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POETIC ACTUALIZATION OF MODAL EXPRESSIONS IN UZBEK AND ENGLISH NOVELS

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ABSTRACT

This article deals with the issues based on analyzing the poetic actualization of modal expressions in Uzbek and English novels from the perspectives of comparative stylistics, linguistic modality, and literary discourse analysis. Particular attention is paid to the ways in which modal verbs, epistemic markers, deontic constructions, and evaluative expressions acquire additional aesthetic and pragmatic meanings in fictional narratives. Comparative examples reveal that Uzbek and English literary traditions employ different grammatical resources to represent similar subjective attitudes, while their stylistic effects depend on narrative context, cultural conventions, and authorial intention.

INTRODUCTION

Modality constitutes one of the fundamental linguistic categories through which speakers and writers express attitudes towards the reality, probability, necessity, desirability, and validity of propositions. In literary discourse, however, modal expressions perform functions that extend beyond their conventional grammatical meanings. They contribute to the representation of fictional consciousness, interpersonal relationships, ideological conflicts, and the narrator's evaluation of events.

The poetic actualization of modal expressions refers to the process through which modal meanings become stylistically prominent and acquire additional aesthetic significance within a literary context. A modal construction that ordinarily indicates possibility may, in a novel, communicate hesitation, psychological vulnerability, irony, or resistance to social expectations.

This phenomenon is particularly relevant to comparative studies of Uzbek and English fiction because the two languages employ structurally different means of expressing modality. English relies extensively on modal auxiliaries such as may, might, must, should, can, and would, whereas

Uzbek employs modal words, auxiliary constructions, verbal suffixes, and lexical expressions such as kerak, mumkin, lozim, shart, ehtimol, and balki. The artistic significance of these forms cannot be determined solely by their dictionary meanings. Their literary interpretation depends on who uses them, under what circumstances, and in relation to which social or psychological conflict.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The linguistic study of modality has developed through grammatical, semantic, pragmatic, and discourse-oriented approaches. Palmer (2001) distinguishes major categories of modal meaning and emphasizes the relationship between modality and the speaker's attitude towards propositions and events. His framework provides an important theoretical foundation for differentiating epistemic modality, which concerns judgments about knowledge and probability, from deontic modality, which relates to obligation and permission. Nuyts (2001) approaches epistemic modality from a cognitive-functional perspective, highlighting the interaction between linguistic form, conceptualization, and subjective evaluation. This perspective is particularly relevant to literary discourse, where a modal expression may simultaneously indicate the character's degree of certainty and reveal the narrator's interpretation of that character's consciousness. Simpson (1993) demonstrates the significance of modality in the analysis of narrative point of view. His stylistic approach makes it possible to examine how modal choices contribute to the construction of fictional perspectives and the representation of psychological distance. Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) interpret modality within the interpersonal metafunction of language, emphasizing its role in negotiating attitudes, commitments, and interpersonal relations. In fiction, this function becomes particularly important when characters negotiate authority, express disagreement, or challenge socially established expectations.

For Uzbek literary discourse, the relationship between linguistic form and artistic meaning is especially significant in the analysis of novels that represent family relationships, social hierarchy, personal freedom, and moral responsibility. Works by Abdulla Qodiriy and Cho‘lpon provide valuable material for examining the interaction between modal meaning and the cultural conditions of character behaviour. Nevertheless, a methodological distinction is necessary between the linguistic identification of a modal expression and the interpretation of its poetic function. A grammatical construction becomes stylistically significant not simply because it expresses obligation or possibility, but because its contextual position contributes to characterization, conflict, irony, or narrative evaluation. The study adopts a qualitative comparative approach combining semantic, contextual, stylistic, and discourse analysis. The literary corpus comprises selected passages and narrative situations from Abdulla Qodiriy's O‘tkan kunlar (Bygone Days), Cho‘lpon's Kecha va kunduz (Night and Day), Jane Austen's Pride and Prejudice, and Charlotte Brontë's Jane Eyre. The analytical procedure involves identifying modal expressions, determining their primary semantic meanings, examining their narrative environments, and interpreting the additional stylistic functions created by their contextual use.

Three categories guide the analysis: epistemic modality, deontic modality, and dynamic modality. The study also considers evaluative and volitional expressions when they contribute to the broader modal organization of fictional discourse. The English literary quotations are drawn from public-domain texts. Uzbek examples below are analytical paraphrases of narrative situations, not verbatim quotations from the novels. This distinction prevents reconstructed wording from being attributed to the original authors.

Epistemic modality and the representation of subjective judgment

Epistemic modality expresses the degree of certainty with which a proposition is presented. In fictional discourse, it may also reveal the limitations of a character's knowledge and the influence of personal expectations on interpretation.

Jane Austen's Pride and Prejudice opens with the well-known sentence:

“It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife.”

The modal auxiliary must is grammatically associated with necessity or strong inference. In this context, however, it becomes an instrument of narrative irony. The apparently universal conclusion reflects the marriage-oriented assumptions of the fictional society rather than an objectively established truth.

The expression therefore performs two simultaneous functions: it communicates an ostensibly unquestionable social judgment and exposes the ideological limitations of that judgment.

In Abdulla Qodiriy's O‘tkan kunlar, comparable mechanisms can be examined in narrative situations where characters interpret marriage, family honour, and personal responsibility through socially established expectations.

An illustrative Uzbek paraphrase is:

Ehtimol, inson baxti o‘z xohishiga emas, boshqalarning qaroriga bog‘liqdir.

Perhaps a person's happiness depends not on personal wishes but on the decisions of others.

Here, ehtimol marks epistemic uncertainty. Unlike Austen's ironic must, the hypothetical Uzbek construction introduces hesitation and reflection. Nevertheless, both examples demonstrate how modal expressions can connect individual judgment with socially constructed expectations.

The difference lies not in a fixed national opposition between English certainty and Uzbek hesitation, but in the particular narrative functions assigned to modal forms.

Deontic modality and social obligation

Deontic modality is associated with duty, obligation, permission, and prohibition. In literary narratives, it frequently becomes a linguistic representation of social authority.

In Jane Eyre, the heroine's resistance to social inequality is articulated through the declaration:

“I am no bird; and no net ensnares me: I am a free human being with an independent will.”

Although the sentence does not contain a conventional modal auxiliary, it establishes a strong volitional and evaluative stance. Its relevance to modal analysis lies in the representation of autonomy and resistance to externally imposed obligation.

A reconstructed Uzbek example reflecting a comparable conflict in the world of Kecha va kunduz may be formulated as follows:

Qiz oilasining qaroriga bo‘ysunishi kerak, ammo uning o‘z orzulari ham bor.

The girl must obey her family's decision, yet she also has dreams of her own.

The construction bo‘ysunishi kerak expresses deontic necessity, whereas the adversative conjunction ammo introduces a conflict between social obligation and individual desire.

The comparison illustrates two different linguistic strategies for representing a related thematic opposition. Brontë emphasizes autonomy through explicit self-definition, while the constructed Uzbek example foregrounds the contradiction between obligation and personal aspiration.

The artistic importance of deontic modality therefore emerges when an apparently ordinary expression of duty becomes a marker of psychological or ideological conflict.

Dynamic modality and individual agency

Dynamic modality concerns ability, capacity, and circumstances that make an action possible or impossible. In fiction, such meanings may contribute to the representation of personal agency.

An illustrative English sentence is:

She could speak, but she could not change the decision.

The repeated modal could creates a contrast between physical or communicative ability and social powerlessness. The character possesses the ability to express an opinion but lacks the authority to determine the outcome.

A corresponding Uzbek analytical example is:

U gapira olardi, biroq taqdirini o‘zgartira olmasdi.

The Uzbek constructions gapira olardi and o‘zgartira olmasdi similarly distinguish between potential action and restricted agency.

Such parallel structures demonstrate that dynamic modality can acquire symbolic significance when a character's abilities are contrasted with social limitations.

In both languages, the poetic effect arises not from the modal construction alone but from the opposition between capacity and constraint.

Modal expressions and psychological characterization

Modal expressions can also reveal the internal conflicts of fictional characters. Hesitation, expectation, doubt, and imagined alternatives frequently appear through epistemic and conditional constructions.

Consider the following illustrative pair:

Perhaps she had misunderstood his silence.

Balki u uning sukutini noto‘g‘ri tushungandir.

Both expressions communicate uncertainty, but their literary significance depends on the surrounding narrative. When associated with a character's internal perspective, they can represent emotional insecurity, incomplete knowledge, or an attempt to reinterpret an earlier event.

In a psychological novel, repeated modal uncertainty may gradually establish a pattern of characterization. A character who consistently interprets events through perhaps, might, or balki may appear cautious, anxious, reflective, or uncertain.

However, such conclusions require contextual confirmation. Modal frequency alone does not establish a character's psychological traits.

Comparative patterns of poetic actualization

The principal findings can be summarized as follows:

Modal category	English resources	Uzbek resources	Potential literary function
Epistemic	may, might, must, perhaps	balki, ehtimol, shekilli	Doubt, inference, irony
Deontic	must, should, ought to	kerak, lozim, shart	Duty, authority, social conflict
Dynamic	can, could, be able to	-a olmoq, qodir bo‘lmoq	Ability, agency, limitation
Volitional	will, would, wish	istamoq, xohlamoq, -moqchi	Desire, determination, resistance

The comparison suggests that Uzbek and English novels may employ grammatically different modal resources to perform comparable aesthetic functions. At the same time, equivalence between modal expressions is not always direct. For example, English must may communicate either strong epistemic inference or deontic obligation, whereas Uzbek translation may require different lexical or grammatical forms depending on context. Consequently, comparative stylistic analysis should focus on functional meaning rather than mechanical word-for-word correspondence.

CONCLUSION

The comparative analysis demonstrates that modal expressions constitute important resources for the poetic organization of Uzbek and English fictional discourse. Their aesthetic significance emerges through the interaction between grammatical meaning, narrative perspective, social context, and character psychology.

Epistemic expressions may represent uncertainty, ideological assumptions, or narrative irony. Deontic constructions can foreground the conflict between social obligation and personal freedom, while dynamic modality may emphasize the difference between individual capacity and actual agency.

The comparison also indicates that structurally different modal systems can produce functionally similar literary effects. Nevertheless, these effects cannot be explained through grammatical form alone; they require careful interpretation of the surrounding fictional context.

The principal theoretical contribution of the study lies in treating poetic actualization as a context-dependent transformation of modal meaning into an aesthetically significant element of narrative discourse.

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