

LINGUOCOGNITIVE FEATURES OF MODAL MEANS IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK LANGUAGES

Ibrohimov Maksud Mirsalim o'g'li

*Lecturer at the Department of Foreign Languages
Samarkand State Pedagogical Institute
Linguistics, Philology*

Abstract: This article examines the linguocognitive features of modal means in English and Uzbek languages. Modality is considered one of the important linguistic categories that reflects the speaker's attitude toward reality, certainty, obligation, probability, and intention. The study analyzes modal verbs, modal words, and grammatical constructions in both languages from cognitive and comparative perspectives. The article highlights similarities and differences in expressing modality and explains how cultural and cognitive factors influence modal meanings in English and Uzbek communication.

Key words: modality, linguocognitive analysis, modal verbs, modal means, English language, Uzbek language.

Introduction

Language serves not only as a means of communication but also as a reflection of human thinking and cognition. In modern linguistics, modality occupies a significant place because it demonstrates the speaker's attitude toward an action, event, or reality. Modal means help speakers express certainty, doubt, necessity, permission, ability, and obligation.

The linguocognitive approach studies how language structures are connected with mental processes and conceptual systems. English and Uzbek languages possess different grammatical systems; however, both languages actively use modal means to express communicative intentions. English mainly relies on modal verbs such as *can*, *may*, *must*, and *should*, while Uzbek uses modal words, auxiliary verbs, affixes, and contextual constructions.

This article aims to analyze the linguocognitive features of modal means in English and Uzbek languages through comparative analysis.

The Concept of Modality in Linguistics

Modality is a linguistic category expressing the speaker's subjective attitude toward the content of an utterance. According to linguistic studies, modality can be divided into several types:

- Epistemic modality
- Deontic modality
- Dynamic modality
- Evidential modality

Epistemic modality expresses probability, certainty, or assumption. Deontic modality reflects obligation, permission, or prohibition. Dynamic modality indicates ability or

willingness.

Modal Means in English Language

English possesses a rich system of modal verbs and expressions. The most common modal verbs include:

- *can*
- *could*
- *may*
- *might*
- *must*
- *should*
- *will*
- *would*

These verbs perform different communicative and cognitive functions.

For example:

- *She can speak English fluently.*
(ability)
- *You must finish the project today.*
(obligation)
- *It may rain tomorrow.*
(possibility)

English modal verbs are grammatically distinct because they do not take suffixes and are followed by the bare infinitive form of verbs.

Modal Means in Uzbek Language

Unlike English, Uzbek expresses modality through a variety of lexical and grammatical means. Modal meanings can be conveyed through:

- Modal words
- Auxiliary verbs
- Affixes
- Intonation
- Contextual constructions

Examples include:

- *kerak* (necessity)
- *mumkin* (possibility)
- *shart* (obligation)
- *bo'лади* (permission or possibility)

For example:

- *U ingliz tilida gaplasha oladi.*
(ability)
- *Bugun kelishingiz kerak*
(necessity)

Ertaga yomg'ir yog'ishi mumkin.
(possibility)

Uzbek modality often depends heavily on context and pragmatic interpretation. Cognitive aspects of Uzbek modal expressions are closely connected with social relationships, politeness, and collective communication traditions.

Modality is one of the most important categories in linguistics because it reflects the relationship between the speaker, reality, and the information being communicated. In cognitive linguistics, modality is closely connected with mental processes such as perception, evaluation, assumption, and intention. Linguists state that modal means help speakers express their attitudes toward events, actions, and situations. English and Uzbek languages possess different grammatical systems, yet both languages actively employ modal means to convey meanings of necessity, possibility, obligation, certainty, and probability.

In English, modality is mainly expressed through modal verbs. The most frequently used modal verbs are *can*, *could*, *may*, *might*, *must*, *should*, *will*, and *would*. These verbs function as auxiliary elements and are followed by the infinitive form of the main verb without "to." English modal verbs have unique grammatical characteristics because they do not change according to person or number. For example, the verb *must* remains unchanged in all grammatical persons: *I must*, *she must*, *they must*.

English modal verbs carry various semantic meanings. The modal verb *can* usually expresses ability or possibility. For example, in the sentence *She can speak three languages*, the speaker emphasizes physical or intellectual ability. The modal verb *must* indicates strong obligation or certainty, as in *You must complete the assignment today*. The modal verb *may* expresses permission or possibility: *You may enter the room*. These modal meanings are directly connected with the speaker's cognitive evaluation of reality.

From a linguocognitive perspective, English modality demonstrates individual reasoning and subjective judgment. Speakers select modal verbs according to their personal assessment of probability or necessity. For instance, the difference between *may* and *must* reflects different levels of certainty in the speaker's mind. In communication, modal verbs also influence politeness and interpersonal relationships. Using *could* instead of *can* often creates a more polite communicative effect.

Unlike English, Uzbek expresses modality through a wider variety of lexical and grammatical means. Uzbek modality is represented by modal words, auxiliary constructions, affixes, and intonation. Common Uzbek modal units include *kerak*, *mumkin*, *lozim*, *shart*, and *darkor*. These words function differently from English modal verbs because they may combine with verbal nouns or participial constructions.

For example, in the sentence *Bugun uchrashuvga borishingiz kerak*, the word *kerak* expresses obligation or necessity. In *U ertaga kelishi mumkin*, the word *mumkin* indicates possibility or probability. Uzbek modal expressions are highly dependent on context, social relationships, and communicative situations. The meaning of a modal construction can vary according to tone, politeness, or cultural expectations.

The agglutinative nature of Uzbek language also affects modal expression. Various suffixes contribute to modal meanings. For example, conditional affixes and imperative forms may express doubt, wish, or command. In many cases, Uzbek speakers use indirect forms to sound more respectful or polite. This feature demonstrates the close relationship between modality and national communicative culture.

Comparative analysis shows that English modality is more structurally fixed, whereas Uzbek modality is more context-oriented and flexible. English relies heavily on grammatical modal verbs, while Uzbek combines lexical, grammatical, and pragmatic devices. Nevertheless, both languages perform the same communicative function: they help speakers express attitudes toward information and reality.

Linguocognitive analysis also reveals cultural differences in modal usage. English communication often values directness and logical precision. Therefore, modal verbs clearly indicate levels of certainty or obligation. Uzbek communication, however, tends to emphasize politeness, collectivism, and respect. As a result, modal expressions in Uzbek may appear softer and less categorical than in English.

Another important aspect is the role of modality in discourse and intercultural communication. Incorrect interpretation of modal meanings may lead to misunderstanding between speakers of different languages. For example, English speakers may perceive direct modal forms as neutral, while Uzbek speakers may consider them too strong or impolite in certain contexts. Therefore, understanding modal means is essential in translation studies and foreign language learning.

Modern cognitive linguistics considers modality not only as a grammatical category but also as a reflection of human conceptualization. Modal means represent how speakers mentally organize reality, evaluate situations, and communicate intentions. Both English and Uzbek languages demonstrate that modality is deeply connected with cognition, culture, and social interaction.

Conclusion

Modal means play a crucial role in expressing the speaker's attitude, emotions, judgments, and intentions in both English and Uzbek languages. The comparative linguocognitive analysis shows that despite structural differences, both languages possess effective systems for conveying modality.

English modality is primarily based on modal verbs and grammatical structures, while Uzbek modality depends more on lexical units, affixes, and contextual interpretation. Cognitive and cultural factors significantly influence how modal meanings are formed and understood in communication.

The study of modal means from a linguocognitive perspective contributes to comparative linguistics, translation studies, and intercultural communication.

REFERENCES

1. Palmer, F. R. *Mood and Modality*. Cambridge University Press, 2001.

2. Lakoff, G. *Women, Fire, and Dangerous Things*. University of Chicago Press, 1987.
3. Bybee, J., Perkins, R., & Pagliuca, W. *The Evolution of Grammar*. University of Chicago Press, 1994.
4. Safarov, Sh. *Cognitive Linguistics*. Toshkent, 2006.
5. Nurmonov, A. *O'zbek Tilining Nazariy Grammatikasi*. Toshkent, 2001.
6. Halliday, M. A. K. *An Introduction to Functional Grammar*. London: Arnold, 1994.