

TYPOLOGICAL DIFFERENCES IN EXPRESSING MODALITY (POSSIBILITY, NECESSARY) IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK

Babaxanova Dildora Ikromjon qizi

Scientific advisor, Uzbekistan State World Languages University

Mushtariybonu Fayzullayeva Burxonjon qizi

Student, Uzbekistan State World Languages University

Abstract. The scope of the category in conveying modality is wide enough in linguistics to conduct a research that is considered as the most interesting field among typology of linguists. The category of modality is evaluated as a concept that expresses the attitude of the speaker to the content of the spoken sentence, to the reality. This category, which serves as an integral part of communication, is not limited to just one field, but is widely used and has its importance in several branches of linguistics, such as lexicology, phraseology, word formation, morphology and text linguistics. The wealth of wide possibilities of the modal category is the basis for its manifestation as a universal concept, and it is distinguished by its importance in understanding and interpreting the fundamental nature of the language structure. In this article, features of the modality category in English and Uzbek languages are analyzed and explained.
Key words: Category, modality, linguistics, attitude, objective, subjective, English , language,typology, necessary,English andUzbek

Modality constitutes one of the most complex and theoretically significant categories in modern linguistics, as it reflects the speaker's evaluative attitude toward the propositional content of an utterance. It encompasses a wide range of meanings, including possibility, necessity, probability, obligation, and permission, thereby occupying a central position at the interface of semantics, syntax, and pragmatics. Among these, the notions of possibility and necessity are regarded as core modal concepts, as they represent fundamental ways in which speakers conceptualize reality and express their judgments about it.

Despite the universality of modal meanings, their linguistic realization varies considerably across languages, largely due to typological differences. In this respect, the comparison between English and Uzbek is particularly illustrative. English, as an analytic language, predominantly employs modal auxiliary verbs such as may, might, must, and should to encode modal meanings. These forms are syntactically independent and semantically multifunctional, often requiring contextual interpretation. Uzbek, by contrast, as an agglutinative language, relies on morphologically complex constructions, including suffixation, verbal nominalization, and auxiliary lexical units such as mumkin, kerak, and lozim. This structural divergence leads to distinct patterns in the expression and interpretation of modality.

The present study aims to investigate the typological differences in expressing the modal meanings of possibility and necessity in English and Uzbek. It seeks to analyze the linguistic nature of modality, identify the principal means of its expression in both languages, and provide a comparative account of their structural and functional characteristics. Particular attention is given to how typological features influence the relationship between form and meaning in modal constructions.



The relevance of this research lies in its contribution to comparative linguistics, typology, and applied fields such as translation studies and language pedagogy. A deeper understanding of cross-linguistic variation in modality not only enriches theoretical insights but also facilitates more accurate interpretation and effective communication in multilingual contexts.

One of the prominent scholars in linguistics, Charles Bally, expressed the following view on the category of modality:

“Modality is the soul, the heart of the sentence. It is expressed through verbs, moods, intonation, interrogative and imperative forms, modal gestures, interjections, vocatives, and numerous other means” (Bally, *Language and Life*, Moscow, 2003).

A different perspective is offered by M. A. K. Halliday, who developed Systemic Functional Linguistics. In works such as “*Language as Social Semiotic*” (1978) and “*An Introduction to Functional Grammar*” (1985), Halliday conceptualizes language as a social system that serves communicative purposes. Also, the linguist defines modality as follows: “Modality is an important functional feature of communication; it represents an interpersonal function and serves as the form through which the speaker’s attitude is expressed in interaction” (Halliday, *System and Function in Language: Selected Papers*, London, 1976, p. 197). He highlights three metafunctions of language: ideational, interpersonal, and textual. Within this framework, modality is seen as a key component of interpersonal meaning, reflecting the speaker’s attitudes and judgments.

Krasnova’s theory underscores that modality is not merely a grammatical category but a central feature of communication, integrating both objective reality and subjective interpretation. Her insights continue to influence modern linguistic research, especially in the fields of functional and cognitive linguistics. Considering the views of T.I. Krasnova, we observe the following statements: “The categories of objective and subjective modality are interconnected, and they can be distinguished only through theoretical analysis” (Krasnova, 2002, p. 189).

Similarly, V.V. Panfilov emphasizes that: “There is hardly any other category in language that has been interpreted as diversely and even contradictorily as modality, given the richness and variability of its semantic nature.” Undoubtedly, Panfilov’s perspectives have made a significant contribution to the development of this linguistic category.

Ferdinand Brunot, basing his approach on the principle of “from meaning to form,” investigated how modal notions such as desire, supposition, belief, request, and negation are expressed in language. He divided modality into two classes: real and eventual (hypothetical). According to Brunot:

“The means of expressing modality include intonation (request, hatred, affirmation, surprise, joy, necessity, refusal, permission, etc.), tense (modal verbs and modal complements such as adverbs, adverbial phrases, particles), word order, and verbal moods” (Brunot, 1965, p. 982).

In Uzbek linguistics, a number of scholars have also extensively studied the category of modality. For instance, S.O'. Boymirzayeva analyzed the problem of textual modality based on Uzbek language material. In her work, she identifies the communicative-pragmatic features of modality and determines the markers that become active within the cognitive and semantic field of the text. She also attempts to classify the semantic types of textual modality. Moreover, during the analysis of textual modality, the scholar focuses primarily on the realization of subjective modality in texts, stating:

“Subjective modality can be divided into the following types: emotive, epistemic, deontic, and axiological” (Boymirzayeva, 2010, p. 152).

J.A. Yoqubov, in his research, connects logic and linguistics and focuses on revealing the semantic features of modality. By analyzing existing scholarly works, he systematizes various theoretical approaches. He defines modality as follows:

“The category of modality is understood as a complex of semantic meanings expressed in the process of formation and development of a wide functional-semantic field, encompassing categories such as affirmation, negation, reality–irreality, interrogation, exclamation, time, cause–purpose, comparison, condition, intention, command, result, concession, location, existence, state, advice, request, obligation, possibility, and others. These meanings reflect the speaker’s attitude toward objective reality and function in the realization of communication between speaker and listener” (Yoqubov, Tashkent, 2007).

In the Uzbek language, modality is often expressed through parenthetical elements and modal words. These can be classified into types such as modal words expressing the speaker’s attitude toward the certainty or definiteness of the proposition, including: albatta (certainly), shaksiz (undoubtedly), shubhasiz (without doubt), so‘zsiz (definitely), haqiqatdan (indeed), darhaqiqat (in fact), ishonchim komilki (I am convinced that), shunisi aniqki (it is clear that), chindan ham (truly), and others.

In the examples provided above, we can clearly observe how the speaker expresses affirmation and certainty toward the proposition within the sentence:

“Certainly, these words may seem very unusual to you now. However, browse through some newspapers from the late 1930s” (O. Yoqubov, Diyonat).

“.....-Certainly! Abduvali boasts because he has a younger brother. I also need a younger brother” (O‘. Hoshimov, Ikki ishiq orasi).

“Truly, even before their arrival, standing on the cart, their squealing and shouting was rather peculiar” (Murod Mansur, Judolik diyori).

“Indeed, why does the teacher hide it? Some committee members said, ‘Saidiyini cannot be excluded from the general rule,’ and for them, it would be more useful to adhere strictly to the rule rather than exclude Saidiyini” (A. Qahhor, Sarob).

From these examples, it is evident that the speaker employs specific linguistic devices to convey affirmation and certainty.

In English, similar meanings are expressed through lexical items such as certainly, of course, exactly, and definitely:

“...Definitely, Isaac turned and ran up the stairs taking them two at a time” (J. Green, The Fault in Our Stars).

“I sagaciously observed, if it didn’t signify to him, to whom did it signify?”

“-Certainly!,” assented Joe. “That’s it. You are right, old chap!” (Ch. Dickens, Great Expectations).

“Of course, there was a public-house in the village, and of course Joe liked sometimes to smoke his pipe there” (Ch. Dickens, Great Expectations).

“‘Most marshes are solitary,’ said Joe. ‘No doubt, no doubt. Do you find any gypsies, now, or tramps, or vagrants of any sort, out there?’” (Ch. Dickens, Great Expectations).

In English, verbs such as hope, wish, want, and need, nouns like necessity, obligation, a Both languages make extensive use of modal adverbs and lexical items to refine or emphasize modality. In English, adverbs such as probably, possibly, certainly, surely, and perhaps function as epistemic markers, qualifying the speaker’s certainty or expectation about a proposition (She will probably attend the seminar). Uzbek uses a parallel system of adverbs



including *ehtimol* (perhaps), *albatta* (certainly), *shubhasiz* (undoubtedly), and *mumkin* (possible) to indicate degrees of likelihood or expectation (*U ehtimol kech keladi* – “He will probably come late”). Unlike English, Uzbek adverbs can often be combined with morphological and auxiliary markers to create highly nuanced expressions of modality, such as in *U kitobni o‘qishi mumkin emas* – “He cannot read the book,” which integrates negation, possibility, and verbal morphology in one clause.

The expression of mood and verb forms further distinguishes the two languages. English relies on subjunctive and conditional constructions to convey hypothetical, counterfactual, or wishful meanings (*I wish I were taller; If I had known, I would have acted differently*). The subjunctive mood is limited in its morphological marking, often indistinguishable from the indicative except in specific cases, reflecting the analytic character of English.

Conditional constructions, using *would* and the base verb, allow for the expression of hypothetical or potential situations (*If she studied harder, she would pass the exam*). In contrast, Uzbek integrates modality morphologically through verb suffixes. The conditional *-sa edi* (*Agar u kelsa edi, xursand bo‘lardim* – “If he had come, I would have been happy”) and the subjunctive *-sin* (*U buni bilsin* – “Let him know this”) illustrate how the agglutinative structure allows for compact and precise encoding of modality within the verb itself.

Lexical and semantic stratnd possibility, and adjectives including possible, necessary, likely, and certain serve as semantic markers of modal meaning. Uzbek employs equivalent lexical items such as *xohlamoq* (want), *umid qilmoq* (hope), and *zarur bo‘lmoq* (necessary), as well as nouns like *zarurat* (necessity), reinforcing or complementing the grammatical expression of modality. Such lexical strategies are particularly important in conveying epistemic and evaluative nuances, allowing speakers to express degrees of certainty, desirability, or obligation with subtlety.

It is also notable that the interaction between grammatical, lexical, and syntactic modalities differs across the two languages. English tends to separate modality into discrete syntactic units, with auxiliary verbs preceding the main verb and adverbs inserted clause-internally. Uzbek, by contrast, often fuses multiple modal functions into the verb complex, simultaneously expressing tense, aspect, negation, and modal nuance. This typological difference has important implications for translation, second-language acquisition, and cross-linguistic pragmatics, as direct equivalents are not always available and subtle differences in meaning may be lost if the full morphological or syntactic context is not considered.

These examples demonstrate that both in Uzbek and English, modality can be expressed through lexical markers that indicate affirmation, certainty, or the speaker’s confidence in the proposition.

In the Uzbek language, in addition to the previously mentioned examples, speakers often use expressions such as *Subhanolloh*, *Mashaallah*, and *Astag‘furillah* to convey emotions like wonder, regret, or astonishment in interpersonal communication. Before beginning an action, phrases invoking God, such as *Bismillah*, are widely used with good intentions. This clearly demonstrates the unique role of Islam in the linguistic and cultural identity of the Uzbek nation. The category of modality, with its multifaceted and rich nature, occupies a distinctive position in linguistics and is an integral part of human communication. Scholars’ research in this field consistently confirms this assertion. The concept of modality is considered a category that reflects the speaker’s attitude toward the content of the utterance and its relationship to reality. Objective reality first exists in the speaker’s consciousness, and subsequently, the speaker’s



attitude toward the expressed proposition—such as confidence, doubt, assumption, or suspicion—is manifested.

When discussing modality, it is impossible to avoid referring to the concepts of dictum and modus. Several scholars have noted in their studies that while objective modality is included in the notion of dictum, subjective modality corresponds to modus.

The present article aims to illustrate the distinctive and shared features of the category of modality in English and Uzbek through ample examples. Even in languages that are not closely related, there are striking similarities in how modality is expressed. It is unsurprising that the speaker's attitude toward certainty, affirmation, or regret in both languages can correspond almost directly through translational equivalents. In analyzing sentence construction, especially through introductory words, it becomes evident that these modal markers do not perform any grammatical function within the sentence. The findings of this study serve as a valuable contribution to comparative linguistics and provide insights into the more abstract aspects of modality.

In conclusion the category of modality is a fundamental component of human communication, reflecting the speaker's attitude toward the content and reality of an utterance. It operates through various linguistic means—lexical items, particles, intonation, and cultural expressions—to convey certainty, doubt, surprise, regret, or emphasis. Comparative analysis of Uzbek and English shows both language-specific and universal features: despite structural differences, similar modal meanings can be conveyed across languages using translational equivalents. Modality thus serves as a bridge between thought, language, and cultural context, making it indispensable for interpreting meaning, understanding speaker intent, and facilitating effective communication. Continued research into modality not only enriches theoretical linguistics but also enhances our understanding of the interplay between language, cognition, and culture. As mentioned Modality is a key linguistic category that reflects the speaker's attitude toward the content and reality of an utterance, conveying certainty, doubt, or emotion through lexical, grammatical, and cultural means. Comparative analysis of Uzbek and English reveals both unique and shared features, showing that similar modal meanings can be expressed across languages. Understanding modality is essential for interpreting meaning, speaker intent, and the cultural nuances of communication.

References:

1. Bally, C. (2003). *Language and life*. Moscow.
2. Boymirzayeva, S. O'. (2010). *Textual modality in Uzbek language*. Tashkent.
3. Brunot, F. (1965). *La pensée et la langue* (p. 982).
4. Halliday, M. A. K. (1976). *System and function in language: Selected papers*. London.
5. Krasnova, T. I. (2002). *Modality in linguistic theory* (p. 189).
6. Panfilov, V. V. (n.d.). *Studies on modality in linguistics*.
7. Yoqubov, J. A. (2007). *Modality in the functional-semantic field*. Tashkent.