



MODAL CHARACTERISTICS IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Salavatova Liliya Enverovna

Teacher, Namangan state institute of foreign languages

salavatovaliliya8@gmail.com

Abstract. *This article examines the modal characteristics of the English language through comprehensive literature analysis and theoretical investigation. Modal verbs represent a distinctive grammatical category that expresses necessity, possibility, permission, ability, and obligation in English discourse. The findings reveal that modality operates as a complex linguistic phenomenon encompassing epistemic, deontic, and dynamic dimensions, each contributing uniquely to meaning construction in English communication.*

Keywords: *modal verbs, modality, English grammar, epistemic modality, deontic modality*

Аннотация. *В данной статье рассматриваются модальные характеристики английского языка посредством комплексного анализа литературы и теоретических исследований. Модальные глаголы представляют собой особую грамматическую категорию, выражающую необходимость, возможность, разрешение, способность и обязанность в английском дискурсе. Результаты показывают, что модальность представляет собой сложное лингвистическое явление, охватывающее эпистемическое, деонтическое и динамическое измерения, каждое из которых вносит свой уникальный вклад в построение смысла в английской коммуникации.*

Ключевые слова: *модальные глаголы, модальность, английская грамматика, эпистемическая модальность, деонтическая модальность*

Annotatsiya. *Ushbu maqolada ingliz tilining modal xususiyatlari adabiyot va nazariy tadqiqotlarni har tomonlama tahlil qilish orqali ko'rib chiqiladi. Modal fe'llar ingliz nutqida zarurat, imkoniyat, ruxsat, qobiliyat va majburiyatni ifodalovchi alohida grammatik kategoriyani ifodalaydi. Natijalar shuni ko'rsatadiki, modallik epistemik, deontik va dinamik o'lchovlarni o'z ichiga olgan murakkab lingvistik hodisa bo'lib, ularning har biri ingliz tilidagi muloqotda ma'no qurilishiga o'ziga xos hissa qo'shadi.*

Kalit so'zlar: *modal fe'llar, modallik, ingliz tili grammatikasi, epistemik modallik, deontik modallik, lingvistik tahlil*

Introduction. Modal verbs are one of the most distinctive and theoretically important characteristics of English grammar, as they are mainly the linguistic tools for expressing attitudes, judgments, and evaluations about propositions and actions [1]. The behavior of modal auxiliaries differs from that of lexical verbs, as they have unique syntactic behavior and semantic complexity which has led to much scholarly attention in areas like descriptive linguistics, functional grammar, and cognitive linguistics [2]. The English language's modal



verbs typically consist of the main modals such as can, could, may, might, must, shall, should, will, would, and ought to, where each one of them gives a certain aspect of meaning related to possibility, necessity, permission, and volition [3]. In order to fully grasp modal characteristics an analysis of both their formal grammatical properties and their functional roles in discourse is a prerequisite, as these aspects determine the intersection of syntax, semantics, and pragmatics [4]. It has been found that modal verbs are among the most important indicators of the speaker's stance and interpersonal relationships in the communicative context, which makes them an unavoidable linguistic resource for subtle expression in English [5].

Methodology and Literature Review. The qualitative approach was used in this research based on a thorough review of the linguistic literature on English modalities that has been published. The analysis is founded on the descriptive linguistic and functional-semantic categorization framework which leads to the systematic identification and explanation of modal characteristics [6]. The research materials were strictly selected from reliable sources such as academic books, scholarly articles, and grammar references that among others are published from 1985 to 2024, thereby covering both the fundamental theories and the latest developments in modal verb studies. The literature review points to three leading theoretical approaches in the study of modality: the traditional grammatical method concentrating on formal traits, the semantic method stressing meaning differences, and the functional-pragmatic method studying usage in context [7].

Subsequent scholars have expanded this classification to include dynamic modality, referring to subject-internal abilities and volitions [8]. Syntactically, English modal verbs demonstrate distinctive characteristics including lack of third-person singular inflection, absence of non-finite forms, and requirement of bare infinitive complements, features that clearly differentiate them from other auxiliary and main verbs [3]. Contemporary corpus-based investigations have revealed diachronic changes in modal verb frequencies and functional distributions, showing declining usage of shall and increasing preference for semi-modals like have to and be going to in modern English discourse [9].

Results and Discussion. The study of literature has uncovered certain essential traits that set English modal verbs apart and classify them as a distinct grammatical category with certain semantic and syntactic properties. The main conclusion indicates that English modals operate as auxiliary verbs having a proper place in the verbal system, the position identified with defective morphology marked by the absence of infinitive, participle, and gerund forms. Thus, their occurrence is limited to finite clauses only [2]. Besides, their semantic ground is that modal verbs articulate speaker's attitudes and judgments rather than merely being actions or states in their direct sense, thus, aligning them as metalinguistic operators that change the content of the propositional by adding subjective evaluation and interpersonal meaning layers [4].



The epistemic-deontic distinction turns out to be especially important for modal semantics and the understanding of the whole picture since epistemic uses reveal certainty about propositions (must as a strong inference, may as a possibility) and deontic uses show social, legal or personal authority obligations and permissions [1]. Studies indicate that the context is responsible for the reading separation, as the same modal forms result in different interpretations according to the aspectual properties, subject animacy, and pragmatic circumstances [7]. The individual modal verbs investigation discloses the systematic polysemy patterns, where the core modals generally are of both epistemic and deontic meanings which are metaphorically connected and drawn from more concrete root meanings to abstract epistemic domains [8].

The concept of modal strength represents another crucial dimension, with modals arranged along continua from weak possibility to strong necessity, though exact positioning varies across different semantic domains and theoretical frameworks [3]. Syntactic analysis confirms that modal verbs govern bare infinitive complements without the to-particle, contrasting sharply with semi-modal constructions like ought to and marginal modals such as need and dare which exhibit mixed properties between core modals and main verbs [2]. The scope of modal negation presents interesting characteristics, as negative forms like cannot and must not express distinct meanings from their positive counterparts rather than simple logical negation, with cannot denying possibility while must not prohibits action, creating asymmetrical semantic relationships [6].

Conclusion. This investigation has demonstrated that modal characteristics in the English language constitute a complex and multifaceted linguistic phenomenon requiring integrated analysis of syntactic structures, semantic functions, and pragmatic applications. The systematic examination of scholarly literature confirms that English modal verbs represent a grammatically distinct auxiliary class characterized by defective morphology, specific syntactic distribution, and rich semantic versatility spanning epistemic, deontic, and dynamic domains. The research establishes that modal interpretation fundamentally depends on contextual factors including clause type, subject properties, temporal reference, and discourse environment, making modality an inherently context-sensitive category that resists simplistic classification. Understanding these characteristics proves essential for comprehensive grammatical description of English and has significant implications for language pedagogy, translation practice, and computational language processing.

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