modality markers. This study focuses specifically on epistemic and deontic modality in disaster reporting.

(Laliberté, 2022) examined changes in the frequency of modals and semi-modals in Indian English newspaper texts from 1939 to the early 2000s. She found that individual modal verbs exhibit different directions and speeds of change, and that the increasing amount of direct quotation in news reportage partly accounts for a rise in modal frequency. Her study is relevant because it focuses on modal verb usage in newspaper discourse. However, she focused on diachronic change rather than comparative analysis across media outlets. This study extends her work by comparing how national and international media use modality differently in disaster reporting.

(Carretero, 2023) analyzed epistemicity in 400 newspaper articles from The Guardian during two stages of the COVID-19 pandemic. She found that epistemic expressions like *might*, *perhaps*, *know*, *clearly*, and *surely* were more

frequent in the first stage when uncertainty was high. Her study shows how journalists use epistemic markers to manage certainty and uncertainty in news. However, she focused on The Guardian only and did not compare different media outlets. This study applies a similar method to disaster reporting and compares national and international media.

(Matseliukh, 2024) examined how deontic modality functions in international news coverage of Russia's war on Ukraine. She found that deontic markers are strategically used for different purposes depending on the institutional context. Her study shows how modality works in international conflict reporting. This study applies similar analytical tools to a different context, especially disaster reporting in Southeast Asia.

Rantsudu and Bartlett (2024) developed a systems network for analyzing deontic modality in hard news reporting. They found that deontic modality enables journalists to express strong evaluations while maintaining an appearance of objectivity. Their study focused on South African news and did not compare national versus international media. This study applies their coding system to Indonesian disaster reporting and extends their work by comparing how national and international media use deontic markers differently.

Chuey et al. (2024) discovered that the use of factive verbs in headlines led readers to regard the assertions as more objective and truthful. They studied the epistemic language used in news headlines and how it affects readers' views.

However, their analysis was limited to headlines not whole articles and did not account for deontic modality. The present work examines entire news stories, including both epistemic and deontic markers.

Dong et al. (2024) analyzed British and Chinese media discourse in English and discovered considerable disparities in the use of stance nouns. British media preferred propositional speech acts and propositions Chinese media preferred propositional truth judgments. The value of their study is that it contrasts media from diverse cultural backgrounds. But they were just looking at stance nouns, not modal verbs or adverbs. The study primarily examines epistemic and deontic modality, as indicated by different linguistic markers.

(Chendei, 2025) examined authorial stance in English migration newspaper discourse and found that epistemic and deontic modality are used to construct ideological meanings. She used Palmer's framework to classify epistemic markers (factive verbs, modal auxiliaries, evidentials) and deontic markers (obligation, permission, recommendation). Her study is relevant because it uses the same theoretical framework as this study. However, she focused on migration news and only analyzed The Guardian. This study applies the same framework to disaster reporting and compares four media outlets.

The uniqueness of this study is its focus on Indonesian disaster reporting and comparison between national and international media. Previous studies mostly concentrate on political news or general news in either western media or

Chinese media situations. Not many people look at how Indonesian media employ modality compared to international media like CBS News or Channel News Asia. This study fills that vacuum, by employing Palmer's (2001) methodology for the analysis of epistemic and deontic modality in news on the MV Putri Sakinah catastrophe. This study differs from prior studies in that it does not look at one media outlet or one country, but at four media outlets that belong to two different groups, so as to highlight the impact of geographical, cultural and institutional factors on language choices.

E. MV Putri Sakinah Tragedy

The MV Putri Sakinah tragedy occurred on December 26, 2025, when a tourist boat sank in the waters of Padar Island, Labuan Bajo, East Nusa Tenggara. The vessel was a semi-pinisi tourist boat carrying eleven people, consisting of six Spanish tourists, one local tour guide, and four Indonesian crew members. The boat was chartered by a Spanish family, including Fernando Martin Carreras, a coach of the Valencia CF women's B team, his wife Andrea Ortuño, and four of their children. The journey began from Pulau Kalong in Komodo National Park, heading toward Padar Island for a trekking activity scheduled for the following morning.

The MV Putri Sakinah tragedy occurred on December 26, 2025, when a tourist boat sank in the waters of Padar Island, Labuan Bajo, East Nusa Tenggara. The vessel was a semi-pinisi tourist boat carrying eleven people, consisting of six Spanish tourists, one local tour guide, and four Indonesian crew members. The boat was chartered by a Spanish family, including Fernando Martin Carreras, a coach of the Valencia CF women's B team, his wife Andrea Ortuño, and four of their children. The journey began from Pulau Kalong in Komodo National Park, heading toward Padar Island for a trekking activity scheduled for the following morning.

Approximately thirty minutes after departing from Pulau Kalong, at around 20:30 local time, the boat's engine suddenly failed. The vessel lost control and was tossed by high waves reaching 2 to 3 meters in height, triggered by tropical cyclone seed 96S. The extreme weather conditions caused the boat to overturn and sink rapidly. According to survivor testimony, the boat sank within minutes, and some passengers were trapped inside the cabins. The crew and passengers attempted to save themselves, but the rapid sinking and darkness made rescue efforts extremely difficult.

The search and rescue operation lasted fifteen days, from December 26, 2025, to January 9, 2026, involving over 150 personnel from various agencies including Basarnas, TNI, Polri, and local authorities. The operation faced significant challenges due to unpredictable weather and strong ocean currents. During the search, three bodies were recovered: a twelve-year-old girl on

December 29, Fernando Martin Carreras on January 4, and a ten-year-old boy on January 6 . One child remained missing when the operation was officially closed. Seven people survived, including Andrea Ortuño and one of her daughters.

The tragedy received extensive media coverage from both national and international outlets due to its international dimension and the involvement of a prominent Spanish football coach. Indonesian authorities subsequently investigated the incident and arrested the boat's captain and engine operator on charges of negligence. In May 2026, a court in Labuan Bajo sentenced the captain to three and a half years in prison. The tragedy also sparked broader discussions about maritime safety standards in Labuan Bajo's tourism sector, with critics pointing to inadequate safety equipment and vessel conditions. Netizen responses on social media were dominated by criticism of safety procedures and calls for accountability, reflecting public concern about tourism safety in one of Indonesia's priority destinations.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHOD

This chapter contains the methodological aspects of the research, including research design, research approach, research instrument, data and data sources, data collection techniques, and data analysis.

A. Research Design

This research uses a descriptive qualitative research approach. Qualitative research belongs to the interpretative paradigm which aims to comprehend social phenomena in depth and context (Rahardjo, 2023). This approach focuses on understanding meanings produced through interaction and interpretation rather than identifying causal relationships or statistical generalizations. In the qualitative tradition, reality is defined as something created by individuals or communities through the process of experience and meaning formation. As a result, this research focuses on the process and meaning of epistemic and deontic modality in news reporting, rather than quantitative measures of their frequency of occurrence.

A descriptive qualitative approach is well suited for examining modality in news discourse as a meaningful social phenomenon in media environments. This design allows the researcher to analyze modal expressions and explore how linguistic form relates to meaning in news coverage. Creswell (2014) emphasizes that qualitative research centers on verbal and textual data to understand meaning within a specific social context. This methodology is appropriate here because the

study analyzes words, phrases, and sentences rather than statistical numbers. The main objective is to understand how epistemic and deontic modality are used in news reports covering the MV Putri Sakinah tragedy.

B. Research Approach

The type of this research is discourse analysis. The research is concerned with modality in news texts. This approach offers a framework for analyzing language forms and processes of meaning-making in news discourse. Epistemic and deontic markers are seen as central indications of language and are investigated from a discourse viewpoint. Thus, the researcher can assess the structure of modal statements, and the understanding underlying the structure.

The main analytical technique used in the present study is the modality framework of Palmer (2001). Palmer differentiates between propositional forms (epistemic, evidential) and event forms (deontic, dynamic). However, the focus is still on epistemic and deontic modality, since they play an important role in the definition of factual certainty and accountability in disaster news. In the study, Palmer's model is used to tie the modal markers to their functions and to identify the modal meanings in the articles.

This study extends beyond an analysis of the structure of modal markers to explore how their meaning is constructed and understood in national and international news contexts. The suitable framework for this study is discourse analysis since it deals with the production of meaning and language expressions in media discourse.

C. Research Instrument

The researcher is the main instrument in this qualitative research. This is consistent with an interpretivist view where meaning is taken through interpretation. According to Creswell (2014), in qualitative research, the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis because the researcher is directly involved in identifying, classifying, and interpreting the data. In this study, the researcher performs three main roles: as the data collector, the data classifier, and the data interpreter.

As the data collector, the researcher reads the news articles repeatedly, identifies sentences containing modal markers, and records them into a data table. The researcher uses digital documentation tools, such as screenshots and data classification tables, to support the analysis. According to Rahardjo (2023), the researcher's role in qualitative research is to read, identify, classify, and interpret data in accordance with the theoretical framework.

As the data classifier, the researcher uses Palmer's (2001) framework of epistemic and deontic modality to categorize each modal marker. For epistemic modality, the classification follows the degrees of certainty: high certainty (*must, certainly, definitely*), medium probability (*may, probably, likely*), and low possibility (*might, could, perhaps, possibly*). For deontic modality, the classification follows the levels of obligation: strong obligation (*must, have to, need to*), weak obligation or advice (*should, ought to*), permission (*may, can, could*), and deontic rhetorical questions.

As the data interpreter, the researcher analyzes the relationship between the modal markers and their functions in the news context. The researcher examines how the modal markers convey certainty and obligation in national and international news coverage. The researcher also uses a notebook to help in collecting and arranging the modal expressions that journalists communicate through their articles. To achieve the standards of the data, the process of data collection through reading news items and recognizing modal indicators is performed several times. This repeated process ensures that all data acquired remain relevant to the topic of the study.

D. Data and Data Sources

The data in this study are words, phrases, and sentences containing epistemic and deontic modality found in online news articles about the MV Putri Sakinah tragedy. These modal expressions are linguistic markers that can be examined from a discourse analysis perspective. The analysis focuses on specific sentences and clauses that distinctly exhibit epistemic and deontic modal markers rather than entire news articles as whole units.

The linguistic markers that appear in news articles serve as the study's unit of analysis. These markers include modal verbs such as *must*, *may*, *might*, *could*, *should*, and *have to*, as well as modal adverbs such as *certainly*, *probably*, *possibly*, and *perhaps*. These features indicate that these markers are linguistic expressions that journalists use to convey certainty, possibility, obligation, or permission in disaster reporting.

The data source comes from four media outlets representing two categories. *The Jakarta Post* and *Tempo English* represent national English-language media based in Indonesia. *CBS News* from the United States and *Channel News Asia* from Singapore represent international media based outside Indonesia. These outlets were chosen because they provide comprehensive coverage of the tragedy and represent different perspectives. The articles were published between December 26, 2025, and January 15, 2026, which covers the main search and rescue operation for the victims.

A total of seventeen news articles were analyzed in this study. The distribution of the articles is as follows: five articles from *The Jakarta Post*, four articles from *Tempo English*, four articles from *CBS News*, and four articles from *Channel News Asia*. From these seventeen articles, the researcher identified and collected 150 sentences containing epistemic and deontic modal markers. The distribution of the data is as follows: sixty-five sentences from national media (thirty-eight from *The Jakarta Post* and twenty-seven from *Tempo English*) and eighty-five sentences from international media (forty-five from *CBS News* and forty from *Channel News Asia*).

From the 150 collected sentences, the researcher selected 37 sentences as the final data for analysis based on the criteria of relevance and clarity. The selected data consist of twenty-five sentences from national media and twenty-five sentences from international media. This selection ensures that the analysis is balanced and comparable between the two groups. The distribution of the final

data is as follows: twelve sentences from *The Jakarta Post*, thirteen sentences from *Tempo English*, twelve sentences from *CBS News*, and thirteen sentences from *Channel News Asia*. In order to enable a systematic examination of the connection between linguistic form and meaning, the researcher restricted the research data to news articles that clearly presented epistemic and deontic modal markers. Only news articles that specifically reported the tragedy of MV Putri Sakinah are included. Opinion pieces, editorials, or stories that only briefly refer to the disaster are excluded in order to maintain text type consistency.

E. Data Collection Techniques

The data for this study was collected by a systematic set of procedures. At first, the researcher examined the official websites of the four selected news providers. These are www.thejakartapost.com, *Tempo English* at www.tempo.co/english, *CBS News* at www.cbsnews.com and *Channel News Asia* at www.channelnewsasia.com. These sites are a reliable way to access original news articles with exact publishing dates. The researcher examined publications published between December 26, 2025 and January 15, 2026 to identify those bearing epistemic and deontic modal indicators.

Secondly, the researcher searched for publications with the terms “MV Putri Sakinah,” “KM Putri Sakinah,” “Labuan Bajo boat sinking,” “Komodo ferry tragedy,” and “Indonesian boat accident Labuan Bajo.” These terms were used to account for the references to the event in the different news outlets after Mor-Lan

et al. (2025). The researcher screened the papers according to pre-determined criteria and selected those for further investigation.

Third, the researcher selected the relevant data and documented the modal phrases in the articles. This was done by taking screenshots or recording the entire text of each article so that we could save them as textual data for study. The researcher also developed a thorough database that documented critical information for each report: article title, name of the media outlet, publication date, URL, and the entire content. Such a disciplined organization meant that all the acquired data was neatly organized and ready for the stage of discourse analysis.

Fourth, the researcher read each thing several times to understand the whole context of the tragedy and the total content of each story. In this method, sentences with possible epistemic and deontic modal phrases were identified for systematic examination and these preliminary picks were updated during the coding step. As suggested by Riccioni et al. (2025), regular reading enables the researcher to understand the broader discursive context in which modal terms are used. The collection technique was performed numerous times to ensure that all the data acquired were still relevant to the topic of the study.

F. Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using a qualitative discourse analysis approach. Modal expressions present in all news articles were selected as key linguistic units and analyzed through the modality model proposed by Palmer (2001). The study began with the identification of all words, phrases and whole sentences that had epistemic and deontic modal indicators. Each expression was analyzed in detail so as to disclose its distinctive linguistic structure and function.

In the second phase the modal markers were categorized based on the categorization scheme proposed by Palmer (2001). For epistemic modality, the coding scheme followed Chuey et al. (2024) findings on factive and nonfactive verbs, as well as Riccioni et al.'s (2025) identification of epistemic rhetorical questions. Epistemic markers are coded as high certainty (must, certainly, definitely), medium probability (may, probably, likely), or low possibility (might, could, perhaps, possibly). At this level, the researcher examined the link between the linguistic form and the meaning it conveys to determine how the modal marker functions in the news context.

The third step was evaluating the link between modal markers and their functions using Palmer's framework. At this point, the researcher examined the notion of meaning associated with the linguistic form and investigated how the relationship between form and meaning is produced in national and international news settings. For deontic modality, the coding scheme followed Rantsudu and Bartlett's (2024) systems network. Deontic markers are coded as strong obligation (must, have to, need to), weak obligation or advice (should, ought to), and

permission (may, can, could). Following Matseliukh (2024), the coding also considered the institutional context in which deontic markers appear, as this may influence their function.

The final level of analysis was drawing conclusions about the overall meaning formation processes of epistemic and deontic modality in national and international news reporting of the MV Putri Sakinah tragedy. The approach attempted to understand the role of modal structures and interpretation processes in generating meaning in media contexts. The analysis was conducted in a careful and iterative process in order to ensure consistency and alignment of the interpretation with the theoretical framework. Data analysis used both quantitative frequency counts and qualitative examples to fully understand modality usage, in line with Dong et al. (2024). The comparative study allowed for a comprehensive examination of the distribution of epistemic and deontic markers in national and international media.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the findings and discussion of the research based on the formulated research questions. The findings focus on the types of epistemic and deontic modality in national and international news reporting of the MV Putri Sakinah tragedy. The analysis identifies the modal markers found in the collected data and explains how they are realized in news discourse. The findings are subsequently interpreted using Palmer's (2001) framework to explain how journalists construct certainty and obligation in disaster reporting.

A. Findings

This study analyzed 40 sentences containing epistemic and deontic modal markers from 17 news articles published between December 26, 2025, and January 15, 2026. The data were obtained from four media outlets: *The Jakarta Post* and *Tempo English* (national media), and *CBS News* and *Channel News Asia* (international media). Following Palmer's (2001) framework, epistemic modality is classified into three subcategories: speculative, deductive, and assumptive. For the purpose of comparative analysis, these subcategories are operationalized into high certainty (deductive), medium probability (assumptive), and low possibility (speculative). Deontic modality is classified into four subcategories: strong obligation, weak obligation, permission, and deontic rhetorical questions. Each datum is presented with its data, context, and analysis.

1. Types of Epistemic Modality in News Reporting

Epistemic modality expresses the writer's degree of certainty or belief about the information being conveyed, ranging from high confidence to speculative doubt (Palmer, 2001). In news discourse, epistemic markers enable journalists to manage the presentation of factual information, distinguishing between what is known with certainty, what is probable, and what remains speculative. The following data illustrate the types of epistemic modality found in the news coverage of the MV Putri Sakinah tragedy.

a. High Certainty Epistemic Markers

High certainty markers are used when journalists present information as factual or highly credible. These markers include modal verbs such as *must*, modal adverbs such as *certainly* and *definitely*, and factive verbs such as *confirm*, *know*, and *found* (Palmer, 2001).

Datum 1 (CBS News, December 27, 2025)

"Real Madrid wishes to express its horror, and extends its condolences and deepest affection to his wife, Andrea, and his daughter, Mar, at this incredibly difficult time."

Context: This sentence appeared in CBS News's first report on the tragedy, published one day after the boat sank. The news outlet quoted an official statement from Real Madrid CF.

Analysis: The verb **wishes** functions as a deductive epistemic marker. According to Palmer (2001), deductive modality expresses certainty based on known facts. Here, the journalist presents Real Madrid's official statement as a confirmed fact, not as speculation. The use of present tense wishes indicates the statement is currently valid and verified.

Datum 2 (The Jakarta Post, December 29, 2026)

"Valencia said they were 'deeply saddened by the passing of Fernando Martin, coach of Valencia CF Femenino B, and three of his children, in the tragic boat accident in Indonesia, **as confirmed by local authorities**'."

Context: This sentence was published in *The Jakarta Post* after Spanish football club Valencia CF issued an official statement confirming the deaths.

Analysis: The passive construction **as confirmed by local authorities** functions as a high certainty epistemic marker. Palmer (2001) categorizes this as deductive because it expresses a conclusion based on official confirmation. The journalist attributes the confirmation to local authorities, which grounds the report in verified sources. This reflects the national media's access to official Indonesian sources.

Datum 3 (Tempo English, December 28, 2025)

"We are determined to find the victims."

Context: This sentence was published in Tempo English, quoting Fathur Rahman, the head of the Maumere Search and Rescue Office, regarding the ongoing search operation.

Analysis: The construction **are determined to** functions as a deductive epistemic marker. Palmer (2001) categorizes this as expressing a firm commitment based on known operational capacity. The journalist presents the SAR team's determination as an established fact, not as a possibility. This high certainty marker reflects the official's confidence in the search operation.

Datum 4 (CBS News, December 27, 2025)

"The Spanish soccer club Valencia said that a coach for its women's reserve team, Fernando Martín, and three of his children **were among the victims**."

Context: This sentence was published in CBS News on the day after the tragedy. Valencia CF had issued a statement regarding the victims.

Analysis: The construction **were among the victims** functions as a deductive epistemic marker. Palmer (2001) categorizes this as deductive because it presents the identification as an established fact, supported by official confirmation from Valencia CF. The journalist attributes the information to the football club, which serves as an authoritative source. This use of factive attribution reflects the journalist's confidence in the information.

Datum 5 (The Jakarta Post, January 5, 2026)

"The body of Valencia B women's coach Fernando Martín Carreras has been **found** in Labuan Bajo, East Nusa Tenggara, a week after a boat he was on sank in the waters of Padar Island."

Context: This sentence was published in *The Jakarta Post* after the SAR team officially announced the discovery of Fernando Martin's body.

Analysis: The present perfect construction **has been found** functions as a high certainty epistemic marker. Palmer (2001) categorizes this as deductive because it expresses a conclusion based on direct evidence or official confirmation. The journalist states the discovery as a completed fact, supported by specific details such as the location and time. The use of present perfect indicates the finding has current relevance and is officially verified.

b. Medium Probability Epistemic Markers

Medium probability markers indicate that information is likely but not entirely certain. These markers include modal verbs such as *will* and *would*, and adverbs such as *probably* and *likely* (Palmer, 2001).

Datum 6 (CBS News, December 27, 2025)

"The search was suspended Saturday evening because of bad weather and poor visibility and **will resume early Sunday**."

Context: This sentence was published on the first day of the search operation.

The search had been temporarily halted due to adverse weather conditions.

Analysis: The modal verb **will** functions as an assumptive epistemic marker. According to Palmer (2001), assumptive modality expresses a conclusion based on reasonable expectation rather than absolute certainty. The journalist predicts the continuation of the search based on standard operational procedures. This choice reflects the uncertainty inherent in ongoing rescue operations.

Datum 7 (The Jakarta Post, December 27, 2025)

"Authorities halted the search overnight and **will resume on Sunday morning** local time, Indonesia's search and rescue agency SAR said in a statement."

Context: This sentence was published in *The Jakarta Post*, citing an official statement from Indonesia's search and rescue agency.

Analysis: The modal verb **will** functions as an assumptive epistemic marker. Palmer (2001) categorizes this as medium probability because it expresses a planned future action without guaranteeing its outcome. The journalist reports the planned resumption based on official sources, but does not present it as a completed fact.

Datum 8 (Channel News Asia, December 29, 2025)

"The search operation, on its fourth day Monday, **continued** for the remaining family members."

Context: This sentence was published in Channel News Asia on the fourth day of the search operation, reporting on the ongoing efforts.

Analysis: The verb **continued** functions as an assumptive epistemic marker. Palmer (2001) categorizes this as medium probability because it expresses an ongoing activity without guaranteeing a specific outcome. The journalist adds that the fate of the other victims is yet unknown, but the operation is still ongoing.

Datum 9 (Tempo English, December 29, 2025)

"**We ensure that all handling is carried out** professionally, transparently, and based on humanitarian values."

Context: This sentence was published in Tempo English, quoting NTT Regional Police Public Relations Head Grand Commissioner Henry Novika Chandra.

Analysis: The verb **ensure** functions as a medium probability epistemic marker. Palmer (2001) categorizes this as assumptive because it expresses an institutional commitment rather than a completed action. The journalist presents the police's assurance as a planned commitment, not as a verified outcome.

Datum 10 (CBS News, January 4, 2026)

"The search operation, on its tenth day Sunday, **continued** for the remaining family members."

Context: This sentence was published in CBS News on the tenth day of the search operation, reporting on the ongoing efforts to find the remaining missing victims.

Analysis: The verb **continued** functions as an assumptive epistemic marker. Palmer (2001) categorizes this as medium probability because it expresses an ongoing activity without guaranteeing a specific outcome. The journalist adds that the fate of the other victims is yet unknown, but the operation is still ongoing. This approach indicates a conservative reporting strategy often utilized in ongoing searches.

Datum 11 (The Jakarta Post, January 10, 2026)

"He said both suspects **will be charged under Article 359** of the Criminal Code, which covers negligence resulting in death and carries a maximum sentence of five years in prison."

Context: This sentence was published in *The Jakarta Post* after police named two suspects in the boat accident.

Analysis: The future passive construction **will be charged** functions as an assumptive epistemic marker. Palmer (2001) categorizes this as medium

probability because it conveys the government's intention to prosecute, but the judicial outcome is never a certainty. The journalist explains a potential prosecution depending on legal formalities.

Datum 12 (Channel News Asia, December 29, 2025)

"The search **will continue** for the remaining family members."

Context: This sentence was published in Channel News Asia on the fourth day of the search operation.

Analysis: The modal verb **will** functions as an assumptive epistemic marker. Palmer (2001) categorizes this as medium probability because it expresses a planned future action without guaranteeing its outcome. The journalist reports the planned continuation based on official sources.

c. Low Possibility Epistemic Markers

Low possibility markers indicate that information is speculative or uncertain. These markers include modal verbs such as *could* and *might*, and hedging expressions such as *believed to be* and *alleged* (Palmer, 2001).

Datum 13 (Channel News Asia, December 29, 2025)

"Indonesian rescuers recovered the body of a female victim **believed to be part of the family** of a Spanish football coach and his three children who went missing after a tour boat sank three days ago."

Context: This sentence was published in Channel News Asia three days after the tragedy, when rescuers had recovered a body but had not yet completed formal identification.

Analysis: The passive construction **believed to be** functions as a speculative epistemic marker. Palmer (2001) categorizes this as speculative because it expresses a judgment based on incomplete evidence. The journalist deliberately avoids stating the victim's identity as fact, reflecting ethical journalistic practice in situations where official identification is pending.

Datum 14 (The Jakarta Post, January 10, 2026)

"Police spokesperson Sr. Comr. Henry Novika Chandra said the suspects are the boat's captain, identified only as L, and a crew member, identified as M, whose **alleged negligence was believed to have caused** the fatal accident."

Context: This sentence was published in *The Jakarta Post* after police named two suspects in the boat accident.

Analysis: The passive construction **was believed to have caused** functions as a speculative epistemic marker. Palmer (2001) categorizes this as speculative because it expresses a judgment based on incomplete evidence. By indicating negligence as a possibility, not a confirmed cause, the journalist acknowledges the continuing judicial procedure.

Datum 15 (Tempo English, December 29, 2025)

"The NTT Regional Police **deployed a sonar system to detect** objects at the bottom of the sea, an underwater drone (ROV) for visual observation, and a professional diving team from the Water and Air Police Directorate (Ditpolairud)."

Context: This sentence was published in Tempo English, quoting NTT Regional Police Public Relations Head Henry Novika Chandra.

Analysis: The construction **deployed to detect** functions as a speculative epistemic marker. Palmer (2001) categorizes this as speculative because it expresses a planned action with an uncertain outcome. The journalist reports the deployment of technology without guaranteeing that it will successfully locate the victims.

Datum 16 (Channel News Asia, January 6, 2026)

"The body was recovered near the coast of Pede beach after fishermen spotted the wreckage, **washed away** nearly 14 kilometres (8.6 miles) from where the boat sank."

Context: This sentence was published in Channel News Asia after rescuers recovered a third body from the tour boat sinking.

Analysis: The construction **washed away** functions as a speculative epistemic marker. Palmer (2001) categorizes this as speculative because it describes a

natural process with an uncertain trajectory. The journalist presents the distance as an approximation, reflecting the uncertainty surrounding how far the wreckage traveled.

Datum 17 (CBS News, January 4, 2026)

"The newly recovered body **remains unidentified** by authorities, but is **believed to be** that of a member of the family."

Context: This sentence was published in CBS News after rescuers recovered a body on the tenth day of the search.

Analysis: The construction **remains unidentified** and **believed to be** functions as a speculative epistemic marker. Palmer (2001) categorizes this as speculative because it expresses a judgment based on incomplete evidence. The journalist qualifies his assertion by calling the identification an "unconfirmed possibility" to emphasize the ambiguity of the information.

Datum 18 (Tempo English, January 5, 2026)

"The files **are to be examined** to see whether there was any negligence behind the incident."

Context: This sentence was published in Tempo English during the investigation into the tragedy.

Analysis: The construction **are to be examined** functions as a speculative epistemic marker. Palmer (2001) categorizes this as speculative because it expresses a low degree of epistemic confidence. The journalist mentions negligence as a possibility, but does not know it for sure. This choice demonstrates a cautious attitude, which is normal for coverage of unsolved cases.

2. Types of Deontic Modality in News Reporting

Deontic modality expresses obligation, permission, or advice, indicating what a person has to do, may do, or should do (Palmer, 2001). In news discourse, deontic modality enables journalists to express evaluations of institutional responsibility and call for action while maintaining an appearance of objectivity. The following data illustrate the types of deontic modality found in the news coverage of the MV Putri Sakinah tragedy.

a. Strong Obligation Markers

Strong obligation markers indicate that an action is required or necessary. These markers include modal verbs such as *must*, *have to*, and *need to* (Palmer, 2001).

Datum 19 (Channel News Asia, December 29, 2025)

"Indonesian law calls for searches to continue for seven days and may be extended if necessary."

Context: This sentence was published in Channel News Asia on the fourth day of the search operation, referencing Indonesian law.

Analysis: The phrase **calls for** functions as a strong obligation marker. According to Palmer (2001), strong obligation expresses a requirement that is non-negotiable and legally binding. The journalist presents the seven-day search as an absolute institutional requirement, not as a suggestion.

Datum 20 (The Jakarta Post, January 10, 2026)

"He said both suspects **will be charged under Article 359** of the Criminal Code, which covers negligence resulting in death and carries a maximum sentence of five years in prison."

Context: This sentence was published in *The Jakarta Post* after police named two suspects in the boat accident.

Analysis: The future passive construction **will be charged** functions as a strong obligation marker. Palmer (2001) categorizes this as a strong obligation because it expresses a compulsory legal procedure with serious consequences. The journalist presents the charges as a necessary institutional action.

Datum 21 (Tempo English, December 29, 2025)

"**We ensure that all handling is carried out** professionally, transparently, and based on humanitarian values."

Context: This sentence was published in Tempo English, quoting NTT Regional Police Public Relations Head Henry Novika Chandra.

Analysis: The verb **ensure** functions as a strong obligation marker. Palmer (2001) categorizes this as a strong obligation because it expresses an institutional commitment to a course of action. The speaker institutionally commits to the professional handling of the case.

Datum 22 (CBS News, January 4, 2026)

"Under Indonesian law, search activities **can last for seven days but can be extended** if there are indicators or prospects of finding the victims."

Context: This sentence was published in CBS News on the tenth day of the search operation, explaining the legal provisions that allow for extension.

Analysis: The modal construction **can be extended** functions as a strong obligation marker. Palmer (2001) categorizes this as a strong obligation because it expresses a conditional obligation. The journalist explains the flexibility of institutions within the limits of the law.

Datum 23 (The Jakarta Post, January 10, 2026)

"Our investigation found negligence in the vessel's operation that **led to the accident.**"

Context: This sentence was published in *The Jakarta Post*, quoting Police Spokesperson Henry Novika Chandra regarding the investigation findings.

Analysis: The construction **led to** functions as a strong obligation marker. Palmer (2001) categorizes this as a strong obligation because it establishes a causal link that necessitates legal accountability. The journalist presents the investigation finding as a basis for legal action.

Datum 24 (Tempo English, January 5, 2026)

"The investigative team also **wants to quickly seize** the documentation of the ship."

Context: This sentence was published in Tempo English during the investigation into the tragedy.

Analysis: The phrase **wants to seize** functions as a strong obligation marker. Palmer (2001) categorizes this as a strong obligation because it expresses a sense of legal responsibility. Although there is no overt modal verb, the word **seize** connotes a sense of legal responsibility.

b. Weak Obligation / Advice Markers

Weak obligation markers indicate that an action is recommended, but not mandatory. These markers include modal verbs such as *should* and *ought to* (Palmer, 2001).

Datum 25 (Channel News Asia, December 30, 2025)

"A Singapore travel firm said the terrible tragedy **should be a lesson** to both travelers and the tourism sector."

Context: This sentence was published in Channel News Asia, quoting a Singapore travel firm's response to the tragedy.

Analysis: The phrase **should be a lesson** functions as a weak obligation marker. According to Palmer (2001), weak obligation expresses a recommendation or advice rather than a requirement. The journalist conveys the travel firm's suggestion that the tragedy serves as a learning opportunity.

Datum 26 (Tempo English, January 5, 2026)

"We **hope this legal process can be a lesson** for all players in the sea tourism industry."

Context: This sentence was published in Tempo English, quoting a statement from authorities regarding the lessons to be learned from the incident.

Analysis: The verb **hope** functions as a weak obligation marker. Palmer (2001) categorizes this as weak obligation because it has little deontic force. Rather than issuing an enforceable order, the speaker suggests that the legal process be used as an educational opportunity.

Datum 27 (The Jakarta Post, December 31, 2025)

"We need to address maritime safety to prevent future tragedies."

Context: This sentence was published in *The Jakarta Post*, quoting an official regarding the need for safety improvements following the tragedy.

Analysis: The modal verb **need to** functions as a weak obligation marker. Palmer (2001) categorizes this as weak obligation because it expresses a broad recommendation rather than an enforceable command. The reporter's demand for general action without specifying an agency is a broad recommendation.

Datum 28 (Channel News Asia, January 6, 2026)

"The bodies of Martin and his daughter **were cremated in Bali** on Monday, according to relatives' wishes."

Context: This sentence was published in Channel News Asia, reporting on the funeral arrangements for the victims.

Analysis: The construction **were cremated** functions as a weak obligation marker. Palmer (2001) categorizes this as weak obligation because it reports a completed action that reflects cultural and familial obligations. The journalist presents the cremation as an action taken according to relatives' wishes.

c. Permission Markers

Permission marks indicate something is permitted, or allowed. They encompass modal verbs such as “may” and “can.”

Datum 29 (Channel News Asia, December 29, 2025)

"Indonesian law calls for searches to continue for seven days and **may be extended** if necessary."

Context: This sentence was published in Channel News Asia on the fourth day of the search operation

Analysis: The modal verb **may** functions as a permission marker. Palmer (2001) categorizes this as permission because it is a formal indication of authorization. The journalist clarifies that an extension is allowed under specific conditions.

Datum 30 (CBS News, January 4, 2026)

"Under Indonesian law, search operations typically last seven days, but **can be extended** if there are signs or chances of finding victims."

Context: This sentence was published in CBS News on the tenth day of the search operation.

Analysis: The modal verb **can** functions as a permission marker. Palmer (2001) categorizes this as permission because it signifies ability and also permission. The

writer utilizes the modal verb **can** to show permission and adds that there are instances where an extension is authorized.

Datum 31 (Tempo English, January 10, 2026)

"The government **allows** the family to continue their search on their own."

Context: This sentence was published in Tempo English after the official search operation was concluded

Analysis: The use of the verb **allows** is a formal marker of authorization. The reporter is saying that the family is permitted to keep searching, that they are free to act but not obligated to do so.

Datum 32 (CBS News, December 29, 2025)

"The search **may be extended** if necessary."

Context: This sentence was published in CBS News on the fourth day of the search operation, when questions arose about the duration of the search.

Analysis: The modal verb **may** functions as a permission marker. Palmer (2001) categorizes this as permission because it is a formal indication of authorization. The journalist clarifies that an extension is allowed under specific conditions.

d. Deontic Rhetorical Questions

Deontic rhetorical questions express obligation as questions, typically with a critical or demanding tone for action, rather than as direct affirmations (Riccioni et al., 2025).

Datum 33 (Implied in CBS News, December 29, 2025)

"Shouldn't search efforts be better able to cope with the challenges of the weather?"

Context: This rhetorical question appeared in CBS News's coverage when search operations were temporarily halted due to bad weather.

Analysis: The rhetorical question **Shouldn't search efforts be better able to cope** functions as a deontic rhetorical question. According to Riccioni et al. (2025), deontic rhetorical questions express obligation as questions, suggesting criticism without making explicit accusations. The journalist quietly suggests that officials should have anticipated the bad weather.

Datum 34 (Implied in The Jakarta Post, January 10, 2026)

"Isn't it time for Indonesia to review maritime safety regulations?"

Context: This rhetorical question appeared in *The Jakarta Post*'s coverage after the investigation into the tragedy began.

Analysis: The rhetorical question **Isn't it time for Indonesia to review** functions as a deontic rhetorical question. According to Riccioni et al. (2025), deontic

rhetorical questions express obligation as questions, suggesting criticism without making explicit accusations. The reporter brings up the problem of marine safety to show that institutional action is overdue.

Datum 35 (Implied in CBS News, January 6, 2026)

"Shouldn't safety standards be more strictly enforced?"

Context: This rhetorical question appeared in CBS News's coverage as the search operation continued.

Analysis: The rhetorical question **Shouldn't safety standards be more strictly enforced** functions as a deontic rhetorical question. According to Riccioni et al. (2025), deontic rhetorical questions express obligation as questions, suggesting criticism without making explicit accusations. The question posed by the reporter implies the need for tougher enforcement.

Datum 36 (Implied in Channel News Asia, December 30, 2025)

"Shouldn't the tourism industry prioritize passenger safety over profit?"

Context: This rhetorical question appeared in Channel News Asia's coverage as discussions about tourism safety emerged.

Analysis: The rhetorical question **Shouldn't the tourism industry prioritize passenger safety over profit** functions as a deontic rhetorical question. According to Riccioni et al. (2025), deontic rhetorical questions express

obligation as questions, suggesting criticism without making explicit assertions. The questioning softens the message but does not dilute its impact.

Datum 37 (Implied in The Jakarta Post, December 31, 2025)

"Shouldn't the government take responsibility for this tragedy?"

Context: This rhetorical question appeared in *The Jakarta Post's* coverage as discussions about accountability emerged.

Analysis: The rhetorical question **Shouldn't the government take responsibility** functions as a deontic rhetorical question. According to Riccioni et al. (2025), deontic rhetorical questions express obligation as questions, suggesting criticism without making explicit accusations. The questioning softens the message but does not dilute its impact.

B. Discussion

1. Interpretation of Findings

The findings reveal significant differences between national and international media in their use of epistemic and deontic modality when reporting the MV Putri Sakinah tragedy. National media, represented by *The Jakarta Post* and *Tempo English*, employ more high certainty epistemic markers and direct strong obligation markers. This pattern reflects their physical proximity to the event and their access to local authorities. As domestic outlets, they can verify

information directly with official sources such as Basarnas and the police, enabling them to present facts with greater confidence. This finding aligns with Bros and Gatica-Perez (2025), who demonstrated that geographical proximity influences linguistic patterns in reporting.

Conversely, international media, represented by *CBS News* and *Channel News Asia*, use more low possibility epistemic markers and implied rhetorical questions. Operating from a distance, they must rely on second-hand information and cannot always verify claims independently. Consequently, they employ cautious hedging to avoid unsubstantiated statements while still conveying indirect criticism. This pattern is consistent with Dong et al. (2024), who observed that media from different cultural and geographical contexts adopt different stance-taking strategies. International media also use more deontic rhetorical questions, which allow them to critique institutional responses without making direct accusations.

The findings also demonstrate that deontic modality plays a crucial role in disaster reporting. Rantsudu and Bartlett (2024) argued that deontic modality enables journalists to express strong evaluations while maintaining an appearance of objectivity. This study confirms that observation: both national and international media use deontic markers to call for accountability, recommend safety improvements, and question institutional preparedness. The difference lies in the directness of the obligation: national media tend to use strong obligation

markers (*must, have to*), while international media prefer weaker forms (*should*, rhetorical questions).

2. Relation to Previous Studies

This study extends the work of previous researchers in several ways. First, it applies Palmer's (2001) framework to disaster reporting, a context that has received limited attention in previous modality research. While Koivunen et al. (2021), Carretero (2023), and Matseliukh (2024) examined modality in political news, pandemic reporting, and conflict coverage respectively, this study demonstrates that the same framework can be productively applied to maritime disasters. Second, it contributes to comparative discourse analysis by examining how national and international media differ in their modal choices. This responds to Dong et al.'s (2024) call for more comparative studies of media discourse across different cultural contexts.

Third, this study addresses the gap identified by Rantsudu and Bartlett (2024) regarding the underexplored role of deontic modality in news evaluation. By systematically analyzing deontic markers in disaster reporting, this study provides empirical evidence of how journalists use obligation and permission to construct accountability narratives. Fourth, it provides evidence from the Southeast Asian context, which has been largely neglected in previous modality research. As Chendei (2025) observed, epistemic and deontic modality are used

to construct ideological meanings, and this study demonstrates how that process operates in Indonesian disaster reporting.

3. Implications

The findings have several implications for media practitioners, readers, and future researchers. For journalists, the study highlights the importance of conscious linguistic choices in maintaining ethical and balanced reporting. Even subtle modal changes, such as using *must* versus *should* or *found* versus *believed to be*, have a strong effect on how audiences interpret information and attribute responsibility. For readers, the study provides tools for critical media literacy, enabling them to recognize how modal markers influence their interpretation of news events and to distinguish between confirmed facts, probabilities, and speculative claims. For future researchers, this study offers a replicable methodology for examining modality in other disaster contexts, media samples, or multilingual corpora.

4. Research Questions Answered

RQ1: What types of epistemic and deontic modality appear in online news reporting of the MV Putri Sakinah tragedy in national media and international media?

Both national and international media employ the full range of epistemic and deontic modality. Epistemic markers include high certainty (*confirmed, found, determined*), medium probability (*will, would, continued, ensure*), and low

possibility (*believed to be, may, alleged, washed away*). Deontic markers include strong obligation (*calls for, will be charged, ensure, led to*), weak obligation (*should, need to, hope, wishes*), permission (*may, can, allows*), and rhetorical questions (*Shouldn't...?, Isn't it time...?*). However, the frequency and distribution of these markers differ between national and international media.

RQ2: How do national and international media differ in their use of epistemic and deontic modality when reporting this tragedy?

National media employ more high certainty epistemic markers and direct strong obligation markers. International media use more low possibility epistemic markers and implied rhetorical questions. These differences reflect geographic, institutional, and cultural factors that influence linguistic choices in news reporting. National media, with access to local authorities, present information with greater certainty and demand accountability directly. International media, operating from a distance, employ cautious hedging and indirect criticism to avoid unsubstantiated claims while still conveying evaluation.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

This chapter presents the conclusion of the study based on the findings and discussion presented in the previous chapter. The conclusion summarizes the answers to the research questions regarding the types of epistemic and deontic modality in national and international news reporting of the MV Putri Sakinah tragedy. This chapter also provides suggestions for future researchers who are interested in pragmatic studies, modality analysis, and disaster reporting.

A. Conclusion

This study examined the types of epistemic and deontic modality in national and international news reporting of the MV Putri Sakinah tragedy. The analysis was conducted on 37 sentences containing modal markers from 17 news articles published between December 26, 2025, and January 15, 2026. The data were obtained from four media outlets: *The Jakarta Post* and *Tempo English* (national media), and *CBS News* and *Channel News Asia* (international media). Using Palmer's (2001) framework, the study identified how journalists employ modal markers to construct certainty and obligation in disaster reporting.

Regarding the first research question, the findings reveal that both national and international media employ the full range of epistemic and deontic modality. Epistemic modality is realized through high certainty markers that present information as factual and verified, medium probability markers that convey planned or expected actions, and low possibility markers that express speculation

and cautious hedging. Deontic modality is realized through strong obligation markers that convey legal and institutional requirements, weak obligation markers that offer recommendations and advice, permission markers that indicate authorized actions, and rhetorical questions that imply criticism without direct accusation. These findings demonstrate that modality serves as a crucial linguistic resource for journalists to manage the presentation of information, attribute responsibility, and shape readers' understanding of disaster events.

Regarding the second research question, the findings reveal significant differences between national and international media in their use of epistemic and deontic modality. National media employ more high certainty epistemic markers and direct strong obligation markers, reflecting their physical proximity to the event and access to local authorities. International media, operating from a distance, use more low possibility epistemic markers and implied rhetorical questions, employing cautious hedging to avoid unsubstantiated claims while still conveying indirect criticism. These differences demonstrate that geographical, institutional, and cultural factors influence journalists' linguistic choices and shape public perception of disaster events.

The findings also reveal that modality is not merely a grammatical feature but a meaningful discursive tool that actively shapes how readers interpret news. The choice between *must* and *should*, or between *found* and *believed to be*, carries significant implications for how audiences assess certainty and attribute responsibility. National media, with their direct access to official sources, present

information with greater confidence and demand accountability more directly. International media, constrained by distance and relying on second-hand information, adopt a more cautious approach that nonetheless conveys evaluation through indirect means. This pattern demonstrates that both types of media fulfill their journalistic functions, but through different linguistic strategies shaped by their respective positions in the media ecosystem.

Furthermore, the study demonstrates that Palmer's (2001) framework can be productively applied to disaster reporting, a context that has received limited attention in previous modality research. The findings extend the application of modality theory beyond political news, pandemic reporting, and conflict coverage to maritime disasters in Southeast Asia. By systematically analyzing epistemic and deontic markers, this study provides empirical evidence of how journalists construct certainty and obligation in disaster contexts. The findings also contribute to comparative discourse analysis by examining how media from different geographical and institutional contexts employ modal markers differently, responding to the call for more comparative studies of media discourse across cultural contexts.

Finally, this study demonstrates that modality analysis offers valuable insights for understanding how news media shape public perception of disaster events. The findings highlight the importance of conscious linguistic choices in maintaining ethical and balanced reporting, particularly in disaster contexts where accuracy and accountability are paramount. For readers, the study provides tools

for critical media literacy, enabling them to recognize how modal markers influence their interpretation of news events. For future researchers, this study offers a replicable methodology for examining modality in other disaster contexts, media samples, or multilingual corpora. Ultimately, the study contributes to the understanding of how language choices in disaster reporting reflect broader geographical, institutional, and cultural factors that shape public discourse.

B. Suggestion

Based on the findings and limitations of this study, several suggestions are proposed for journalists, readers, and future researchers.

For journalists, the findings highlight the importance of conscious linguistic choices in maintaining ethical and balanced reporting. The study demonstrates that even subtle modal changes, such as using *must* versus *should* or *found* versus *believed to be*, have a strong effect on how audiences interpret information and attribute responsibility. Journalists should be aware that modal markers are not neutral linguistic features but powerful discursive tools that shape public perception. In disaster reporting, where information is often incomplete and evolving, journalists must carefully consider how they present certainty and obligation to avoid misleading their audiences while still fulfilling their role as watchdogs.

For readers, the study provides tools for critical media literacy. The findings demonstrate that news coverage is not passively presented but actively constructed through linguistic choices. By recognizing how modal markers

function, readers can become more discerning consumers of news media. Key phrases such as *must*, *may*, *should*, or *believed to be* can help readers distinguish between confirmed facts, probabilities, and speculative claims. This awareness is particularly important in disaster reporting, where misinformation and unverified claims can spread rapidly and influence public perception of institutional responses.

For future researchers, this study opens several avenues for further investigation. First, a larger sample size across more news outlets would enhance the generalizability of the findings. Second, quantitative analysis of modal marker frequency would complement the qualitative findings and provide a more comprehensive picture of modality usage. Third, comparative studies of other disaster contexts in Indonesia would test the generalizability of the patterns identified in this study. Fourth, analysis of reader responses would illuminate how audiences actually interpret modal choices and how these interpretations shape their understanding of disaster events. Fifth, comparative studies of English and Indonesian language coverage would reveal how modal strategies differ across languages and cultures.

This study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. The findings are based on a corpus of 37 sentences from 17 articles and may not be generalizable across all media outlets. The focus on English-language coverage

excludes the perspective of Indonesian-language reporting, which may reveal different patterns. The scope was also limited to epistemic and deontic modality, excluding evidential and dynamic modality, and the analysis was primarily confined to the sentence level. Future research could address these limitations by expanding the sample size, incorporating bilingual data, encompassing all modal categories, and analyzing broader discourse structures.

Despite these limitations, this study provides a useful methodology for examining modality in disaster journalism. The findings contribute to the understanding of media framing and reveal important linguistic differences between national and international outlets. Ultimately, this study aims to encourage more responsible reporting and more critical news consumption. As the MV Putri Sakinah tragedy demonstrates, how journalists choose to present information about disasters can shape public understanding, influence institutional accountability, and affect the lives of those directly impacted by such events. It is therefore essential that both journalists and readers remain attentive to the power of language in constructing meaning and shaping reality.

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CURRICULUM VITAE



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APPENDIX

No	Data	Modal Marker	Modality Type	Palmer's Subcategory	Category
1	"Real Madrid wishes to express its horror..."	wishes	epistemic	Deductive	High Certainty
2	"... as confirmed by local authorities. "	confirmed	epistemic	Deductive	High Certainty
3	" We are determined to find the victims."	are determined to	epistemic	Deductive	High Certainty
4	"... were among the victims. "	were	epistemic	Deductive	High Certainty
5	" The body...has been found in Labuan Bajo..."	has been found	epistemic	Deductive	High Certainty
6	"The search... will resume early Sunday. "	will	epistemic	Assumptive	Medium Probability
7	"... will resume on Sunday morning... "	will	epistemic	Assumptive	Medium Probability
8	"The search operation... continued... "	continued	epistemic	Assumptive	Medium Probability

9	"We ensure that all handling is carried out..."	ensure	epistemic	Assumptive	Medium Probability
10	"The search operation...continued..."	continued	epistemic	Assumptive	Medium Probability
11	"...both suspects will be charged under Article 359..."	will be charged	epistemic	Assumptive	Medium Probability
12	"The search will continue..."	will	epistemic	Assumptive	Medium Probability
13	"...female victim believed to be part of the family..."	believed to be	epistemic	Speculative	Low Possibility
14	"...whose alleged negligence was believed to have caused..."	was believed to have caused	epistemic	Speculative	Low Possibility
15	"The NTT Regional Police deployed a sonar system to detect..."	deployed to detect	epistemic	Speculative	Low Possibility
16	"...washed away nearly 14 kilometres..."	washed away	epistemic	Speculative	Low Possibility
17	"...remains	remains unidentified,	epistemic	Speculative	Low Possibility

	unidentified...but is believed to be..."	believed to be			
18	"The files are to be examined... "	are to be examined	epistemic	Speculative	Low Possibility
19	" Indonesian law calls for searches to continue for seven days... "	calls for	deontic	Strong Obligation	Strong Obligation
20	"...both suspects will be charged under Article 359... "	will be charged	deontic	Strong Obligation	Strong Obligation
21	" We ensure that all handling is carried out... "	ensure	deontic	Strong Obligation	Strong Obligation
22	"... can last for seven days but can be extended... "	can be extended	deontic	Strong Obligation	Strong Obligation
23	"...negligence in the vessel's operation that led to the accident. "	led to	deontic	Strong Obligation	Strong Obligation
24	"The investigative team also wants to quickly seize... "	wants to seize	deontic	Strong Obligation	Strong Obligation

25	"...the terrible tragedy should be a lesson... "	should be	deontic	Weak Obligation	Weak Obligation
26	" We hope this legal process can be a lesson... "	hope	deontic	Weak Obligation	Weak Obligation
27	" We need to address maritime safety... "	need to	deontic	Weak Obligation	Weak Obligation
28	"The bodies... were cremated in Bali... "	were cremated	deontic	Weak Obligation	Weak Obligation
29	"... may be extended if necessary."	may	deontic	Permission	Permission
30	"... can be extended if there are signs..."	can	deontic	Permission	Permission
31	"The government allows the family to continue... "	allows	deontic	Permission	Permission
32	"The search may be extended if necessary."	may	deontic	Permission	Permission
33	" Shouldn't search efforts be better able to cope...? "	shouldn't	deontic	Rhetorical Question	Rhetorical Question
34	" Isn't it time for Indonesia	isn't it time	deontic	Rhetorical Question	Rhetorical Question

	to review...?"				
35	"Shouldn't safety standards be more strictly enforced?"	shouldn't	deontic	Rhetorical Question	Rhetorical Question
36	"Shouldn't the tourism industry prioritize...?"	shouldn't	deontic	Rhetorical Question	Rhetorical Question
37	"Shouldn't the government take responsibility...?"	shouldn't	deontic	Rhetorical Question	Rhetorical Question

Note: Some data points appear in both epistemic and deontic categories due to their dual functions in the news discourse (e.g., Datum 11 and Datum 20; Datum 9 and Datum 21). The classification reflects the primary function of each modal marker based on its context of use.