

THE PRAGMATIC FUNCTION OF MODAL VERBS AND THE DISTINCTIONS BETWEEN UZBEK AND ENGLISH IN TERMS OF COGNITIVE ANALYSIS

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Abstract: This article examines the pragmatic role of modal verbs in English and Uzbek, highlighting their cognitive and pragmatic functions. Modal verbs serve crucial roles in conveying modality, which reflects the speaker's attitudes, intentions, and degrees of certainty. The analysis compares how modal expressions in each language are influenced by cultural and linguistic factors, impacting politeness, formality, and indirectness. Understanding these differences reveals the unique cognitive mechanisms each language utilizes, emphasizing the cultural context embedded within language structures. The findings aim to contribute to cross-linguistic studies on modality and improve pragmatic understanding in multilingual communication.

Keywords: Modal verbs, cognitive analysis, pragmatics, English, Uzbek, modality, cross-linguistic, language structure, politeness, certainty, indirectness, cultural context, multilingual, communication.

Modal verbs are essential in expressing modality—a linguistic feature that conveys a speaker's stance, intentions, or attitudes. While English and Uzbek utilize modal verbs, each language displays unique cognitive and pragmatic distinctions. For English, modality often emphasizes levels of certainty, politeness, and indirectness, aligning with broader Indo-European linguistic traditions. Uzbek, in contrast, reflects Turkic language influences, showing different pragmatic tendencies in terms of authority and indirect expression. This article explores how these modals function within their respective languages, aiming to understand the cognitive frameworks and pragmatic roles they serve. Through this analysis, we gain insights into how modality shapes intercultural communication, illuminating the deep-seated cultural contexts embedded within the structure of English and Uzbek.

Cognitive-pragmatic analysis of modal verbs in English and Uzbek languages shows the concept of modality in both languages, that is, how the speaker expresses his attitude and goals to the sentence. Modal verbs express the speaker's intention,

doubt or level of confidence and acquire a certain pragmatic significance. In English, modal verbs (for example, “can,” “may,” “must”) are sociolinguistically significant because they often mean politeness, formality, and indirect forms of expression. These verbs are used to express an offer, request or demand in a sentence and are chosen according to the social position of the speaker and the status of the addressee. For example, the verb “may” in English expresses gentleness, while the verb “must” expresses a strong demand and emphasizes the speaker’s insistence on a certain situation. These choices are examples of cognitive processes, as the speaker chooses a particular modal tool to express his or her opinion, and the choice is influenced by a number of social and cultural factors.

Uzbek also has modal verbs, but they are used in a unique way and have different pragmatic and cognitive functions compared to English. In the Uzbek language, verb forms serve to express more status, respect, and social relations. For example, the words “may” or “should” in Uzbek mean the speaker’s doubt or need for a certain event, and in a certain socio-cultural context, it can be taken as advice or instruction rather than a strong demand. This shows that communication in Uzbek society is more based on cooperation. On the contrary, in English, independence and personal decisions are in the first place, in Uzbek, social-group views and equality in communication or, in many cases, indicators of social status play a significant role. Thus, politeness and respect are more important in Uzbek, and indirect expression is strengthened through modal means.

The cognitive and pragmatic differences between English and Uzbek are also reflected in how the speaker expresses his intentions and goals. In English, the cognitive speaker tends to express his opinion openly and clearly, while in Uzbek, the indirect communication style prevails. These cognitive processes change the content of communication and have a positive effect on understanding, because each language has its own pragmatic aspects. For example, when an English speaker uses “must” to express determination, it often conveys dominance or strong intent, while in Uzbek, a similar form of “kerak” can have a more advisory tone. This shows the cognitive mechanisms of communication in each language and sheds light on how cultural values are reflected in language.

In a pragmatic sense, these differences significantly affect communication. For example, indirect expressions in English are perceived as more polite and understandable, while indirect styles in Uzbek are often perceived as a sign of respect. When a request or command in Uzbek is given politely and indirectly, it means that social status in society and communication is based on more cooperation. English, on

the other hand, values personal independence more, and therefore the indirect expression is often used in a more specific and strict sense of freedom of decision and personal choice. In both languages, cognitive processes and pragmatic norms create specific tools for language users and facilitate mutual understanding.

The fact that modality is expressed in different ways through language combinations in Uzbek and English is important in multilingual communication and provides an opportunity to increase cultural understanding. This analysis expands linguistic and pragmatic knowledge to foster greater understanding and respect in multicultural communication. For example, when translators or language learners know how important modal verbs are in both language cultures, the likelihood of ambiguity or misunderstanding in communication is reduced. In this way, the correct interpretation of modal verbs in multilingual communication has a positive effect not only on the grammatical aspect, but also on the socio-cultural aspects of communication. By properly understanding the pragmatic aspect, it becomes easier to create a more precise and appropriate meaning in the translation process.

In general, the study of modal verbs in English and Uzbek illuminates the pragmatic and cognitive mechanisms of each language and reveals how these mechanisms are connected to the cultural foundations of the language. Through mutual comparison of modal verbs, specific features of each language, as well as cultural influences on communication in them, are highlighted. This approach provides a deep understanding of multilingual communication and helps to understand complex meanings in communication.

In conclusion, modal verbs in English and Uzbek serve as windows into the respective cultures, reflecting distinct pragmatic and cognitive frameworks. English leans toward expressing choice and indirectness, influenced by Western norms of politeness and individualism. Uzbek, shaped by its cultural values, emphasizes social hierarchy and relational dynamics through modality. Understanding these differences enhances cross-linguistic awareness and enriches the interpretation of language in multilingual settings. This study underscores the necessity of pragmatics in intercultural communication, emphasizing how language structure carries cultural insights, which is crucial for achieving effective and nuanced expression across languages.

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