

## A Research into Modality in English, Spanish, and Tatar Proverbs

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### Abstract

This article was devoted to the comparative analysis of modality in English, Spanish, and Tatar proverbs. The topicality of the research was determined by the fact that modality was one of the most complex and contradictory concepts, from a variety of different interpretations. The topic of this article was relevant to modern linguistics for revealing the features and the structure of modality in proverbs of English, Spanish and Tatar languages. General and particular types with the use of modality of proverbs had been allocated in the article. The types of classifications of proverbs were also identified. On the basis of the results of the study of proverbs in English, Spanish and Tatar languages are presented in the article. Article submissions, the results of the research are of interest for scientists studying the modality of proverbs in English, Spanish and Tatar languages. The results could be also used both when studying intercultural processes and by culture experts, philologists, ethnologists and others groups interaction and analyzing cultural and research issues and processes of the studying languages.

**Keywords:** Modality; Modality component; Proverbs; Classification; Interpretation.



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### 1. Introduction

A proverb is a simple and concrete saying, popularly known and repeated, that expresses a truth based on common sense or experience. Proverbs are often metaphorical. Sayings and proverbs are part of any language, any culture. They were used to convey knowledge, wisdom and life verity from the beginning of times and till today. It is impossible to imagine language, or even our speech without sayings and proverbs. Not only they considerably widen our vocabulary, adorn and enrich our speech, but they also carry considerable information on the most vital things, underlining their polymathy.

Linguistics has come a long way in studying modality. The first definition of modality occurred in the linguistic dictionary of [Zainulli \(1986\)](#), who viewed modality as a conceptual category with the meaning of the speaker's relation to the content of the utterance and the relation of the content of the utterance to reality, expressed in various lexical and grammatical means, such as form and mood, modal verbs, modal words, etc ([Ahmanova, 1966](#)).

"The problem of motivation /non-motivation of phraseological meaning and its dependence on the inner from transparency /non- transparency has not been solved" ([Ayupova et al., 2017](#)).

In foreign Spanish studies, the development of modality problems is mainly carried out in two directions:

1) A verbal inclination is analyzed in detail, the majority of researchers identified it with the category of modality ([Kilis and Manuel, 2007](#)) and considered it as one of the grammatical means of this category by only some authors; ([Kodekova, 2018](#))

2) An interpretation of the modality at the syntactic level is reduced, as a rule . . . ([Antúnez, 2009](#)),

Zainullin in his book "Modality as a Functional-Semantic Category" cited the following modes of modality:

1) Modality of reality means that the content is expressed from the point of view of the speaker, corresponds to the objective reality: the subject perceives the reported as a real and reliable fact.

2) Modality of invalidity on the contrary means that the content of the reported does not correspond to the objective reality, the subject perceives the reported as not real, i.e. as possible, desirable, presumptive, questionable, etc.

The modality of invalidity is subdivided into the following semantic species ([Zainulli, 1986](#)),

- 1) modality of necessity (debility modality)
- 2) modality of possibility and impossibility (potential modality)
- 3) hypothetical (hypothetical) modality
- 4) incentive (imperative) modality
- 5) modality of intention (intentional modality)
- 6) desired (optative) modality

Within text linguistics, modality is considered as one of the main text categories (Galperin, 1981). Thus, there are six basic types of text modality:

- 1) Epistemological modality
- 2) Evidential type of modality
- 3) Emotional modality
- 4) Meaning of the conditioning modality
- 5) Hypothetical modality
- 6) estimated (axiological) modality

Accordingly, the modality can have many aspects of study and can be examined from various scientific positions. Comparing the languages of different language groups, it made sense to create a classification of different types of modality in English, Spanish, and Tatar proverbs based on the studied types of modality.

This research provided an analysis of the structural, semantic and functional-stylistic features of the PE with the modality component in English, Spanish and Tatar languages (Bazarova and Gilyazeva, 2017).

## 2. Methodology

The methodological basis of the research was the fundamental works of native and foreign researchers: Tumasheva (1977), Zainulli (1986), Galperin (1981), etc.

A review and analysis of theoretical materials has shown that conceptual analysis, comparative analysis, conspiratorial and linguocultural analysis, and component analysis methods have been used in the course of the research.

Material for practical analysis, obtained by the method of random sampling, even with a superficial analysis demonstrates the implemented in the functional grammar of the approach to the study of modality in proverbs of English, Spanish and Tatar languages.

## 3. Results and Discussion

The category of modality can have many aspects of study and examined from various scientific positions. A comprehensive description of the modality can be found in the works of academician Vinogradov (1975). He traced the history of studying this category, outlined the range of means of expression of modality, and revealed its scope and specific content. He believed that each sentence contained an indication of the attitude to reality in linguistics.

The same opinion was expressed by another Russian linguist, considering modality as a category inherent in language in reality, i.e. speech, and the very essence of the communicative process.

The point of view, according to which the invariance of the modality is the relation of the content of the utterance to reality, is widely spread. Modality also extends to the relation of the subject of the utterance to action and the attitude of the speaker to the authenticity of the content of the utterance (Dang, 2005). With this approach, many varieties and means of expressing the modality are declared secondary or altogether outside this multifaceted, but at the same time integral category. This point of view is presented in the works of Bondarko (1990), Greple (1973), Zolotova (1962), Panfilov (1977), and some other linguists.

Given the nature of modality, Lyons distinguished two classes of proposals: imperative (expressing an order or instruction) and interrogative (expressing additional modal signs, on those or other expectations of the speaker). He also found various ways of grammatical expression of the speaker's attitude to the content of the utterance in various languages. In his opinion, at least three scales of the modality were relevant:

- "desire and intention",
- "necessity and obligation", and
- "confidence and opportunity" (Lyons, 1978).

All researchers have noted an obvious interrelationship between people and language, to track ethnic identity in systems of set expressions in which there are proverbs, sayings, phraseological units, and other paremias. It is also necessary to recognize that the Tatar proverbs, as well as proverbs of other people of the world are used in two values: direct and figurative (Yusupova *et al.*, 2015).

Tumasheva, studying the morphology of the Tatar language, highlighted the correctness of the selection of modal words in a separate language group and recognized them as independent parts of speech. he also affirmed the objectivity and the subjectivity of modal words and divided them according to this parameter into two large groups: the modal words used in the composition of the predicate expressing an objective relation of statements to reality (bar, yuk, tiesh, kiræk, momkin, yariy, ihtimál, imesh, ikæn), and modal words used as an introductory word in the sentence expressing the subjective attitude of the speaker (áhrí, imesh, bugáí, bælki, shshlyat', ichmáslam, ælbættæ) (Tumasheva, 1977).

In most English grammars (Close, 1979; Swan, 1984), information was find only on modal verbs and their semantics. Swan, in particular, pointed out that modality in grammar (English) was considered to be in the form of values such as will (volatility) and possibility or necessity. He also added that verbs expressing these values were called "modal auxiliary verbs" (Swan, 1984).

## 4. Summary

According to the research of modality in English, Spanish and Tatar languages based on the present classification, proverbs with an epistemological type of modality were considered in this research. Its markers were the verbs of knowledge, understanding, thinking, and remembering, as well as constructions expressing logical

cause-effect relations of processes and facts (complex sentences with subordinate real or probable conditions). There are some examples in this respect:

In English:

*Live and learn.*

In Spanish:

a mas bibir, mas saber - Live and learn

- If you do not learn in youth, you will regret it in old age.

- It is never too late to learn.

Verbs of speaking, action, and perceptual activity, always in the form of an indicative mood, modal verbs *could*, *must*, *might* in the sense of supposition, modal words *certainly*, *perhaps*, *etc.*, words removal and comparison *as if*, *it seemed*, *it appeared*, *like*, others' speech (direct, indirect, generalized exposition of someone else's speech) had been also used in this type of modality.

In English:

*A bird may be known by its song* - A bird is seen by flight; A broken friend is unreliable, but will never be sound

*A cat in gloves catches no mice* - Without difficulty, you will not pull out the fish from the pond. Do not wash your hands, you will not wash yourself.

*Be swift to hear, slow to speak* - Listen more, talk less

*Do not poke your wolves when the tail is tekin* - The leopard cannot change its spots. - The leopard cannot be repainted. The wolf molts every year, but everything happens (yes, the customs do not change). How many wolves do not feed, he looks into the forest.

In Spanish:

- A frequent guest is not welcome brightly.

- There is no law for love.

- Darn the hole until it is great.

- Live a century, learn.

In Tatar language:

- Tatar will break a stone.

- Tatar can drive in a nail in a stone.

- If you like riding you should like carry the sleigh.

The emotional modality was also considered whose components were:

Emotionality, evaluativity, sincerity, interest, and figurativeness; each one needed to be discovered and studied in detail (Tarasova *et al.*, 2017). The following examples of PE with this component were also found:

In English:

*A burden of one's own choice is not felt;*

*For the love of the game;*

*He is happy that thinks himself so;*

In Spanish:

- Where there is a will, there is a skill.

- Do good, without looking for anyone.

- Knowledge is power.

In Tatar:

- Toys for a cat, tears for a mouse.

In the course of the present study, the conditioning modality was also considered. The main means of expression in this case were modal verbs, their equivalents (be to, have to, be able to) and volitional vocabulary (wish, want, desire, long for, able, prohibit, impossible, etc.). There are several examples in English:

*Beggars cannot be choosers*-To the poor and the thief, all clothing is fit

*Children and fools must not play with edged tools.* - Children and fools should not play with sharp instruments.

On the basis of evaluative (axiological) modality, there were the concepts of "good" and "evil", "good" and "bad". The main means of expression were also estimated as epithets and vocabulary, in which there was an evaluation component of meaning, as well as key words-symbols that always represented the axiological position of the author.

The following examples of proverbs with this component were detected:

In English:

*Better be alone in bad company* - With kind friends, but avoid the crafty ones.

*Better be born lucky than rich* - do not be born beautiful, but be born happy.

*A civil denial is better than a rude grant* - Polite rejection is better than a rude agreement.

In Spanish:

- Love is nothing without sadness.

- An old friend is better than the new two.

- Where there is a joy, there is a grief.

In Tatar:

- Who does not work shall not eat.

- The tree is famous for its fruits, and the man is famous for his works.

In the course of the present research, the incentive modality was similarly considered. In the semantic aspect, it interacted with such modes of modality as the modality of necessity and obligation as well as the modality of possibility and impossibility. The following examples of proverbs with this modality component were illustrated:

In English:

- Bind the sack before it be full* - know measure in all;
- Business before pleasure* - first thing, then entertainment;
- Catch the bear before you sell his skin* - first catch a bear, and then sell his skin;
- Choose an author as you choose a friend* - choose a writer the way you choose a friend;
- Claw me, and I will claw thee* - praise me and I praise you;
- Do not count your chickens before they are hatched* - chicks do not count in autumn;

In Spanish:

- A more honor, more pain.
- The best happiness is compliance.
- The best thing is to be frank.
- It is better not to shake it.

In Tatar language:

- For two hares you will chase, you will not catch a single one;
- Strike while the iron is hot;
- You will be angry –will hang, you will be soft – will crush;
- You have been fed at a party - in return and you feed.

## 5. Conclusion

Thus, it was revealed that the concept of modality could have a multifaceted interpretation in linguistics that required in-depth study. Since the category of modality is recognized as very complex, the attitude towards it is ambiguous and there is no unified opinion on its nature. In linguistics, modality is viewed as a complex functional - semantic category, which is relevant to reality and to the speaker’s opinion.

On the basis of this research, a table of the types of modality in English, Spanish and Tatar proverbs was provided:

Table-1. Conclusion

Types of Modality	Presence of Modality in English Proverbs	Presence of Modality in Spanish Proverbs	Presence of Modality in Tatar Proverbs
1) epistemological modality	Rarely used	Rarely used	Rarely used
2) evidential type of modality	Often used	Often used	Rarely used
3) emotional modality	Sometimes used	Sometimes used	Sometimes used
4) meaning of conditioning modality	Often use	Do not used	Do not used
5) estimated (axiological) modality	Often used	Often used	Sometimes used
6) incentive modality	Quite often used	Quite often used	Quite often used

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