

THE PROBLEM OF MODALITY IN LINGUISTICS

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Abstract: In this article the theory of modality that describes the semantics of the relationship between denotations and reality or the relationship between the content of a message and reality is depicted.

Key words: Modality, content and reality, reality vs unreality, grammatical category, syntactic structures, epistemic function, dictemic modality, dicteme.

Introduction. Modality is a category of a higher order (category of categories) in that it integrates linguistic elements of various categorical subsystems, in contrast to traditional lexical and grammatical categories, which are constructed on the basis of distinct paradigmatic connections of elements that collectively form the matter of language. From this, we may conclude that modality is expressed at all sign levels of language when it is actualized in speech. Modality is expressed through individual words, grammatical forms, syntactic structures, and prosodic features. Modality is a lexical-grammatical category in linguistics that describes the semantics of the relationship between denotations and reality, or the relationship between the content of a message and reality in terms of reality vs unreality, as expressed by language's grammatical and lexical methods. [Виноградов 1950, Золотова 1962, Панфилов 1977, Бондаренко 1979, Беляева 1988]. The meanings of linguistic units that convey an evaluation of the speaker's message content are likewise included in the concept of modality.

Methods. The article looks at modality at different language levels. It is revealed in the way that the propositional content of a sentence is generally related to reality; in the way that significant words and phrases are semantically related to the sentence, expressing the speaker's subjective evaluation of the reality reflected in the sentence along with the subject-denotative or referential meaning; and in the way that semi-functional words—modal verbs and introductory verbs—realize the meanings of possibility, necessity, obligation, etc. Regarding modality, the points made by Professor M. Ya. Blokh about the two primary roles of a sentence-statement—nominative-denotative and evaluative-attitudinal, predicative—correspond to what has been discussed. While the second applies the attribution of a propositional name (denotation of a sentence) to reality from the speaker's point of view, the first reflects a specific piece of extra-linguistic reality in the content of a sentence [Blokh 2004].

Reference. For a considerable amount of time, the issue of modality has consumed the thoughts of logicians, linguists, psychologists, and philosophers. Numerous scientists' interest in this subject suggests the importance and intricacy of the phenomenon under study. V.V. Vinogradov, G.A. Zolotova, V.N. Bondarenko, T.P. Lomtev, I.I. Meshchaninov, V.Z. Panfilov, G.V. Kolshansky, and many others addressed modality issues in Russian linguistics. In foreign linguistics, Bally S., Wierzbicka A., Grepl M., Kiefer F., Palmer F.R., Wright G.H. von, S. Zhazha, and other researchers examined different facets of the modality category. A broad interpretation of its content in light of modern scientific research is the key change in the understanding of this idea that has been observed in the scientific literature recently.

Modality is primarily understood in traditional linguistics as a lexical-grammatical category that expresses the semantics of the relationship between denotations and reality, or, more specifically, the relationship between a message's content and reality in terms of reality / unreality,

as expressed by language's grammatical and lexical means [Vinogradov 1950, Zolotova 1962, Panfilov 1977, Bondarenko 1979, Belyaeva 1988]. The definitions of language components that convey the speaker's perspective on the message's content are also included in the concept of modality. A limited interpretation of modality, which is represented by the three meanings of necessity, possibility, and reality, dominated languages until recently. Scientists' aim to constrict this category's breadth and unify its content under a single categorical characteristic (invariant) formed the basis for this modality view. Understanding this category was further restricted by orientation toward Aristotle's original theory of modality, which taught about the several categories of judgments of necessity, possibility, and reality. Advocates of this methodology in linguistics (Panfilov, 1977: 37), such as Kolshansky, G.V., and Lomtev, T.P., were against the wide interpretation of this category because they feared that non-categorically specified linguistic events would be included in the modality category.

Analysis. The realization of the clear difference between linguistic and logical modalities and the disparity between linguistic and logical notions led to a comprehensive understanding of modality (expanding its content beyond the stated triad of meanings). The increased interest of linguists and researchers in related sciences in the issues surrounding language in action, or how it functions in real communication, as well as linguists' general tendency to view semantics as the individual and collective consciousness of speakers' language as an area of representation of the speaker's knowledge—anthropocentric and cognitive paradigms in science—were the main causes of the new interpretation of modality and many other linguistic categories. Even though many scholars understood the significance of the logical theory of modalities for linguistics, many continued to believe that the logical method was unworkable when it came to real language. According to F. Bruno, a judgment is true or modal in logic in an absolute sense, regardless of subjective context, spatial parameters, or temporal constraints. In speech, on the other hand, a statement's characteristics, such as truth (true / false) and modality (possibility / necessity), are established relative to the speaking subject and the conditions of communication [Bgipo!, 1965:36].

According to Petrov N.E., attempts to define modality and restrict its application in accordance with logical requirements fall short of providing a complete understanding of it. He states that logical modalities are only examined in sentences that have a true or false meaning. Performatives, intentions, and questions do not have such meanings in statements [Petrov, 1982:10]. According to Hintikka J., "... everyday concepts of truth in some possible world are closer and more understandable to a person than such specialized concepts as logical truth" [Hintikka, 1980:32], both perspectives are comparable.

The term "modality" in cognitive linguistics has long since lost its distinct meaning. Modality is defined as a specific language space of subjective interpretations that a speaker uses to convey his perspective on any given conceptual piece (frame). It is imperative that modality be taken into account independently of lexical and grammatical categories. It is thought that modal meanings are implicitly conveyed in the structure of lexical units and grammatical constructs actualized in the context of speech communication, in addition to the explicit statement of modality via mood and a small number of modal verbs. Cognitivists contend that modality has nothing to do with the systemic components of language, which are arranged in the shape and similarity of grammatical categories. In addition to the conventional modal meanings of necessity and possibility, modus categories include a variety of linguistic meanings (evaluateness, approximation (approximateness, inaccuracy), emotiveness, persuasiveness, negation, etc.), which allow for a person to interpret conceptual content in a variety of ways and to create unique subjective meanings based on that interpretation (Boldyrev 2005; Kobrina 2006). The way modal categories are formed and arranged is unique in that it unites specific linguistic means according

to the shared nature of their conceptual (interpretive) function. The basic distinction between modal categories and lexical and grammatical (linguistic) categories is thus emphasized by cognitive linguistics. Lexical categories actualize the epistemic function of language and thought because they reflect the structure and content of categories of natural objects in a language, or an ontological model of the world. Grammar serves as an organizing principle when creating informative assertions from discrete language components because grammatical categories represent the ontological model of language, which classifies linguistic objects (words and sentences). In addition to contributing to the development of an individual's mentality—the evaluative component of consciousness—and that of a national-cultural community of people, modal categories objectify an individual's methods of information interpretation and consolidate the mechanisms of this interpretation in the language system into a particular format of knowledge [Boldyrev, 2006:5–22].

A semantic category without a well-defined expression plan is called modalities. The following facts serve as proof for this: 1) Modality appears at different levels of language; it is not an immanent grammatical category of the word, such as tense, aspect, voice, or gender; that is, it is not assigned to distinct groups of significant words (parts of speech); 2) modality is not purely sentential; 3) the same linguistic expression can convey different types of modality; this is demonstrated by the regular use of mood forms in conjunction with modal verbs in the function of expressing assumptions, oughts, etc.

For instance, a sentence “Он должен был быть на посту в ту ночь” can express the speaker's confident assumption that the event took place. This is comparable to the English sentence that uses the verb must: He must have been on duty that night. It can also convey a duty; in this instance, the responsibility is to not follow through on an order, which is equivalent to using the verb ought in an English sentence: He ought to have been on duty that night.

According to Yu.S. Stepanov, there are at least three distinct ways to understand the statement "Life is possible on Mars": 1) "There isn't life on Mars right now, but given the planet's conditions, life could exist there"; 2) "Life on Mars might exist in the future"; 3) "It can be assumed, even though we don't know for sure, that there is life on Mars" [Stepanov, 2004:239].

Similarly, modal verbs have extra interactions with mood forms rather than being semantically opposed to them. (I wish John were here / If only John were here / Should John be here / If only John could be here; If the doctor had come in time, he would have saved the man = Could the doctor have come in time, he might have saved the man; The police insisted the car should be moved immediately / The police insisted the car be moved immediately).

Discussion. We take modalities into account in our work at different linguistic levels. It is commonly understood that modal meanings are not only grammatical; hence, any word that conveys an evaluation of how the identified material interacts with the outside world should be classified as modal [Bloch, 2004:145]. Lexical modality is when a significant word in semantics manifests multiple subjective evaluative meanings, revealing: a) the specificity of the relationship between the denotation of a sentence to reality in terms of possibility/impossibility - elegiac modality; b) the speaker's attitude toward the situation named in the sentence in terms of an approval/disapproval assessment - axiological modality. The first type of modality is expressed in English by adjectives and adverbs of the alethic evaluation type: possible, apparently, evidently, likely; modal verbs could, might in the meaning of assumption; the second type of modality is realized in English by words of axiological assessment such as to my regret, (un)fortunately, too bad, luckily. In addition to the indicated units, modal meanings are also realized by the verbs like, try, endeavor, manage, prefer and many others.

The category of predicativeness of a sentence, which connects the overall propositional-situational content of a sentence (sentence denotation) to reality, is known as syntactic modality. In the syntactic modality, the speaker's consciousness is used to explain relationships between objects of extralinguistic reality. Professor M.Ya. Flea claims that a sentence's syntactic modality, or predicativity, is a unique category that denotes its grammatical originality and qualitative certainty and is not present in any other linguistic unit. It is noteworthy that the referential-denotative function of the respective linguistic units, words and sentences, is in opposition to the modal function of linguistic units, which we emphasize at the level of both words and sentences. Significant words that designate and describe objects and realities of extra-linguistic reality, as well as deictic signs—pronominal words, proper names—that are used in a sentence to identify objects and realities designated by significant vocabulary—perform the referential-denotative function in a sentence. Deictic words can sometimes help to clear up confusion and ambiguity brought on by the polysemy of important terms. Referentiality and modality are two interacting facets of sentence semantics that will be discussed in the following. Therefore, we contend that modality, often known as "subjective meaning" or "speaker's meaning," can function at the propositional, or sentence, level in addition to the word semantic level. Furthermore, a word's modality is included into the sentence's modality as a unique aspect of the sentence's overall modal structure.

A sentence's inherent modalities are found in speech utterances, or dictames, which are constructed from one or more sentences. In the language's segmental structure, this unit is positioned above the sentence and acts as a transitional link between it and the entire text. From the perspective of communicating the speaker's intended message, a dicteme is a finished speech act that serves four purposes: nomination, predication, thematization, and stylization. Specific lexical and grammatical units that make up a sentence's nominative-predicative scheme express a sentence's modality. In oral and written speech, dictemic modality is realized in the unusual distribution of these means in the relative segments of a paragraph or monologue statement, in thematic connections between sentences, in the author's conclusions, and in intonation. As a fundamental component of the text's modality, dictemic modality is less obvious since it "sprays" into the mass of judgments made in different sections of the text. As a result, the modality of a single sentence can sometimes mask the dictemic modality.

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