

A SEMANTIC FEATURE ANALYSIS OF THE ENGLISH MODAL AUXILIARIES

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Annotation

This article deals with a semantic analysis of the English Modal Auxiliaries and their both the epistemic and the deontic characteristics of modality.

Keywords: Modal verb, lexicon, possibility, root meaning, epistemic meaning, logical entailment, volition, ability, future prediction.

As a starting point, the analysis of the English Modals will be assumed. Nevertheless, there will be some modifications for the following reason: Flowing out of the belief that there is not a clear division between semantics and syntax and between the lexicon and syntax is the belief that lexical items in many instances will have a single listing even for many poly-semous words which have the same phonological shape in their surface forms. Adjustments then are made in the underlying feature matrices through a device such as Weinreich's semantic calculator (1972:83) and through the use of transfer features formulated in the modal to account for the polysemy. Thus, although English Modal verbs are postulated a form, can—1, 'ability' (root), and can—2, 'possibility' (epistemic), and so on for the remainder of the modals, the convention will be followed here that there is a single form can with two readings, 'epistemic,' and 'root,' depending on the environments in which the surface form occurs.

EPISTEMIC MEANING may (permission). may (possibility) ; must (necessity) ,must (logical entailment); will (volition), will (future prediction) ; can (ability), can (possibility) ;



From this system, Hofmann and succeeding writers, predicted that "in general, the 'root' interpretation is excluded by the progressive and perfect. For example: You may be singing now. - permission (root), possibility (epistemic)

The purpose of this paper is to make a sentence systemic within the category of structural grammar for the modality in which a speaker expresses his attitude. It is the priority of a language to communicate meaning. By eliminating the theoretical description of traditional grammar, this paper also aims to illustrate the concepts of nine modal verbs through a systemic network. The concept of modality includes both the epistemic and the deontic characteristics of modality.

Epistemic modality is associated with either knowledge or belief on the part of a speaker who gives his own judgments about the state of affairs, events, or actions. However, deontic modality is related to either the possibility or the necessity of acts that a speaker performs to give permission or fulfill an obligation. In conclusion, all the subsystems are described within the framework of the systemic network, with the intention of including all the potential options of the semantic functions available in a situation. [modality/function/category]

By indicating some tasks and contents, a human being is able to describe a situation which has occurred and has been brought into existence in his own world, through the sentences of natural language. At a given moment, a speaker can express his situation by indicating the time when these things happened. This is called modality. There are limitations to understanding exactly the situation of the utterances imposed. Free from the theoretical description of traditional grammar, which does not include a situation within a context, the purpose is to make the concepts of modal verbs with "may", "might", "can", "could", "will", "would", "shall", "should", and "must" functional in a systemic network.

Definition of Modality has indicated that modality is described by grammatical means, based on the mental state of a speaker and its impact on the contents of the description. With respect to the descriptive contents given by a speaker, his mental attitude is a mental state pertaining to a certain degree of possibility, probability, certainty, or necessity. There is still ambiguity between modality and mood in the use of each of these concepts. In contrast to sentence a., the speaker asserts his opinion to be a fact when he gives utterance to sentence b., which is not modal. a. He may already have left. b. He has left.



The functional concepts of modality are signified by both modal verbs such as “can”, “could”, “may”, “might”, “must”, “ought to”, “will”, “would”, “shall”, “should”, etc. and quasi-modal verbs such as “have to”, “need to”, “had better”, etc. In addition, Perkins (1983) says that a modality is signified as a factor of language: an adjective and a participle of modality such as “be going to” and “be going to”, (duplication here); modal adjective and adverb such as “necessary”/ “necessarily”, “probable”/ “probably”, A Study of the Semantic Function of Modality 153 “certain”/ “certainly”, “advisable”, “perhaps”, “maybe”, etc., and parenthetical remarks such as “I think” and “I’m sure”, etc. First all, the expression of modality is examined in both modal verbs and quasimodal verbs. Modal verbs are related to various psychological attitudes of a speaker, far from an action and a state expressed by the main verb. Fries (1940) says that modal verbs are the same as functional words. These can be divided according to their types and significance: (a) ability or power, such as “may”, “might”, “can”, and “could”; (b) possibility or doubt, such as “may”, “might”, “can”, and “could”; (c) permission, such as “may”, “might”, “can”, and “could”; (d) obligation, such as “should”, “ought”, and “must”; (e) habitual action, such as “would”, and “used to”; (f) appropriateness, such as “should” and “ought”; (g) future prediction, such as “should”, “must”, and “would”; and (h) wish and will, such as “may” and “would”. “Must”, “need to”, and “have (got) to” convey an inevitability of the state of things. These modal verbs have implications on an environment in relation to the state of affairs related to a question. On the other hand, “will”, “would”, “be going to”, “shall”, “should”, “ought to”, “had better”, etc. are considered to be somewhere in between a probability (and what?). Therefore, these modal verbs and quasi-modal verbs indicate a probability of things in relation to the state of affairs and can be induced to direct the truth. In particular, “can”, “could”, “be able to”, “may”, “might”, etc. indicate a possibility of things because they show the lowest degree of the truth and the occurrence of the state of affairs.

Modality is associated with the message of a speaker. It is related to the judgement of a speaker with respect to whether the speaker's message is true or not. Not every clause is included in the system of modality which is being discussed. In the modal system, it is possible for a clause to be either an indicative or a declarative sentence depending upon the mood desired. Clauses with questions can be selected in the system of modality, but such a domain of choice is not always equal to that of



a declarative sentence. As modality is mentioned with priority given to a clause, it is classified as interrogative, declarative, or of systemic meaning. Clauses can be divided into interrogative and declarative sentences. Here the declarative and systemic meanings agree with the system of modality, but the interrogative meaning does not. systemic meaning declarative interrogative clause. She is capable of keeping a secret when she wants to. Tom could speak three languages by the age of seven. They say John can cook better than his wife. "Can" is used to express ability, but "can't", "be unable to", or "incapable of" are used to express inability. She can't speak French well. She can speak English, but she can't write it. Usually "could" means "know how to", which indicates both perpetual and habitual ability. "Be able to" often has a meaning of both ability and achievement. She could play the piano when she was six. By acting quickly, we were able to save her from drowning. Certainty or Logical Necessity – "must", "have to" "must" + root verb and "have to" + root verb convey the meaning of either a certainty or a logical necessity. There must be some mistake. You have to be joking. The sentences from and above indicate varying levels of necessity. "Must". a logical necessity, is equivalent to the possibility of "may". That is because a speaker makes a judgement about a proposition which is either inevitably true or highly likely to be true, to say the least. In this sense, "must" means that a speaker already knows and he has made a decision based on the objects observed. In general, "must", of a logical necessity, is not used in a question or a negative.

To make good use of a modal auxiliary, one should realize that it can be divided into both intrinsic modality and extrinsic modality according to the meaning of the modal auxiliary. These options can be shown to have both intrinsic modality and extrinsic modality which are meaningful features. 1) An intrinsic modality Intrinsic modality relates to some internal control of human beings with respect to both things and contexts. It includes permission, obligation, and will. You may go out and play. (permission) You must study hard. (obligation) I'll see him tomorrow. (will) 2) An extrinsic modality Extrinsic modality is related to the judgement of human beings with respect to whether the events can possibly happen or not. It includes possibility, necessity, and prediction. That may be David. (possibility) I'll see him tomorrow. (necessity)





A Study of the Semantic Function of Modality. David will have arrived by now. (prediction) Semantically, all modal auxiliaries are either of the intrinsic or extrinsic type. In some cases, they may be both types at the same time. They can also be used as a model option which conveys the meaning of other potential options. The meaning in the previous sentence is not clear. The systemic model is as follows: extrinsic modality (intrinsic modality) intrinsic modality (extrinsic modality) systemic meaning For example, sentence conveys both the meaning of will and prediction. Permission – “may”, “can” The modal verbs have the concept of modality such as possible, probable, and almost certain. They are used to express permission, obligation, and volition. The above three options can convey the meanings of permission, obligation, and volition. These three features are indicative of the assumption of an intrinsic modality. Can/May I smoke here? The concept of “may” involves both a permission and a possibility. In the case where the meaning is a permission, “can” may be used instead of “may”. “May” is less frequently used as an auxiliary of a permission than “can” because “may” is a formal expression. The above features can be shown in the following systemic model: intrinsic modality obligation volition permission extrinsic modality systemic meaning 164 Sang-Yoon Lee 9. Prediction – “will”, “must”, “shall” You will feel better after taking this medicine. As mentioned above, it is a well-known fact that “will” is generally used to predict a future event. The prediction falls into three categories, namely specific prediction, habitual prediction, and timeless prediction. That must be my husband. (I know that he is phoning now.) 1) A specific prediction “Will”, “must”, and “should” are generally used to predict future events. You will feel better after taking this medicine. The game will be finished by now. This shop will be opened in five minutes. 2) A habitual prediction Even though it is not observed in practice, it is a prediction about the certainty of an event which one can be fairly certain of, based on evidence. “Will” is also used in either a prediction or when describing a characteristic behavior which habitually occurs. Accidents will happen.

CONCLUSION

This paper has been focusing on the nine uses of a modal auxiliary. It can be described in the semantic system as follows: possible probable almost certain interrogative nine uses of a modal auxiliary. As a clause is systematized, it can be

categorized as either imperative or indicative. If indicative is chosen from the two options, it can be further classified as either interrogative or declarative.

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