

To The Question Of The Moods Of The English Verb

Shamileva Razeta^{1,*} *Ovkhadov Musa*² *Zekieva Petimat*³

^{1,2} Kadyrov Chechen State University, Grozny, Russia

³ Chechen State Pedagogical University, Grozny, Russia

Abstract. The article is devoted to the category of mood of the English verb. This category in the English language is considered taking into account the research available in foreign and domestic linguistic science. The work takes into account the opinions of Henry Sweet, M. Dychben, H. Whitehall, V. Plotkin, F. Palmer, and others. Some of these researchers put forward the semantic approach in the first place, others - the form. There is also a kind of “compromise” approach (B.A. Ilyish).

The position of the authors of the article is based on the need to distinguish mood and modality, take into account the unity of form and content, and study the current state of the mood system in the English language, in which the historical approach, taking into account analogies with Latin, Greek and even Old English, is not fundamental. The theory of inclination put forward by L.S. Barkhudarov seems logical and successful. Along with the main moods, some attention is paid to the so-called “secondary” moods in the work.

1 Introduction

Syntax and semantics of modality are important problems of grammatical analysis. The modal operators of the English language present a particular difficulty in understanding the question of the functioning of the modality of possibility, reality and necessity. The traditionally called “mood” domain of language is only one of the grammatical subcategories within the broader grammatical category of modality. In many of the classical and new languages of Europe, the mood is associated with the opposition between the indicative and subjunctive moods. One of the best illustrations of modal systems is the function of modal verbs in English and possibly some other European languages. The most important difference between inclination and the modal system is that the inclination is mainly related to the binary system, which is not the case with the modal system. The mood is described in terms of “modal” and “non-modal”: the indicative mood is characterized as non-modal, the subjunctive as modal. The terms “real” and “surreal” are more preferable in categorization. The indicative mood can be seen as a reflection of reality, while the subjunctive mood captures unreality. For the sake of simplicity, there is a tendency to use

* Corresponding author: razula.80@mail.ru

the terms “modal” and “non-modal”. If we are talking about modal systems, then the category “non-modal realis” (in other words, realis per se) is used, i.e. a form that is unmarked or “modal realis” (irrealis). Let us give some examples on the material of the English language.

“The category of mood reflects the speaker’s point of view on the nature of the connection between the action and the actor or object. It expresses an assessment of the reality of the connection between the action and its subject from the point of view of the speaker or the will of the speaker to implement or deny this connection. Thus, the mood category is a grammatical category in the verb system that determines the modality of the action, that is, it denotes the relation of action to reality established by the speaker” [4]. The Big Encyclopedic Dictionary defines a verb as: “a part of speech denoting an action or state as a process. It has different grammatical categories in different languages, of which tense, person, mood, aspect and voice are the most typical. The main syntactic function of a verb in a sentence is to be a predicate. In fact, without a verb, it is impossible to correctly convey complete thoughts, and even the simplest sentences, such as, for example, Maria sings. The verb can be a sentence on its own, for example: Sing! or drive! [1-303]

In English, there are mainly five types (kinds) of verbs:

1. Intransitive verbs;
2. Transitive verbs;
3. Linking verbs;
4. Auxiliary verbs;
5. Modal verbs.

1. Intransitive verbs - verbs that do not require a direct object after themselves:

June cries. June is crying.

2. Transitive verbs are opposite by definition to intransitive ones:

Jenny writes a letter. Jenny is writing a letter.

Jackson likes swimming. Jackson likes to swim.

3. Linking verbs - verbs that have lost their own meaning in a certain context. They are used to connect the subject and other members of the sentence:

A face appeared at the window.

A face appeared in the window.

She remained outside while her sister went into the hospital.

She stayed outside while her sister went to the hospital.

Verbs in English are endowed with certain “parameters”:

1. Time - present, past, future;
2. View - indefinite, perfect, continuous;
3. Pledge - passive, active;
4. Person and number - plural, singular;
5. Incline.

In this work, we focus on inclination. Under the mood of the verb, Henry Sweet in his work “A new English Grammar (Part 1)” understands the grammatical form that expresses various types of connection between the subject and the predicate [2].

It should be noted that various systems and theories of moods proposed by linguists include from 16 to no moods at all. Obviously, the system of 16 moods proposed by M. Deutschbein (1928) is the result of a semantic approach. The main problem with his theory is that it focuses solely on meaning while neglecting form. According to H. Whitehall (1956), V. Plotkin (1989) and F. Palmer (1998), the category of mood has disappeared in modern English. However, this approach focuses primarily on form and neglects existing linguistic data [3].

It is important to note that B. A. Ilyish considers this view as “a way to cut the Gordian knot of problems that arise in the analysis of the modal meanings of the verb” [4].

2 Research Methodology

This paper uses theoretical and practical research methods, namely analysis, descriptive method, sampling method.

3 Results and Discussions

Before describing the various approaches to the category of mood in English, we want to indicate our position on the problem under discussion. First of all, a clear distinction must be made between mood and modality; then define the semantic scope of modality. Further, the grammatical category is considered as a unity of form and meaning; therefore, a combination of approaches can be consistently applied to all members of the opposition. Moreover, since combinations of modal verbs with an infinitive are not characterized by a discontinuous morpheme, they cannot be considered as an analytic mood [5]. We are studying the current state of the mood system in English, which means that analogies with Latin, Greek, and even Old English are not valid unless they are supported by appropriate linguistic data. Finally, we proceed from the assumption that homonymy in the language system should be avoided.

Let's consider various interpretations of the mood system in modern English and choose the one that would meet our requirements for a grammatical category.

Between these extreme theories there are intermediate views, such as, for example, A. I. Smirnitsky [6], who proposed a system of 6 inclinations:

1. Indicative: He came without an invitation;
2. Imperative: Go dress up!
3. Subjunctive I: I suggest that he go there;
4. Subjunctive II: I wish I were at the meeting;
5. Suggestive: Should you go there?;
6. Conditional: Would you answer her call if you heard it?

An analysis of the mood system above shows that it has several weaknesses:

First, its semantic basis is inconsistent because the meaning of the condition is not modal.

Secondly, combinations of modal verbs that have a pronounced lexical meaning with an infinitive are analytic forms, which does not converge in this case.

Finally, homonymous forms are introduced, which should be avoided.

We have come to the conclusion that this system, although it tries to reconcile form and meaning, does not meet our requirements as a grammatical category. In addition, it seems rather complicated and inappropriate for educational purposes.

The most common system in traditional grammar that we encounter in school grammar and textbooks is the system of three moods: indicative, imperative and subjunctive. They are sometimes called inclinations of fact, inclinations of will and inclinations of thought, respectively [7; 2]. This system is identical to the mood system in Latin. Moreover, the same system of moods exists in the Russian language.

Some linguists also subdivide the subjunctive mood. This gives rise to the development of G. Suit's system of seven moods, which is criticized in the same way as the system of A. I. Smirnitsky.

Systems that include two inclinations were proposed by M. Ya. Bloch [8] and L. S. Barkhudarov [5].

The mood category, according to M. Yu. Bloch, expresses the speaker's interpretation of the situation as real or imaginary. He distinguishes in modern English two moods: indicative and subjunctive, which oppose each other, thus forming the unity of the system. The indicative mood represents the action as real, and the subjunctive - as imaginary [6].

An analysis of the theory of mood by M. Yu. Bloch shows that this is another attempt to identify the relationship between the form and meaning of the category of mood, which also does not meet our requirements for a grammatical category.

Having analyzed the approach of L. S. Barkhudarov to the category of inclination, we can assert that he proposes a twofold system in which the opposition lies between the indicative mood and the imperative mood.

Modal operators in modal systems index the speaker's judgments. Example (1) presents an unmarked form "realis" in which the proposition is declarative. It asserts information that is a fact to be taken for granted. In example (2), modal verbs indicate different types of inference: 2.a. - conclusion about the probability of a fact with the verb *may*; 2.b - the conclusion of the only possible fact with *must* and 2.c - the conclusion of the conclusion with the verb *will*. We believe that *realis* and *irrealis* are mutually exclusive: different languages have either inflection or modality, but not both. The English language, in which the morphologically marked forms of the subjunctive mood have disappeared, and the modal system has developed, is no exception in this regard [3]. The English language shows specificity, since modal verbs in it have their own characteristics. For example: 1) modal verbs have all the features of auxiliary verbs; 2) they do not have the -s form of the third person, i.e. **cans*, **mays*, etc.; 3) they cannot be used together in standard English i.e. the sequence *may can*, etc., cannot occur. [1: 333]. At the same time, there are many problem areas, in particular, the status of the forms *could*, *might* and *should* and the relationship between *ought* and *must* are not defined. The position of semi-modal forms is also unclear, especially *be going to*, *have (got) to* and *be able to*, which have appeared in the language quite recently [2], since they are often used in contexts in which modal verbs cannot be used. It should be added that there is no subjunctive mood in English, except for some forms such as: *Long live the queen!* *I propose they be excluded.* *May he rest in peace!* *I'm surprised that you should think that.* *If I were you.* The argument is as follows. None of the examples fit the role of the subjunctive mood, which is known, for example, from Latin. The first two examples simply give the grammatical form of the verb, which is also used for the infinitive and imperative. This grammatical form has many different functions, but it is not a subjunctive as in other languages. In the next two examples, there is just a modal verb (*may* and *should*) whose function is explained in terms of the English modal system, not in terms of mood. In the last example, there is a form that is invariable in number and person, like other forms of the past tense, such as *knew*. Thus, in modern English there is a modal system, but there is no mood.

The four main moods of the verb, according to the theory of D. Pullum and R. Huddleston:

1. Indicative;
2. Imperative;
3. Interrogative;
4. Subjunctive.

1. The indicative mood is the form of the verb used in ordinary utterances, statements of fact, expressions of opinion, or questions. Most English sentences are used in the indicative mood [11].

In modern English, as a result of the loss of inflections, verbs are no longer distinguished for moods. As Liz Fontaine, Ph.D. in Linguistics, York University in Toronto, notes in "Analysis of English Grammar. Systemic functional introduction": "The singular number of the third person in the indicative mood "-s" is the only surviving indicator of the mood" [12: 26]:

He works for Elon Musk.

He works for Elon Musk.

2. The imperative mood is a form of the verb that expresses commands, orders, requests. The imperative mood uses the infinitive of the verb without the particle "to", the form of the verb in the imperative mood (with the exception of the verb "be") is the same as the second person in the present tense:

Go and make us some tea. "Come and make us some tea."

Please answer him later. Please answer him later.

3. Interrogative mood - the form of the verb in this mood does not change. Instead, auxiliary verbs are used and placed before the subject. The main verb follows it. Such sentences always end with a question mark, which is the easiest way to identify them:

Did you finish the book I gave you?

Have you finished reading the book I gave you?

Do you have any friends?

You have friends?

4. Subjunctive mood - expresses a desire, an action that cannot be performed, an unreal fact:

I would go if I were younger.

I would go if I was younger.

It presents a particular difficulty in learning a language, although it is the most rarely used mood.

In English, in addition to the main moods of the verb, linguists also distinguish "minor" moods.

A. Akmajian, R. Demers, A. Farmer and R. Harnish explain in the book *Linguistics: An Introduction to Language and Communication* that minor moods are on the "periphery of communication, are rarely used and vary widely" [13].

One of the most common minor moods is label or tag. It is a sentence or question added to a declarative sentence:

1. Narrative tag:

You have been crying again, haven't you?

You cried again, didn't you?

2. Imperative tag:

Leave the room, will you?

Leave the room, please.

Other examples of minor moods:

Pseudo-imperative:

Move or I'll shoot!

Move or I'll shoot!

Alternative Question: A type of question that offers the question's addressee a closed choice between two or more answers:

Does Glenn resemble his father or his mother?

Who does Glenn look more like, his father or his mother?

Exclamatory: sudden utterance or cry:

What a lovely weather!

What wonderful weather!

Wish: a category of grammatical mood expressing desire, hope, need:

May he rest in peace!

May he rest in peace!

Curse, insult:

You are just a pig!

You are just a pig!

4 Conclusions

Thus, the category of mood in modern English is a very complex system as a result of changes both in the structure of the language and in the communication system. Therefore, we consider it important to take into account the unity of semantics and form.

In general, the category of mood as a linguistic problem is a rather complex system in a number of other languages, the data of which also indicate the need to distinguish between the categories of mood and modality, taking into account semantics and form, i.e. taking into account the form and content, as well as historical changes in the system of languages.

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