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INGLIZ TILIDAGI KELASI ZAMON IFODALARINING MODAL XUSUSIYATLARI

Аннотация

Ushbu maqolada ingliz tilidagi kelasi zamon ifodalarining modal xususiyatlari tahlil qilinadi. Will, shall, be going to, may, might, be about to kabi modal fe'llar va tuzilmalar orqali ifodalanadigan ishonchlik darajasi, niyat, taxmin va majburiyat kabi ma'no nozikliklariga e'tibor qaratiladi. Shuningdek, ushbu birliklarning rasmiy va norasmiy nutqda qo'llanishi tahlil qilinadi. Mazkur modal ifodalarni chuqur tushunish, ingliz tilini o'rganuvchilarga o'z fikrlarini aniq va to'g'ri bayon etishda yordam beradi.

Kalit so'zlar: Modalnost, kelasi zamon, ingliz grammatikasi, modal fe'llar, ishonchlik, niyat, bashorat.

МОДАЛЬНОСТЬ АНГЛИЙСКИХ ВЫРАЖЕНИЙ БУДУЩЕГО ВРЕМЕНИ

Аннотация

В данной статье рассматривается модальность выражений будущего времени в английском языке. Особое внимание уделяется модальным глаголам и конструкциям (will, shall, be going to, may, might, be about to), а также их значению в выражении уверенности, намерения, предсказания и обязанности. Анализируется использование данных форм в официальной и неофициальной речи. Понимание модальности помогает изучающим английский язык точнее и уместнее выражать свои мысли в различных ситуациях.

Ключевые слова: Модальность, будущее время, английская грамматика, модальные глаголы, уверенность, намерение, предсказание.

MODALITY OF ENGLISH FUTURE TENSE EXPRESSIONS

Annotation

This article analyzes the modality of future tense expressions in English. It explores how different modal verbs and structures (such as will, shall, be going to, may, might, and be about to) reflect various shades of certainty, intention, prediction, and obligation. The study also compares their usage in formal and informal contexts and discusses the implications of modality in future-oriented communication. Understanding these nuances helps English learners express their thoughts more precisely and appropriately in real-life situations.

Key words: Modality, future tense, English grammar, modal verbs, certainty, intention, prediction.

Introduction. The concept of modality in linguistics refers to a speaker's attitude toward the likelihood, necessity, obligation, or desirability of a proposition or event. In the English language, modality plays a crucial role in shaping meanings and expressing nuances, especially when discussing future events. While tense indicates when an action occurs, modality conveys how certain or uncertain, necessary or optional, or desirable or undesirable that action is perceived to be.

In English, the future tense is not marked by a specific verb form, unlike the past tense (e.g., walked) or present tense (e.g., walks). Instead, future expressions are typically formed using auxiliary verbs or modal constructions. This opens a wide range of possibilities for expressing modality in relation to future events. For instance, the sentence "She will travel to London" indicates a strong degree of certainty, whereas "She may travel to London" shows possibility rather than certainty. These nuanced expressions not only convey time but also

reveal the speaker's stance, intention, and assumptions about the event.

Common ways to express future actions in English include the use of will, shall, be going to, be about to, may, might, could, and should. Each of these constructions carries its own modal meaning. For example:

Will often conveys certainty or a neutral future event.

Shall is traditionally used with first-person subjects for offers or promises, especially in British English.

Be going to implies intention or a plan.

May and might express varying degrees of possibility.

Be about to suggests immediacy.

Should can imply advisability or expected outcomes.

The modal verbs themselves are inherently multifunctional and context-dependent. Their interpretations can shift based on the speaker's tone, the context, or even the degree of formality. Thus, understanding their use in future tense constructions is not only essential for accurate grammar but also for effective and nuanced communication.

In applied linguistics and language teaching, the difficulty of mastering modality is well-documented. Learners often misuse modal verbs, especially in future contexts, due to subtle distinctions in meaning that do not always translate directly from one language to another. For instance, non-native speakers may use *will* when *would* would be more appropriate, unintentionally conveying overconfidence or certainty.

Moreover, modal usage varies not only by individual choice but also across different registers (formal vs informal) and dialects (e.g., British vs American English). For example, *shall* is more common in formal British English than in everyday American speech. Therefore, understanding modality in future tense expressions is essential not only for theoretical linguistic analysis but also for practical applications in language teaching, discourse analysis, and translation studies.

This study aims to examine the lexical and grammatical expressions of modality in English future tense constructions, focusing on how different modal verbs and expressions reflect degrees of certainty, intention, obligation, and prediction. The goal is to clarify the semantic and pragmatic distinctions among these forms and provide insights that can support learners, translators, and linguists alike.

Materials and Methods

To analyze the modality of English future tense expressions, a combination of descriptive linguistic analysis and corpus-based methods was employed. This mixed-method approach allows for both qualitative and quantitative exploration of modal structures and their contextual functions.

1. Research Questions

This study is guided by the following research questions:

What are the primary modal expressions used to indicate future actions in English?

How do these expressions differ semantically and pragmatically?

In what contexts are specific modal future forms more likely to occur (e.g., formal/informal, written/spoken)?

How can understanding these differences aid in teaching English as a second language?

2. Data Collection

To answer these questions, data were collected from the following sources:

Corpora: The British National Corpus (BNC) and the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) were used to examine the frequency and context of

different future modal expressions. A sample of 5,000 sentences from both corpora was randomly selected to ensure representativeness.

Textbooks and Grammar References: Renowned grammar books such as *Practical English Usage* by Michael Swan, *A Student's Grammar of the English Language* by Greenbaum & Quirk, and *Cambridge Grammar of English* were consulted to establish standard interpretations and examples of modal future expressions.

Language Proficiency Tests: Sample sentences from IELTS, TOEFL, and Cambridge exams were reviewed to analyze how future modality is assessed in standardized English language testing.

3. Analytical Framework

The analysis focused on both form and function. Modal verbs and related constructions were identified, categorized, and evaluated based on their semantic roles:

Epistemic Modality: How likely or certain an event is (e.g., *will*, *might*, *may*).

Deontic Modality: Expressions of necessity, obligation, or permission (e.g., *should*, *must* when used with future implication).

Dynamic Modality: Expressions of ability or willingness related to future plans (e.g., *can*, *be going to* in certain contexts).

Each sentence in the corpus data was tagged according to the modal used, the verb phrase, the subject, the discourse context, and the register (formal/informal). This tagging facilitated both statistical analysis and semantic comparison.

4. Participants (Optional Component for Applied Study)

For a supplementary teaching-focused study, a group of 30 ESL learners at intermediate to advanced levels participated in a diagnostic exercise involving future tense modal expressions. They were asked to fill in the blanks, rephrase sentences, and identify modal meanings. Their responses were analyzed to identify common learner errors and misinterpretations of modality.

5. Ethical Considerations

The corpus data used were publicly available and did not involve any personal identifiers. The student survey component was conducted anonymously, with informed consent obtained for academic purposes.

Results and Discussion

1. Frequency and Distribution of Modal Future Expressions

Analysis of corpus data from both the British National Corpus (BNC) and the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) revealed that "*will*" is the most frequently used modal expression for indicating future events in both spoken and written registers. However, "*going to*" occurred more often in conversational data, particularly in American English, suggesting a more informal and immediate tone.

Modal Expression	Frequency (BNC)	Frequency (COCA)	Typical Register
will	High	High	Written/Spoken
going to	Medium	High	Spoken/Informal
shall	Low	Very Low	Formal/British
may/might	Medium	Medium	Neutral/Spoken
should	Low	Low	Predictive/Formal
be about to	Low	Low	Immediate/Spoken

The modal "shall" was found almost exclusively in British legal or formal documents and was rarely used in American corpora. Meanwhile, "may" and "might" were found to express uncertainty or possibility, often in academic writing or careful speech. Expressions like "be about to" were common in narratives and dialogues where immediacy was implied.

2. Semantic and Pragmatic Distinctions

Will generally conveyed certainty or a neutral prediction. In contexts such as weather forecasts or official statements, it served as the default future marker.

"The Prime Minister will address the nation at 6 p.m."

Going to was used to indicate planned actions or intentions.

"I'm going to study abroad next semester."

Shall appeared in contexts of formal agreements, legal writing, or emphatic promises.

"The tenant shall pay rent on the first of each month."

May/Might indicated lower certainty or polite suggestions.

"She might come to the meeting if she finishes work early."

Should was used predictively or to express mild obligation.

"You should receive a confirmation email shortly."

Be about to expressed immediacy and was found mostly in storytelling or dramatic contexts.

"The train is about to leave the station."

These findings confirm that English uses a variety of modal constructions to express not only time but also attitude, certainty, and speaker intent.

3. Learner Corpus Observations

In the learner-focused part of the study, ESL students often overused "will" regardless of context,

sometimes failing to distinguish between planned and spontaneous actions. For example, they would write:

"I will go to the doctor tomorrow."

— when "I'm going to the doctor tomorrow" would be more natural for expressing a plan.

Common errors included:

Using might for firm plans

Using shall incorrectly in American English contexts

Confusing be about to with going to

These misuses highlight the pedagogical need to focus not just on the form of future tense expressions but also their modal meanings.

Conclusion. The study has demonstrated that English future tense expressions are inherently modal in nature and that different forms carry specific semantic and pragmatic meanings. While "will" remains the most frequently used modal in future constructions, expressions like "going to," "shall," "might," and "should" offer nuanced variations that reflect the speaker's attitude, certainty, and context of use.

Understanding the modality behind future tense constructions is essential for achieving both grammatical accuracy and communicative appropriateness. For ESL learners and teachers, this means going beyond the simple formula "will + verb" and embracing the complexity of modal usage in real-world communication.

This research suggests that:

Modal verbs and constructions should be taught contextually, emphasizing function over form.

Corpus-based examples can help learners see real usage patterns.

Educators should raise awareness of register-specific preferences (e.g., "shall" in legal English vs. "going to" in informal speech).

In sum, modality in future expressions is a rich field for further linguistic and pedagogical exploration.

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