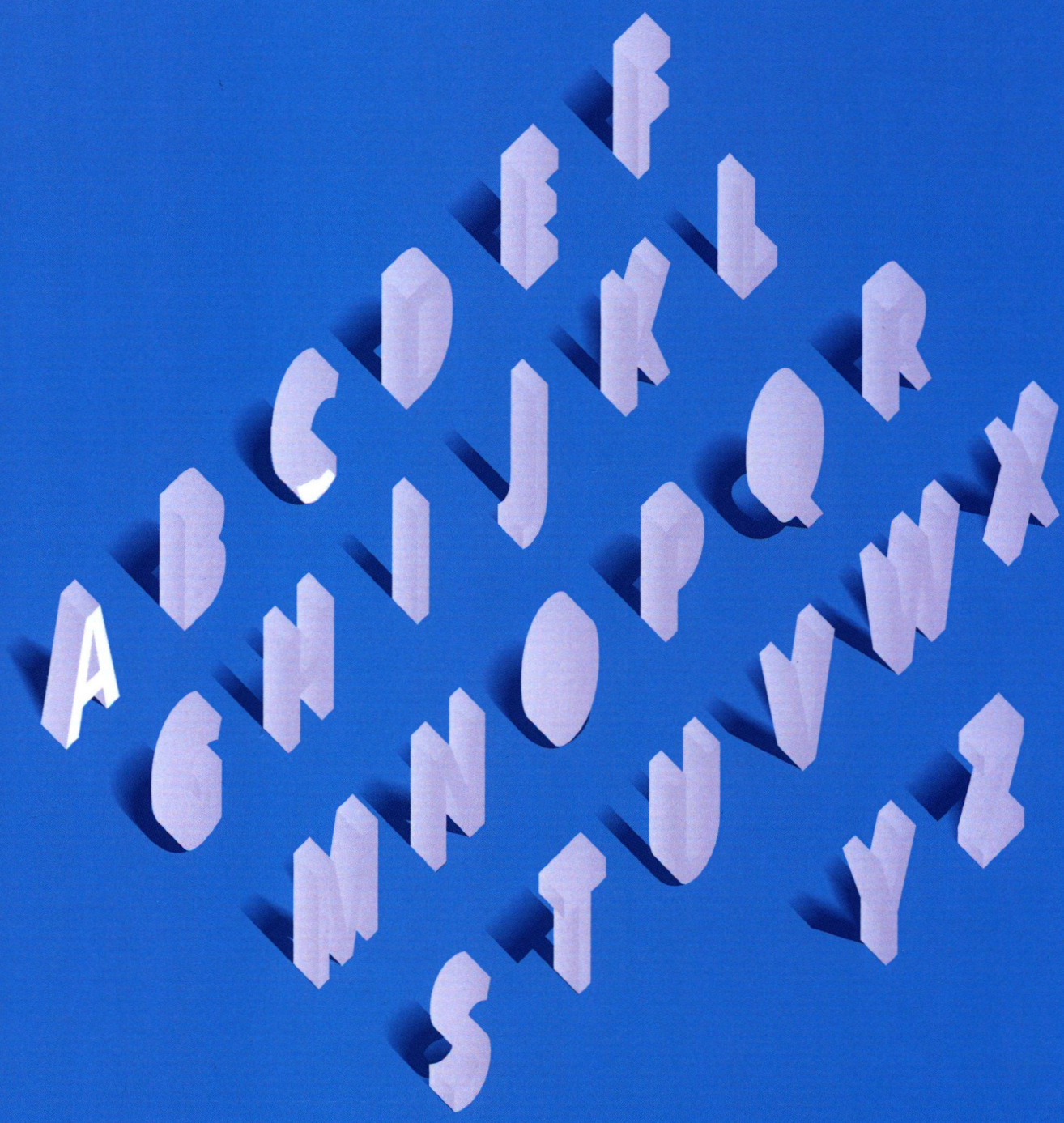
Modern English Structures: Forms, Functions and Position

Contributors: Sevil Elchin Gurbanova, et al.



About the Book

Modern English is the form of the English language spoken since the Great Vowel Shift in England, which began in the late 14th century and was completed in roughly 1550. Modern English has a large number of dialects spoken in diverse countries throughout the world. Language is a means of communication. It is a system of conventional oral and written signals. In English, the correspondence between the written form and the spoken form is not consistently maintained. We use a number of different speech sounds while speaking English. Words are used in speech. But word is not the smallest unit of a language. A word can be divided into smallest linguistic units which are called as 'Phonemes'. Every language has certain number of distinctive sound units which are called as 'Phonemes'. Thus a phoneme is a minimal distinctive sound unit of language. To illustrate, the word 'bat' can be divided into the smallest linguistic units. These are the smallest linguistic units which cannot be divided further. They are distinctive because they are the smallest units in the sound system of a language which can be used to differentiate meanings from one another. This means that when one phoneme is substituted by another, it produces change in meaning. Each phoneme may have a number of variants. These variants are called as allophones. Linguistics is a systematic study of language. Phonetics is a branch of linguistics which deals with the medium of speech. It deals with the production, transmission and reception of the sounds of human speech. It is related to the description and classification of these sounds. On the other hand, phonology is an applied phonetics. It is a branch of linguistics which deals with the sound system of a particular language. It is about different patterns of sounds. The selection and organization of the speech sounds in that particular language constitutes the phonology of that language. It also studies how the phonemes are combined into syllables and how the prosodic features of length, stress and pitch are organized into certain patterns. Thus, phonemes are studied in phonology. It is notable that phonology of one language can be different from the phonology of other languages.

Modern English Structures- Forms, Functions and Position is intended for advanced graduate students and practitioners interested in contemporary English, especially those whose key area of interest is English as a second language, English stylistics, theoretical and applied linguistics.

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Preface

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Modern English Structures- Forms, Functions and Position is intended for advanced graduate students and practitioners interested in contemporary English, especially those whose key area of interest is English as a second language, English stylistics, theoretical and applied linguistics.

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1

VERBS EXPRESSING WISH AND THEIR MODALITY FEATURES IN MODERN ENGLISH

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ABSTRACT

In this article the study of the modality features of verbs expressing wish in modern English is carried out. Modality is a semantic-grammatical category which expresses the attitude of the speaker to the discourse. It is frequently targeted for its subjectivity, meaning and contextual expressions. Modality features of verbs expressing wish has been thoroughly researched, the latest achievement of different linguists on this topic have been investigated. A new approach on modality of the verbs expressing wish has been given in the result of the article

INTRODUCTION

This article deals with the modality features and functions of verbs expressing wish in modern English. In the English linguistics study of modality of verbs, including modal words on which a number of scientific works have been written, have always been in the focus of attention of the scholars. In the dictionary of linguistic terminology modality has been given as the attitude of the speaker towards the expressed thought, as grammatical semantic category expressing the attitude of the objective reality towards the thought which is expressed. (Akhmanova, 1966) Some linguists have studied modality functions of a number of verbs, existing in the English language. In spite of the fact that a number of scientific works have been devoted to the study of wish as the modality of verbs in linguistics, this problem is still causing the subject of dispute among the linguists. Though wish is not accepted as modality by the logical semantics, a number of scholars have assumed wish as the meaning of modality and have made attempts to prove this thesis. (Ballie, 1955; Bogdanov, 1977) Some of these authors determine modality parameters as a theoretical basis for their classification and each of which plays a certain role in determining modality. It includes, for example, the attitude of the speaker to the situation (assessment), the status of the situation directed to real attitude (irreality) etc. The second model appeared on the boundaries of diachronic morphology theory being one of the functional theories. In this case wish is affirmed. It often exists in association with diachronic modality. (Bybee, 1994) Though they belong wish to modality, they introduce its meaning as something nearer to the meanings of

"encouragement", "longing for". A. Bondarenco notes that meaning of "wish" is a type of modality, and it expresses objective situation of a person and gives special modality expressing grammatical forms to the verbs such as "to wish", "to want", "to desire". (Bondarenco, 1979) But other investigations suppose that one structure of the verbs denoting "wish" and "desire" express modality but the others' don't. (Alisova, 1971; Benosova, 1972; Grepl, 1978) Some scholars evaluate modality of the verbs expressing modality as something emerging from the meaning of "obligation". M. Swan notes that modality in the English grammar expresses possibility and obligation. (Swan, 2001) D. Layons associates wish and intention with obligation. (Lyons, 1978)

J. Kurylowicz when belonging the meaning of wish to modality widely, uses the term "optative". (Kurylowicz, 1964) O. V. Shestakova also uses the meanings of optative with pure wish in close to each other meanings and irrespective of the realization of the wish he accepts them similar to each other in the meaning, as they both express the meaning of "wish". (Shestakova, 1995)

O. N. Novikova has also characterized the meaning of modality. In this respect the scholar revealing the role of each component of the sentence in the creation of modality contents determines the relativity of wish modality, analyzes text creating quality of the considered sentences. He indicates that depending upon the fact whether modality is characterized as the category of logics of linguistics the status of conception of wish among the modal meanings is determined differently. As to the investigator modal meanings expressed by the verbs denoting the meaning of wish which participates in the structure are determined by taking into consideration the subject of speech, subject of wish, and also predicate modality and mutual concrete speech situations. Wish modality is existing in mutual impact with aim. The basis of mutual influence of those being in the process of communication contains the attitude of speaker and listener to the event, necessity or unnecessity of the realization of the event and the direction of the event. (Novikova, 1989)

MATERIAL STUDIED

It is considered that the verbs denoting the meaning of wish, during their syntactic-semantic analysis in the sentence, important categories associated with the conception of wish driven from the contents must be taken into consideration. As to O. N. Novikova, it is necessary to take into consideration different colorings characteristics for each type of wish, to determine the character of the attitudes between the modality of wish with the category of affirmation or (negation), to study the circle of impact of the meaning of wish within the text, to make clear in which attitudes can the sentences with the verbs denoting wish can be in relations with other sentences within the contents. (Novikova, 1989)

I. G. Jirova's thoughts on the modality of verbs expressing wish is also of interest. The investigator in his research work called "Semantic field of verbs denoting wish in the modern English language" while analyzing the agreement of verbs expressing wish, speaks of valency of verbs on certain language, more exactly speaking, lexis conception. I. G. Jirova determines two semi-groups in the composition of group of verbs denoting wish on the basis of the analyzed words:

1) verbs denoting wish which have tendency to modality
2) verbs denoting wish which have no tendency to modality

Verbs agreeing only with nouns within the construction are included into the list of the verbs of wish not having tendency to modality. These are"to crave", "to covet", "to thirst for/after", "to lust for", "to sigh for", "to pant for", 'to itch for", "to burn for", "to care for" and other verbs.

But the verbs agreeing only with nouns but also with infinitive within the construction are expressed with the verbs of wish which have more tendency to modality. It includes verbs such as"to desire", "to want", "to wish", "to long for", "to hunger for/after", "to die for", "to pine for", "to yearn for", "to emulate". (Jirova, 1990)

E.P.Vasilyeva has investigated intentional conceptions and means of their expressions in English directed to modality. Expression of speaker's will in the process of communication is one of the important forms of manifestations of modality. E.P.Vasilyeva discriminates directive expression of will from the forms of will expressions denoting non-directive expressions of subjective thirst for and he includes into the circle of influence of will expressing of both, addressed (aim-denoting) and the unaddressed (denoting will) will expressions. During the addressed will-expression the addressee becomes the obligatory component of the semantic structure of the expression, and here the person realizing the wish of the speaker is intended. During the addressed will expression it is not important for the speaker who is listening to him, this modality attitude does not require any other object. E. P. Vasilyeva sees the modality of wish in the addressed form of will-expresser.

E. P. Vasilyeva has introduced wish expressing modality in objective optative modality in the widest form.

1) The author includes into the first group the verbs denoting passionate, strong desire and wish, such as to desire, to long for, to covet, to lust
2) The verbs as "to want", "to wish", "to will" are included into the second group. The willfulness expressed by these verbs is weaker in comparison with the verbs mentioned in the first group, such as "to desire", "to long", "to covet", "to lust".
3) Into this group are included such verbs and verbal constructions expressing will in which in comparison with the previous groups of verbs the contents of wish are weaker. The following verbs are included into this group: "to intend", "to be going" + infinitive, "to have a mind", "to be in spirits", "to be in a mood"
4) Into the fourth group of expressions of grammatic forms of "Present Subjunctive" not excluding the fulfilment of the stated a actions are included, such as:

   "would / should like" + infinitive, "would sooner / would rather", "had better", "would / should be glad", "sooner had" + infinitive

   All these means express wish, longing which are not insistent as to their degree of intensivity.
5) The last group involves means expressing the idea of unreal wish. Here realization of the action, which is spoken on, either is problematic for the speaker or in general seems to be unreal. This content is possible thanks to the usage of different types of conditional characterizations not obeying the verb "to wish" in the subordinate clauses with the contents of object. (Vasilyeva, 1999)

Some other linguists consider the verbs denoting wish as boulomaic modality as a type of dynamic modality, as it has a "person". M.R. Perkins notes that indication of a person drives from the wish of a person and it is like deontic volitive modality. (Perkins, 1983) But Palmer suggests that 'bouletic' would be etymologically preferable. (Palmer, 2001) Though such expressions as "it is hoped/desired/feared/regretted that…." are belonged to modality, N. Rescher and P. Simpson introduce the verb "to want" as modality only. (Rescher, 1968) (Simpson, 1993) R. A. Latipov too in his investigations has touched upon the problem of modality of the verbs denoting wish. The author notes that wish not depending on whether it is real or unreal always bears potential contents. The characterization of obligatory modality between the object and its features is taking place in a certain time (past, present, or future tenses). Verbal predicate of present tense expresses modal attitude towards the reality. But those which express past tense states suspicious attitude to the reality or to its realization. (Latipov, 1992)

O. V. Khanina in her investigations notes that the concept of modality exists in narrow and wider senses. The wider understanding of modality is based upon any evaluative attitude of the person towards the reality and at this time thought, emotion, understanding notions may be completely valued as lawful representation of modality. Verbs denoting wish as to their features often do not differ from the verbs expressing emotion, thought, and understanding which makes it possible to belong them to a proper group. Verbs denoting wish in most languages of the world never join the modal verbs. (Khanina, 2004) Hereon we may come to the conclusion that O. V. Khanina too affirms the modality of verbs expressing wish. Despite the verbs denoting wish are belonged to the group of wish verbs or hypothetic modality, their differences are also indicated. In the hypothetic modality as to the existence of fact, the realization of wish is expressed as possible. In the wish modality the desire to realize the fact and the wish find their reflections. (49, 9) O. B. Shestakova in her research work has investigated the modality of verbs denoting wish and has valued them as the form of manifestation of subjective modality of verbs denoting wish to be studied from the functional-syntactic and pragmatic aspects. The author notes that the subjective modality determines the contents of the subjective attitude as wished and unwished factors.

Besides that, O. B. Shestakova stresses the fact of belonging of the expression of contents of the subjective modality to the different language levels. (lexic, morphological, and syntactic levels). To the lexic level belong such language units, in which content of wish is expressed by the wish nuclear of these units. Here belong verbs to want", "to wish", "to desire", "to long", "to crave"; adjective "desirable"; also verbs possessing the meaning of wish in them such as "to hope", "to look forward", "to be eager", "must" and other units of lexic type. To the morphological level belong the oblique and imperative moods. But to the syntactic level belong such constructions as "to be willing to", "if only", "would like", "would love" and other type of constructions such as"let it be", "may the rain come", "long live the king". O. B. Shestakova thinks that the choice of any of these means is determined a great deal by the impact of factors of pragmatic character, and it is closely associated with the atmosphere of intercourse.

The author related with these themes, notes the following parameters as the most important factors:

1) The subject of wish indications of age, psychological and other character features of the subject

2) The character of the wish (it is realized or unrealized)
3) On whom the realization of the wish depends
4) The character features of the object of wish
5) The highest degree of the wish
6) Time limits of the state of wish
7) Suitability to other modal meanings

O. B. Shestakova pays special attention to the subjective contents of wish and stresses the fact of much dependence of this factor on the communicative focus of the expression. The contents of wish are expressed by the verbs denoting wish. In this case taking the degree of highness of the expression of wish is taken into consideration in the choice of this or that verb which is the main factor.

For example:

To want – to long

To wish – to crave. (Shestakova, 1995)

It is evidently observed from above mentioned issues that O. B. Shestakova doesn't deny the modality of the verbs denoting wish, but she specifies only the subjective modality of the verbs of this group, denoting the contents of wish. In the study of the author subjective modal contents of wish are observed in both simple and hybrid speech acts. Speaking of hybrid acts the author intends to mean speech acts involving the activity contents of different types. (Shestakova, 1995)

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Questions

The paper aims to investigate the modality features of verbs expressing wish in Modern English. The study attempts to address the following two questions:

1) Do all verbs expressing wish in English have modality features?
2) How do they express modality in different contexts?

Method

The researches of different linguists were analyzed theoretically and comparatively. Referring to the preferred concepts, the verbs expressing wish were studied in details pragmatically and grammatically. By using different literature, the verbs expressing wish were analyzed and modality features of the verbs were investigated in different contexts.

Scope of the Study

Researching the modality of the verbs of wish it could be stated that especially verbs of this group such as "to will", "to wish", "to want" expresses more modality than the other verbs belonging to this group. Let us consider the modality of the verb "to want" among this group of verbs.

First of all, it is necessary to note that the verb "to want" is used in two modusus – objective and subjective. In the objective modus it states the meanings of obligation and demand, i.e. this verb factually approaches as to the meaning to the verbs "must", "ought to", "need" and other verbs. The objective meaning of the verb "to want" as a rule is a deontic complex expressing the obligation of the necessity, its modality etc. But this verb politely expresses these meanings of obligation that's why it is more used than the other verbs denoting directly, clearly the meaning of obligation. On the other hand the verb "to want" is characterized by the subjective semantic, i.e. it expresses personal wish, mood, desire and in its this quality. This is a strong volitive syntagm as "to have a great desire". The presuppositive -implicative meanings of the saying having the verb "to want" in its composition can be understood as its meanings associated with context and thus it can be considered not as paradigmatic meaning but as syntagmatic meaning. Here belong wish modifications of emotive load, also paradigmatic meanings differing by the different shades of meanings expressing advice, offer, suggestion, order, demand, sentence etc. The subjective meaning of the verb "to want" is of emotive shade of meaning. This verb practically occupies a major place in all the fields of linguistics, but in practice mostly the objective meaning of the verb is realized.

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