



## "INNOVATIVE ACHIEVEMENTS IN SCIENCE 2021"

### STYLISTIC AND LEXICOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS OF MODAL VERBS IN ENGLISH

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**Annotation:** *The article deals with the stylistic and lexicographic analysis of modal verbs in English, their use, analysis.*

**Keywords:** *Modal verb, ought to, have to, need, might, should, I'd rather.*

At present, some new trends can be observed in the formal-structural approach to the study of modal verbs. Thus, the use of the particle *to* after the verb *ought* in affirmative sentences remains unchanged, while in interrogative, negative, interrogative-negative sentences and short answers, the use of *to* becomes optional:

*He **oughtn't (to)** have left for USA.*

***Oughtn't I (to)** invite my brother?*

*Yes, I think you **ought (to)**.*

There are certain changes in the forms of the verbs *need* and *dare*, which are increasingly likened to the forms of most English verbs, used with the auxiliary verb *do*:<sup>1</sup>

*We **don't need** much bread. / "What **do you need** to build it?" he asked.*

In interrogative and negative sentences with the verb *dare*, where it is understood as non-modal, and the auxiliary verb *do*, the particle *to* may be absent:

***Does he dare (to)** tell her what he thinks about her?*

*She didn't **dare object** to himr claim.*

If the modal verbs *need* and *dare* are in the past tense or present tense with the subject in the third person singular, they usually attach the infinitive with the particle *to*:

*The president of the World Health Organisation Cancer Unit said USA **needed to** change its bad habits in the battle against cancer.*

Thus, the formal-structural approach implies the study of modal verbs from the point of view of their "defectiveness" using a limited set of grammatical rules.

Semantic approach to the study of modal verbs. The semantic approach is based on the separation of semi-auxiliary (modal) verbs from auxiliary ones. The difficulty arose due to the fact that the verb can be used in various functions - from a strongly pronounced modal to a purely auxiliary one. With the development of semantics, the main attention was focused on the meanings of modal verbs. This aspect has become dominant not by

<sup>1</sup> Collins, Peter and Carmella Hollo (2000), English Grammar An Introduction, London, MacMillan Press Ltd.



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chance. The meanings of modal verbs are extremely important for understanding how they function.

Often the choice of a modal verb to express a particular action becomes quite difficult, because the gradation of shades of one meaning can be expressed by several verbs:

*We **might** / **should** / **I'd rather** / **'d better** you (saw) / **will** / **must** / see the film.*

The verb will is used in the sense of absolute certainty, such examples are quite rare. In this case, one can observe a gradual increase in shades of perseverance from advice to order. A similar situation occurs when conveying different shades of the probability value (from the least degree to absolute certainty) by modal verbs might, could, may, should, must, will:

*That **might** / **should** / **must** / / **could** / **may will** / be Phil phoning at this hour.*

Among the new trends within the framework of the semantic approach, the development of the meanings of necessity and desire should be noted. After the verb need, it is possible to use not only a gerund, but also a complex object (gerundial construction):

*I need **my car servicing**. / you need your report checking*

Another important issue is the consideration of factors influencing the interpretation of the meanings of modal verbs. The most significant of them is, of course, the context.

It is the context that helps to accurately determine the meaning of a particular modal verb. If there is not enough context, there is a chance that the listener will not understand the meaning of the sentence or regard it as ambiguous. So, for example, the statement

*'You **must** speak Spanish' can be interpreted in different ways:*

*'You **may** be speak French' or*

*'You **must** speak French, do you?'*

The study of modal verbs at the semantic level paved the way for a closer and more detailed study of the style differences between them, which allows us to consider and understand how one or another modal verb or one of its meanings is chosen depending on the style of narration.<sup>2</sup>

Currently, a number of stylistic features can be observed in the system of modal verbs. For example, there is a tendency to use the verb can instead of may in the sense of permission and its expansion from the colloquial to the neutral style:

*Here you **can** order magazines with or without card.*

In negative and negative-interrogative sentences, the use of the verb can is preferable in all styles:

***Why can't** I call my friend right now?*

Some stylistic features are also present in the field of the use of equivalents of modal verbs. Thus, the use of the modal equivalent have to without the auxiliary verb do gives the interrogative sentence stylistic features of archaism:

***Have** we to bring the books on Monday?*

<sup>2</sup> Akmajian, Adrian and Frank Henry (1976). An introduction to the principles of Transformational Syntax. Cambridge, Mass: The MIT press.



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The newspaper-journalistic style is characterized by the use of the modal equivalent *be to*, which expresses the meaning of the decision made, followed by the use of the auxiliary verb *will* to form the future tense:

*The price of sugar is to rise during next month.*

Thus, within the framework of the stylistic approach to the study of modal verbs, the stylistic features of their use and functioning are considered.

Thus, the problem of classification of modal verbs becomes even more urgent. Obviously, traditional views on this issue do not cover the entirety of the content of teaching modal verbs. Therefore, in addition to the formal grammatical, semantic criteria, the criterion of frequency of use in authentic texts, one should take into account such grounds for classification as stylistic, idiomatic, phrasal, textual modalities, and also take into account the latest trends associated with the globalization of the English language.

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