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MODALITY MEANS IN THE MODERN ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Petimat Almurzaeva (a)*, Larisa Habaleva (b)
*Corresponding author

(a) Chechen State University, 32, Sheripov str., Grozny, Russia, Chechen Republic
fatja69@mail.ru, 89287889519
(b) Chechen State University, 32, Sheripov str., Grozny, Russia, Chechen Republic
Xabaleva@inbox.ru, 89388966523

Abstract

The authors emphasize that the development of language is determined by the development of society. The paper deals with semantics and the use of modal words which have specific functional features. The purpose of the paper is to study the semantics of modal words, identify main semantic and syntactic features. The units under study are adverbs, being indicators of subjective modality. Language is a means of communication performing its main function. It is emphasized that language and thinking are inextricably linked, and the results of thinking form a close relationship with semantics. One of the most important categories of language is modality as a mandatory feature of the utterance. Language modality is relevant in modern linguistics. This phenomenon has its own specificity. The research issue is relevant due to the need to clarify semantic possibilities of modal words of modern English. The main purpose of the work is to study semantics of modal words, their peculiarities in various utterances. The theoretical background are works by V.V. Vinogradov, A.B. Bondarko, O.I. Moskalskaya. Currently, linguists are studying modal words and phrases. Because of their specificity and functional features, scientists express conflicting opinions on their nature. The paper analyzes the semantics of such modal words as *certainly, of course, no doubt, surely, apparently, undoubtedly, indeed, obviously, naturally, obviously, unhappily, luckily - unluckily, fortunately– unfortunately*. The authors come to the conclusion that the specificity of the modal meaning of the words is due to the veracity of utterances in relation to reality.

1. Introduction

The development of language is determined by the development of society. Language is a means of communication. Language and thinking are inextricably linked, and the results of thinking are associated with semantics. Modality is one of the most important categories of language.

The concept "modality" originated in the philosophical period of Aristotle who distinguished between three types of judgments:

1. Judgment of possibility

2. Judgment of reality

3. Judgment of necessity

These three types of judgments depend on the relationship between the object and its feature.

The researchers use logical and linguistic approaches.

1. Modal meanings are not reduced to these three types of relationship, as required by logic. In addition to those modal relations, linguistic modality is represented by other types of relations (e.g. reality / irreality).

2. The formal logical doctrine narrowed the problem of the category of modality reducing it to the utterances containing only judgments which limited the range of modal meanings. Linguistic modality includes other types of utterances (Belyaeva, 1985).

Language modality is the most important and relevant phenomenon of modern linguistics. This phenomenon is characterized by its specificity and diversity of opinions of famous scientists.

In modern English, modality is expressed with various grammatical, lexical, and intonational means. It is a multifaceted, specific linguistic expression and has its own functional features.

Russian scientists considered the category of modality using various approaches: as a conceptual category (Mironov, 1991), as a semantic grammatical category (Didkovskaya, 1991), as a semantic category (Vinogradov, 1975), as a syntactic category (Nemets, 1991), as a functional semantic category (Bondarko, 1990).

Belyaeva (1985) defines modality as a subjective objective category of language. This definition reflects the objectively subjective nature of the category of modality: subjectivity of the actual assessment of reality is limited by objective relationships (which does not mean that everyone who speaks adequately evaluates them).

Vinogradov (1975) distinguishes between various forms of reaction and evaluates utterances in their relation to reality.

Russian linguists revealed modal meanings and types. So, Zolotova (1973) distinguished between the following modal meanings: utterances from the point of view of the speaker, attitude of the speaker to the utterance, relation of the actor to the action.

Panfilov (1977) distinguished between two types of modal meanings: objective and subjective ones. Objective modality reflects possible, real and necessary relations, etc. Nemets (1991) believes that being abstract objective, modal means express subjective modal relations.

According to Miloserdova (1991), modal meanings are closely related to their pragmatic meanings.

"Being the category in which the subjective meaning should be reflected in objective linguistic forms, modality is a barometer that must response to the slightest changes in the state of a native speaker and any changes in the linguistic system of intellectualization" (Miloserdova, 1991, p. 11).

Bondarko (1990) considers modality as a functional-semantic field based on multi-level means of language.

Studying the semantics of partial coincidence of French modal expressions, Thibault (2008) says that although there is no consensus on whether French has any true modal auxiliary, is one of the very few possible candidates. Most studies of devoir concentrate on criteria for distinguishing its epistemic and root semantic values, but some also explore the subtle semantic nuances it conveys depending on context. Here, we identify discrete meanings through the analysis of semantic overlaps between devoir and other French modal expressions, such as *probablement* 'probably', *être supposé* 'to be supposed to', or *falloir* 'ought to'. The analysis of data from two corpora on Montreal French, collected in 1971 and 1984, shows that:

1. There is only one root semantic value exclusively associated with devoir, namely, the notion of desirability (as in the English 'should').

2. There are different patterns of use of the competing modal expressions within each semantic field analyzed, according to the social class of the speaker. Moreover, some patterns characterizing a specific social group are acquired relatively late (Thibault, 2008).

2. Problem Statement

The paper deals with semantics and the use of modal words which have specific functional features.

3. Research Questions

Modal words that have lost their lexical meanings are mentioned as parts of speech in the dictionary of linguistic terms. Depending on the subjective attitude to the facts of reality, they are divided into words expressing statements, assumptions, subjective assessments (Akhmanova, 2004).

The semantics of modal words of modern English is a relevant issue.

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the paper is to study the semantics of modal words, identify main semantic and syntactic features (Almurzaeva, 2011, 2018).

5. Research Methods

The theoretical background is works by Vinogradov (1975), Bondarko (1971), Moskalskaya (1981).

The modal words "of course", "probably", "perhaps", "possibly" mean that the speaker does not guarantee accuracy of the utterance, since he interprets the state of things as known, taken for granted and considered as facts or hypotheses.

6.   Findings

The units under study are adverbs. By their semantic meanings, they are indicators of subjective modality indicating the degree of credibility:

- confidence: *certainly, surely, surely, inevitably, naturally, of course, no doubt, undoubtedly, indeed, really, actually*;

- assumption / guess: *apparently*;

- probability: *probably, maybe*;

- capability: *perhaps, possibly*;

- approval or disapproval: *fortunately, unfortunately, luckily, unluckily, happily, unhappily*.

The semantic meaning of each word can be revealed within the context:

Starting your own business is difficult at the moment but you'll certainly have no problems with it.

Teacher was amazed and students were certainly surprised too at the behaviour of their classmate.

Madina is definitely the best English-speaking student in the group.

There must surely be some reason for his absence at the sport event.

Those who are created by publicity are inevitably destroyed by it.

The utterances are interpreted as hypotheses losing the status of facts and acquiring the status of opinions.

Although these words belong to the same modal group (certainty - confidence), they are not completely identical and cannot be interchanged in all contexts.

For example, in the first sentence, "certainly" can be replaced by "definitely" and "surely", since all three words mean that the speaker is convinced of reliability of the utterance regardless of what others think.

If the speaker does not doubt the accuracy of the utterance, "definitely" can be used.

To express the speaker's confidence in what that cannot be avoided, the adverb "inevitably" is used.

When the speaker emphasizes that he is a guarantor of the statement by virtue of his affiliation with reasonable subjects, he uses "of course".

It looks as if the Sun goes round the Earth, but, of course, the Earth really goes round the Sun.

Of course, one can see well all the picture of the mountains from here.

The teacher told the pupils that the task was to be done immediately, of course.

Of course, none of them have forgotten to take part in the competition.

At that time, she really smiled, and all the students smiled too.

The adverb "naturally" is a modal word that is close in meaning. It means that the guarantor of an assertion is the nature of things which includes causal relationships between phenomena.

The student tried his best, but the examination was a failure. Naturally, he was frustrated.

The speaker uses the modal words "obviously", "clearly" and "apparently" (when the facts of objective reality guarantee the adequacy of judgment).

He found his child in bed evidently in pain.

These two events are evidently closely linked.

The boy has been bullied at school and he is evidently unhappy.

For more subjective and emotionally colored utterances, the use of the adverb "obviously" is characteristic.

She has obviously got a gift for languages.

One of the rooms has obviously been lived in.

When using the modal word "apparently", the speaker emphasizes the fact that he does not have enough grounds for unconditional statement.

We weren't there but apparently it was a remarkable event.

The driver managed to climb out of the broken bus, apparently unhurt.

In the above examples, there was a more or less high degree of probability that the statement is adequate to the state of affairs. When the speaker expresses a certain degree of doubt about the reliability of the judgment, he uses "perhaps", "probably", "possibly".

When the utterance about the state of things has the status of subjective perception, "probably" is used.

This is probably the best thing you can do in this situation.

When the utterance about the state of affairs is only a hypothesis, "possibly" is used.

Television is possibly to blame for the degradation of the society.

The modal word "perhaps" having the same meaning is used more often.

Kate said nothing of her friend's visit. Perhaps she had forgotten.

We have no doubt that he is an honest and noble man.

Unfortunately, I've heard nothing more of the others.

Unfortunately, I've got to get going.

Unfortunately, I am not one of them.

Fortunately for you ... we're not actually interested in what you did over the last few days.

And, fortunately, we have plenty of water.

Fortunately, Irina's marriage is a match made in heaven.

Fortunately, most of the cities are concentrated on this small continent here.

happily

When we married, we vowed to help each other and live happily together.

And the king and the queen and their daughter lived happily ever after.

Forty million dollars in the bank, happily married, good health.

unhappily

Well, unhappily, it is.

Unhappily, I know my clients will demand proof of a deposit.

But, unhappily in this case, yours complicates matters.

The good ended happily and the bad unhappily.

I mean, you could always just get your window fixed and buy a new telly, stumble on, unhappily ever after.

luckily

Luckily, I was there and scared him off.

But luckily not everybody said that.

luckily

Luckily, the cars come equipped with a GPS tracking device.

To build one from the ground up would take time, but luckily enough, we can acquire one.

Luckily, no casualties were reported.

unluckily

He's been burnt. He's been one of the unluckiest men alive.

Either she's the unluckiest woman on the planet... .

7.   Conclusion

Having analyzed lexical means of modality, we can conclude that the use of modal words is quite multifaceted. Modal words have various additional functions: intensifying, attracting attention, denial, clarification, approval, and disapproval. They allow for classification of utterances as real or unreal.

Thus, specificity of the modal meaning is due to the degree of reliability of the utterance in relation to reality. The issue is relevant and requires further research on English modality.

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