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Synopsis

Theme: Modal verbs in modern English

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Contents

I. Introduction	2
II. Main part	4
Chapter I	
1.2.1. General definition	4
1.2.2. The comparison of modal verbs may and can	13
1.2.3. Modal verbs must, have to, ought to	16
Chapter II	21
2.2.1. Should + perfect infinitive, ought to + perfect infinitive and was/were to + perfect infinitive compared	
2.2.3. Shouldn't + Perfect Infinitive, oughtn't to + Perfect Infinitive and needn't + Perfect Infinitive compared	24
III. Conclusion	25
IV. Bibliography	26

I. Introduction

I'm going to investigate some features of modality. And the theme of my course work sounds as following: "Modal verbs in modern English" This course work can be characterized by the following:

The actuality of this synopsis caused by several important points. We seem to say that the distinguishing of modal verbs differentiation is one of the main problems for those who learn English. This course work will try to make this problem clearer.

So the significance of our synopsis can be proved by the following reasons:

- a) Modal verbs are a traditionally difficult theme for learning.
- b) Modal verbs are often used in colloquial layer of the language and their development as speech units has not stopped yet.
- d) Being developing branches of linguistics it requires a special attention of teachers to be adequate to their specialization in English.

If we say about the new information used within our work we may note that the work studies the problem from the modern positions and analyzes the modern trends appeared in this subject for the last ten years. In particular, the wide use of internet forums of the English teachers was taken into consideration in the given course work.

The practical significance of the synopsis can be concluded in the following items:

- a) The work could serve as a good source of learning English by young teachers at schools and colleges.
- b) Those who would like to communicate with the English-speaking people through the Internet will find useful to study these expressions which are popular among the internet users.

If we say about the methods of scientific approaches used in our work we can mention that the method of typological analysis was used.

The novelty of the synopsis is concluded in including the language of charts to one of the chapter of the course work.

The general structure of our synopsis looks as follows:

The work is composed onto three major parts: introduction, main part and conclusion. Each part has its subdivision onto the specific thematically items. The main part of the course work is subdivided onto two meaningful chapters, each of which has its special items. In the first chapter of the main part we can study general definition of the modal verbs, their role in a language and their structure in the English language in comparative analysis with other languages.

In the second chapter we may see such obvious problem solving method concerning the position of single adjectives and adverbs in a sentence. Here we shall take into consideration such kind of questions as the royal order of adverbs, inappropriate adverb order and some special cases of order.

The conclusion of the course work sums up the ideas discussed in the main part (the first item) and shows the ways of implying of the course work (in the second item).

Modality is expression of speaker's attitude to what his utterance denotes.

The speaker's judgment may be of different kinds, that is, the speaker may express various modal meanings. Modal verbs unlike other verbs, do not denote actions or states, but only show the attitude of the speaker towards the action expressed by the infinitive in combination with which they form compound modal predicates. These modal verbs may show that the action (or state, of process, or quality) is viewed by the speaker as possible, obligatory, doubtful, certain, permissible, advisable, requested, prohibited, ordered etc. Modal verbs occur only with the infinitive. This or that meaning is to a great degree determined by communicative type of the sentence and the form of the infinitive. That is a huge problem for foreign learners of English, who make a great deal of mistakes in this field. So, the aim of my work is to show how modal verbs can be used, in what case we need one or other verb and why.

English modality can be expressed not only by modal verbs. Modality can be expressed by different linguistic means. In actual speech all forms expressing modality work together to make the meaning clear. But in every case there is some leading form that expresses the main attitude. These forms fall into four categories: phonetic (intonation), grammatical (mood), lexico-grammatical (modal verbs), lexical (modal words and phrases). But the most important from them is the third form, which includes modal verbs. It is important to take into account one more feature peculiar to modal verbs. They all show that a certain action is represented as necessary, doubtful, etc. From the point of view of the speaker, there are verbs which 'help' other verbs to express a meaning: it is important to realize that "modal verbs" have no meaning by themselves/ A modal verb such as *would* has several varying functions; it can be used, for example, to help verbs express ideas about the past, the present and the future. It is therefore wrong to simply believe that "*would* is the past of *will*": it is many other things.

English modality can be expressed not only by modal verbs. There are many ways to express it – generally **Mood** shows the relation between the action expressed by the predicate verb and reality. The speaker establishes this relation.

In present-day English **the category of mood** is made up by a set of forms opposed to each other in presenting the event described as **a real fact, a problematic action of as something unreal that does not exist.**

Actions represented as real facts are expressed by **the Indicative Mood.**

E.g. Architects have done some very good work, too, in designing new schools. Many of these **are** prefabricated, which **means** that as much of the building work as possible is **done** not on the building site but in factories where mass production methods **are used.**

When the brothers had gone home, Mr. Waterfall announced that they were a much pleasanter pair of young men than the had been led to believe.

II. Main part

Chapter 1. Modal verbs

1.2.1. General definition

We find the following modal verbs in English: **can, may, must, ought, shall, should, will, need and dare**. Besides, **to have** and **to be** in some of their uses are also classed among modal verbs. A modal verb in combination with the infinitive forms **a modal compound predicate**.

Modal verbs are defective verbs since they lack many forms characteristic of regular verbs: they have no –s in the third person singular in the present tense and no verbal, so they have no analytical forms; some of them lack the form of the past tense.

Modal verbs have the following peculiarities:

- 1) they are followed by the infinitive **without** the particle *to* (with the exception of *ought, to have* and *to be*);
- 2) their interrogative and negative forms are built up **without** the auxiliary *do*.

Most of the verbs have more than one meaning. Each of their meanings is characterized by a specific usage.

- 1) Some of the meanings may be found in all kinds of sentences; others occur only in affirmative or interrogative or negative sentences;
- 2) Different meanings may be associated with different forms of the infinitive – simple and perfect (both in the active and passive forms), continuous and perfect continuous;
- 3) If the modal verbs have more than one form (*can – could, may – might, will – would*, also the verbs *to have* and *to be*), their different meanings are not necessarily found in all those forms.

The use of modal verbs is in most cases independent of the structure of the sentence: the use of this or that modal verb is determined by the attitude of the speaker towards the facts contained in the sentence. In this case we may speak of **the free or independent use of modal verbs**.

E. g. He admires you. He thinks you're a little beauty. Perhaps I oughtn't to have told you that.

He may be in the hall now, waiting for me.

But sometimes the use of certain modal verbs depends on the structure of the sentence, mainly on the type of the subordinate clause, and occasionally also on the lexical character of the predicate verb in the principal clause. This may be called the **structurally dependent** use of **modal verbs**.

E. g. It is obviously necessary that an investigation should be made.

Christine feared she might not be met at all.

When the use of modal verbs is structurally dependent, their meaning is sometimes weakened; in fact, it may be quite vague. This may be accounted for by the fact that these verbs become rather part of the structure than bearers of individual meaning.

It is important to take into account one more feature peculiar to modal verbs. They all show that a certain action is represented as necessary, possible, desirable, doubtful, etc. **from the point of view of the speaker**. Consequently, modal verbs are generally used in conversation. In past-time contexts they may be found only in reported speech or thought, Thus *You should have done it before*, or *He might be wrong*, or *It must be true* cannot be possibly found in narration unless they are used after *He thought that ... He said that ... He knew that ...*, etc.

The only exceptions are the past tense forms *could*, *would*, *had*, *was* and *might* which may be used only in conversation but also in narration.

E. g. Walker was illiterate and could not sign his name.

When I looked at her I saw tears in her eyes. So I had to tell her the truth.

We can't but mention that modal verbs are of common usage in literature – both American and English. In this work several examples taken from the works of famous American and English writers of the 18-19th centuries, such as I. Asimov, O. Henry, S. Maugham, F. Scott Fitzgerald, A. Christie, O. Wilde, M. Spark and others, can vividly show you their usage and importance in speech. We guess it'll

be necessary to provide you with some examples on their usage from different newspapers and analyze them thoroughly.

Can. The modal verb **can** has the following forms: **can** – the present tense (e.g. *He can speak English*) and **could** – the past tense. The form *could* is used in two ways: a) in past-time contexts as a form of the Indicative Mood (e.g. *He could speak English when he was a child*), b) in present-time contexts to express unreality, or as a milder and more polite form of *can*, or as a form implying more uncertainty than *can* (e.g. *He could speak English if necessary. Could I help you? Could it be true?*). Compare with the Russian *мог бы*: *Он мог бы сделать это, если бы у него было время* (unreality). *He мог бы я Вам помочь?* (politeness). *Неужели он мог бы так сказать?* (uncertainty)

Can has the following meanings:

1) **ability, capability,**

E.g. I can imagine how angry he is.

We can represent a figure of a three-dimensional solid.

This meaning may also be expressed by **to be able** . The phrase can be used in all tense-forms if necessary.

In the meaning of ability and capability *can* occurs in all kinds of sentences.

E.g. Right and left we can go, backward and forward freely enough, and men always have done so. You can move about in all directions of Space, but you cannot move about in Time.

You could articulate more distinctly with that cigarette out of your mouth. (*мог бы говорить более отчетливо*).

As the form *could* may be used in two ways it is usually understood as expressing unreality with reference to the present **or** future unless there are indications of past time in the sentence **or** in the context. Thus the sentence *She could paint landscapes* will be understood as *Она могла бы писать пейзажи*.

If there is **no** indication of past time **in** the context but the speaker wishes to refer the action to the past, *was/were able* is used of *could* to avoid ambiguity.

E.g. She **was able to explain** the mystery.

In combination with the perfect infinitive *could* indicates that the action was not carried out in the past.

E.g. She could have explained the mystery. (Она могла бы объяснить эту тайну; но не объяснила).

2) possibility due to circumstances.

E.g. You can see the forest through the other window.

We can use either the Present Perfect or the Present Perfect Continuous in this sentence.

In this meaning *can* is found in all kinds of sentences. It is followed by the simple infinitive and it refers the action to the present or future.

E.g. You can obtain a dog from the Dog's Home.

Can we use the indefinite article with this noun?

We can't use the indefinite article with this noun.

3) Permission

E.g. You can take my umbrella.

Can in this meaning is found in affirmative sentences, interrogative sentences in which a request is expressed, and in negative sentences where it expresses prohibition.

E.g. You can use my car. Can I use your car? You can't use my car today.

In this meaning *can* is combined with the simple infinitive.

4) uncertainty, doubt

E.g. Can it be true?

In this meaning *can* is found only in interrogative sentences (in general questions). Besides, sentences of this kind are often emotionally colored and so their application is rather restricted.

Depending on the time reference, *can* in this meaning is used in combination with different forms of the infinitive.

Thus, if reference is made to the present, the simple infinitive is found with static verbs.

E.g. Can he really be ill?

Can it be so late?

With dynamic verbs, the continuous infinitive is used.

E.g. Can she be telling lies?

Can he be making the investigation all alone?

Can in combination with the perfect infinitive refers the action to the past.

E.g. Can he have said it? Can she have told a lie?

5) Improbability

E.g. It can't be true. (Это не может быть правдой. Вряд ли это так.)

In this meaning *can* is found only in negative sentences, which are often emotionally colored. Depending on the time reference, this *can* is also used with different forms of the infinitive/

E.g. He can't be really ill.

She can't be telling lies.

He can't have said it.

She can't have been at home all this time.

She can't have been waiting for us so long.

possibility due to circumstances – You can get the book from the library. You could get the book from the library if necessary. E.g. “You can have a million books on our television screen, and even more. There is nothing to throw away.” (I. Asimov)

“How could a man be a teacher?” (I. Asimov)

In the other meanings, however, this difference between the two forms is obliterated. *Could* is used either as a milder or more polite form of *can* as a form implying more uncertainty than *can*:

permission – Can I use your pen? Could I use your pen? (more polite)

uncertainty, doubt, improbability – Can it be true? Could it be true (less certain). It can't be true. It couldn't be true (less certain).

We can also find some examples of modal verbs usage in some newspapers, magazines or in literature.

E.g. It **could** be true but it is advisable to find out first what has really happened there. (Может быть, это и правда, но лучше сначала выяснить, что же действительно там произошло.)

“Honey, you **couldn’t** support a wife,” she answered cheerfully. “Anyway, I know you too well to fall in love with you.” (F. Scott Fitzgerald)

In this case the verb *could* is used here in the meaning of doubt, uncertainty and improbability.

May. The modal verb *may* has the following forms: **may** – the Present tense (e.g. it **may be** true) and **might** – the Past tense. The form *might* is used in two ways: a) in past-time contexts, mainly in reported speech in accordance with the rules of the sequence of tenses (e.g. *He told me that it might be true*) and b) in present-time contexts as a milder and more polite form of *may*, or as a form implying more uncertainty than *may* (e.g. *Might I come and see you? It might be true*), or to express unreality (e.g. *He might have fallen ill if he hadn’t taken the pills*).¹

May has the following meanings:

1) supposition implying uncertainty

E.g. He may be busy getting ready for his trip.

In Russian this meaning is generally rendered by means of the modal adverbs *возможно* and *может быть*.

In English this meaning may also be rendered by means of the attitudinal adverbs *perhaps* and *maybe*.

May in combination with the Perfect infinitive refers the action to the past.

E.g. He may have fallen ill.

“What’s happened to the dog?” I asked. “It isn’t here. His master may have taken it with him.”

The combination of *may* with the Perfect infinitive may also indicate an action begun in the past and continued into the moment of speaking. This is usually found with stative verbs.

E.g. He may have been at home from about two hours.

However, if *may* is followed by a dynamic verb, the Perfect Continuous infinitive is used.

E.g. He may have been waiting for us for an hour.

3) possibility due to circumstances

E.g. You may order a taxi by telephone.

A useful rough-and-ready rule is that time adverbs may come at either end of the sentence, but not in the middle.

May in this meaning occurs only in affirmative sentences and is followed only by the simple infinitive.

permission

E.g. The director is alone now. So you may see him now.

If you have got a car and can drive, you may spend part of your holiday moving from place to place. (C. Eckersley)

May in this meaning is found in affirmative sentences, in interrogative sentences which usually express a request, and in negative sentences where it denotes prohibition. But in negative sentences it is not common as prohibition is generally expressed by other modal verbs (see *can* and *must*).

E.g. You may smoke in here. May I smoke in here? You may not smoke in here.

4) disapproval or reproach

E.g. You might carry the parcel for me. You might have helped me.

Here we find only the form *might* used in affirmative sentences and followed by the simple or Perfect infinitive. In the latter case it expressed reproach for the nonperformance of an action.

The form *might* which expresses unreality is not always parallel to *may*. *Might* expresses unreality only in combination with the Perfect infinitive.

E.g. You might have let me know about it beforehand.

There was a car accident in front of our house. Luckily Tommy was at school. He might have been killed.

In most cases **might** is used as a milder and more polite form than **may** of as a form implying a greater degree of uncertainty:

permission – May I call to my mother now? Might I call to my mother now? (*very polite*)

Might I take the liberty of pointing out that you have made a small mistake?
(J. Joyce)

supposition – He may come a little later. He might come a little later (*less certain*).

The Chancellor's measures **might** help towards an agreement on an incomes policy. (Moscow News).

The two forms are not opposed in the meaning of possibility due to circumstances where only *may* is used, nor in the meaning of disapproval of reproach where **might** alone is found.

E.g. You may find the book at the library.

You might have considered your parents' feelings.

May as well (*might as well, might just as well*) + *infinitive* is a very mild and an emphatic way of expressing an intention. It is also used to suggest or recommend an action.

E.g. I may as well take the child with me. (*Я, пожалуйста, возьму ребенка с собой. Пожалуй, будет лучше, если я возьму ребенка с собой*).

You may as well give him the letter. I might as well stay at home tonight.

“I'll go at six.” “That's far too late; you might just as well not go at all.”
(Можно было бы и не ходить туда совсем).

It might have been worse means “Things are not so bad after all.” In Russian it is rendered as: *Могло бы быть и хуже or в конце концов дела обстоят не так уж и плохо*).

He might have been a ... means ‘He might have been taken for a ...’ ‘He looked as a ...’

E.g. Roy Wilson, the new doctor, was twenty-eight, large, heavy, mature and blond. He might have been a Scandinavian sailor.

If I may say so ... has become a stereotyped phrase in which the meaning of permission is considerably weakened.

E.g. If I may say so, I think you have treated him very badly.

1.2.2. The comparison of modal verbs *may* and *can*

The use of *can* and *may* is parallel only in two meanings: possibility due to circumstances and permission. In these meanings, however, they are not always interchangeable for a number of various reasons.

1) Thus in the meaning of possibility due to circumstances the use of *may* is restricted only to affirmative sentences, whereas *can* is found in all kinds of sentences.

Can – He can find this book at the library. Can he find this book at the library? He cannot find this book at the library.

May – He may find this book at the library.

Their time reference is also different. *May* refers only to the present or future: the form *might* is used in past-time contexts only in reported speech. *Can* (*could*) may refer to the present, past or future.

May – He may find the book at the library. I said that he might find the book at the library.

Can – He can find the book at the library. He could find the book at the library yesterday. He can find the book at the library tomorrow.

Both *could* and *might* combined with the Perfect infinitive indicate that the action was not carried out in the past.

E.g. He might have found the book at the library.

He could have found the book at the library.

It follows from the above that the sphere of application of *can* in this meaning is wider than that of *may*.

2) When *may* and *can* express permission the difference between them is rather that of style than of meaning – *may* is more formal than *can* which is characteristic of colloquial English.

E.g. May (might) I speak to you for a moment, professor?

Can (could) I have a cup of tea, mother?

May in negative sentences expressing prohibition is uncommon.

The modal verb *must* has only one form it is used in present-time contexts with reference to the present or future and in combination with the Perfect infinitive it refers to the past. In past-time contexts this form is used only in reported speech, i.g. the rules of the sequence of tenses are not observed with *must*.

Must has the following meanings:

1) **obligation** (from the speaker's point of view)

E.g. Any real body must have extension in four directions: it must have Length, Breadth, Thickness, and – Duration.

In different contexts *must* may acquire additional shades of meaning, such as duty or necessity.

In this meaning *must* is found in affirmative and interrogative sentences and followed only by the simple infinitive.

2) **Prohibition**

E.g. He must not leave his room for a while. (Он не должен (ему нельзя) выходить из комнаты некоторое время).

This meaning is expressed in negative sentences and *must* is also followed by the simple infinitive.

3) **emphatic advice**

E.g. You must come and see us when you're in London.

You must stop worrying about your son.

You mustn't give another thought to what he said.

You mustn't miss the film. It is very interesting.

You must have your hair cut.

It is much too long. You mustn't cry.

“Andy” – she spoke in a quick, low voice – “of course you must never tell anybody what I told you about Canby yesterday.” (F. Scott Fitzgerald)²

This meaning is found in affirmative and negative sentences and is closely connected with the two above mentioned meanings.

4) **supposition implying strong probability**

E.g. Watson, we must look upon you as a man of letters.

It must be late as the streets are deserted.

Must in this meaning is found only in affirmative sentences. In Russian this meaning is generally rendered by means of the attitudinal adverbs *вероятно, должно быть*.

In English this meaning may also be expressed by means of the attitudinal adverb *probably*.

In this meaning *must* may be followed by different forms of the infinitive. If reference is made to the present, the Continuous infinitive is used with dynamic verbs.

E.g. The book is not on the shelf. Jane must be reading it. Let's have something to eat. You must be starving.

If *must* is followed by the simple infinitive of dynamic verbs, it expresses obligation.

E.g. Jane must read the book. You must stay here.

However, with stative verbs the simple infinitive is used to express supposition.

E.g. He must be over fifty.

He must know all about it as he has read a lot on the subject.

“Yes, but I must wash before dinner,” Jimmy said and added, “You’re lucky. Dirt doesn’t show on you.” (B.J. Chute)

I must be going and *I must be off* both mean – it is time for me to go (in Russian – *мне пора уходить*).

I must tell you that ... and *I must say ...* are stereotyped phrases in which the meaning of obligation is considerably weakened in *must*.

In the sentences: *You must come and see me some time* *You must come and have a dinner with me.* *You must come to our party.* *You must come and stay*

with us for the weekend and the like, the meaning of obligation in *must* is also weakened. *Must* has become part of such sentences which are a common way of expressing invitations.

1.2.3. Modal verbs **must, have to, ought to**

Must and *may* can be compared in two meanings: Both *may* and *must* serve to express **supposition** but their use is not parallel. *May* denotes supposition implying uncertainty whereas the supposition expressed by *must* implies strong probability

E.g. For all I know, he may be an actor. His face seems so familiar. He must be an actor. His voice carries so well. I saw him an hour ago. He may still be in his office now. He always comes at 10 sharp. So he must be in his office now.

They must be satisfied with going to the piers... (M. Spark)

1) *May* and *must* are used to express **prohibition** in negative sentences. But *may* is seldom found in this meaning. In negative answers to questions with *may* asking for permission we generally find *must not or cannot*.

E.g. ‘May I smoke here?’ ‘No, you mustn’t (you can’t).

To have to

To have to as a modal verb is not a defective verb and can have all the necessary finite forms as well as the verbal.

E.g. He is an invalid and has to have a nurse.

She knew what she had to do.

He frightened her – I had to yield him my last date before Bill came. (F. Scott Fitzgerald)

I shall have to reconsider my position.

He is always having to exercise judgment.

My impression was that he was having to force himself to talk.

I have had to remind you of writing to her all this time.

The women at barfed had had to be told that an experiment was taking place that day. “As a matter of fact,” he said, “I’ve been having to spend some time with the research people.”

It wouldn’t have been very nice for the David’s sons to have to mix with all those people in the smoking-room.

Having to work alone, he wanted all his time for his research.

To be to

To be to as a modal verb is used in the present and past tenses.

E.g. We are to meet at six.

We were to meet at six.

To be to as a modal verb has the following meanings:

1) **a previously arranged plan or obligation** resulting from the arrangement

E.g. We are to discuss it the following week.

Is he to arrive tomorrow?

Who was to speak at the meeting?

Mass struggle is vital if the elimination of the evils of racial hatred is to be guaranteed.(Daily Worker)

This meaning of *to be to* is found in affirmative and interrogative sentences in the present and past tenses. *To be to* is followed by the simple infinitive.

The past tense of the verb *to be to* in combination with the Perfect infinitive denotes an unfulfilled plan.

E.g. I promised to go to a club with her last Tuesday, and I really forgot all about it. We were to have played a duet together.

2) **orders and instructions**, often official (frequently in reported speech).

E.g. I just mention it because you said I was to give you all the details I could.

Norman says I am to leave you alone. All junior officers are to report to the colonel at once.

The Prime Minister is to go to Paris next week. (Daily Worker, London)

In this meaning *to be to* is found in affirmative and negative sentences and followed by the simple infinitive.

3) **something that is destined to happen**

E.g. He was to be my teacher and friend for many years to come.

He did not know at the time that he was never to see his native place again.

How was I to know that I was going to meet a raging beauty?

It has been a great blow to me that you haven't been able to follow me in my business as I followed by father. Three generations, that would have been. But it wasn't to be.

This meaning of *to be to* is rendered in Russian as *суждено*. It is mainly found in the past tense and its application is limited to narration. It occurs in affirmative and negative sentences and is followed by the simple infinitive.

4) **Possibility**

E.g. Her father was often to be seen in the bar of the Hotel Metropole.

Where is he to be found?

Nothing was to be done under the circumstances.

Responsibilities and obligations possessed by the Soviet trade unions are to be envied. (Morning Star)

In this meaning *to be to* is equivalent to can or may. It is used in all kinds of sentences in the present and past tenses and is followed by the passive infinitive.

Here are some examples taken from the literary works:

'Tell him to go to sleep'. – 'She says **you're** to go to sleep'. (D.H. Lawrence).

I could scarcely see her in the darkness, but when I rose to go – it was plain that I was not to linger – she stood in the orange light from the doorway. (F Scott Fitzgerald)

The verbs *must*, *to have to* and *to be to* have one meaning in common, that of obligation. In the present tense the verbs come very close to each other in their use, though they preserve their specific shades of meaning. Thus *must* indicates obligation or necessity from the speaker's viewpoint, i.e. it expresses obligation imposed by the speaker.

E.g. I must do it. (*I want to do it*).

He must do it himself.

To have to expresses obligation or necessity imposed by circumstances.

E.g. What a pity you have to go now (*It is time for you to catch your train*).

In this case *had to* is close to *must* in meaning: it does not include the idea of a realized action but refers to some future moment.

The modal verb **ought to** has only one form which is used "with reference to the present or future. In reported speech it remains unchanged. *Ought* is always followed by the infinitive with *to*.

Ought to has the following meanings:

1) **obligation**, which in different contexts may acquire additional shades of meaning, such as **advisability** and **desirability**,

E.g. You ought to say a word or two about yourself.

Ought she to warn him?

He oughtn't to mention it to anybody.

"It doesn't mean you ought to marry a Yankee." He persisted. (F. Scott Fitzgerald)

In this meaning *ought to* is possible in all kinds of sentences, though it is felt to be awkward in questions where *should* is preferred.

Generally *ought to* refers an action to the future and is followed by the simple infinitive. With reference to the present *ought to* is used with the continuous infinitive or with the simple infinitive if the verb is stative.

E.g. At your age you ought to be earning your living.

You ought to feel some respect for your elders.

It was getting darker and darker – all those tomb-stones ought to be repainted, sure enough, only that would spoil them, of course. (F. Scott Fitzgerald).

“If you care for him you certainly oughtn’t to belittle yourself in front of him,” said Ailie in a flash, her head high. (F. Scott Fitzgerald)

In combination with the perfect infinitive *ought to* in the affirmative form shows that a desirable action was not fulfilled.

E.g. You ought to have chosen a more suitable time to tell me this news.

In the negative form *ought to* in combination with the Perfect Infinitive shows that an undesirable action was fulfilled

E.g. I’m sorry. I ought to have said it.

You oughtn’t to have married her, David. It was a great mistake.

supposition implying strong probability.

E.g. Oughtn’t you to go and have your tiffin?

The use of *ought to* in this case is not very common as this meaning is normally rendered by *must*: *He/You ought to know it* (=he is/you are supposed to know it). *You ought to be ashamed of yourself*.

Historically, *shall* and *should* were two forms of the same verb expressing obligation. *Shall* was the present tense of the Indicative Mood; *should* was the Subjunctive Mood. But later they came to express different meanings and in present-day English their use is not parallel – they are treated as two different verbs.

Shall. In modern English the modal meaning of obligation in **shall** is always combined with the function of an auxiliary verb of the future tense.

Shall is still used to express obligation with the second and third persons, but at present it is not common in this meaning in spoken English. Its use, as a rule, is restricted to formal or even archaic style and mainly found in subordinate clauses, i.e. it is structurally dependent.

E.g. It has been decided that the proposal shall not be opposed.

Chapter II.

2.2.1. Should + perfect infinitive, ought to + perfect infinitive and was/were to + perfect infinitive compared

Should + Perfect infinitive and *ought to + Perfect infinitive* show that the action has not been carried out though it was desirable; *was/were to + Perfect infinitive* indicate an action that has not been carried out though it was planned.

E.g. You should have helped him.

You ought to have warned him (*Now she is in trouble*).

He was to have arrived last week (*but his plans were upset by some cause or other*).

The verb *will* has the following forms: *will* – the present tense and *would* – the past tense. The latter form is used in two ways:

- a) in past-time context to express an actual fact and
- b) in present-time context to express unreality or as a milder and more polite form of *will*.

Will and *would* may also be used as verbs of full predication (not modal verbs). *Will* may be used as a regular verb (*wills, willed*). It means *проявлять волю, заставлять, внушать*. *Would* is a defective verb. It is used with reference to the present and means “*желать*”. It is found mainly in poetry and like the verb to wish is followed by an object clause: *I would I were a careless child*.

While *shall* and *should* are treated as two different verbs in modern English, *will* and *would* are considered to be the forms of the same verb, its original meaning being that of **volition** (Volition is a general term which includes such meanings as willingness, readiness, consent, intention and determination to perform an action). However, in some of their meanings the use of *will* is parallel only to *would* which denotes an actual fact in the past; in other meanings *will* is found alongside *would* which expresses unreality in the present or serves as a milder or more polite form of *will*.

The use of *will* and *would* which denotes an actual fact in the past is parallel in the following cases:

1) when they express **habitual or recurrent actions**,

E.g. She *will* (*would*) sit for hours under the old oak tree looking at the beautiful country around her (...любит/любила сидеть, обычно сидит/сидела ...)

In addition to indicating an habitual action, *will* (*would*) in this case implies willingness, personal interest on the part of the doer of the action. *Will* (*would*) in this meaning is found in affirmative sentences and is followed by the simple infinitive.

In present-time context *will* in this meaning is not common. In past-time context *would* is mainly characteristic of literary style.

E.g. Then there were weekends when he would ride over to the house of one farmer or another and spend a couple of nights on the hills.

2) when they express **refusal to perform** an action,

E.g. The doctor knows I won't be operated on.

He was wet through but he wouldn't change.

"Clark," she said softly, "I wouldn't change you for the world".

(F. Scott Fitzgerald)

This meaning is found in negative sentences; *will* (*would*) is followed by the simple infinitive. In Russian it is usually rendered as *никак не хочу, ни за что не хотел*.

3) when they are used with lifeless things to show that **a thing fails to perform its immediate function**,

E.g. My fountain pen *won't* (*wouldn't*) write.

The door *won't* (*wouldn't*) open.

In this meaning *will* (*would*) is found in negative sentences and is followed by the simple infinitive. In Russian it is usually rendered as *никак не пишет (не писала), никак не открывается (не открывалась)* and the like.

4) when they are used with the first person to express **will, intention or determination,**

E.g. “Damn it!” he thought, “I’m going to get out of this hole. I will make money. I am an Englishman and I will suffer no priest to interfere in my business”.

“I said I would do anything for him. We decided that we wouldn’t interfere”.

Need. The modal verb **need** may be used either as a defective or as a regular verb.

1) As a defective one *need* has only one form, which is the present tense. In reported speech it remains unchanged. It is followed by the infinitive without *to*.

Need expresses necessity. When reference is made to the present or future it is followed by the simple infinitive. It is used in negative and interrogative sentences. In interrogative sentences *need* usually implies that there is no necessity of performing the action.

E.g. You needn’t be afraid of me.

You need not meet him unless you’d like to. Need I repeat it?

Occasionally it may be found in affirmative sentences but it is not typical.

In negative sentences it is not always the verb *need* that is in the negative form; the negation may be found elsewhere in the sentence.

E.g. I *don’t think* we need give her any more of our attention. I need hardly say that I agree with you.

In combination with the Perfect infinitive *need* express an action which has been performed though it was unnecessary. It implies a waste of time or effort.

E.g. You needn’t have come. The deal is off.

It was obvious. You needn’t have protested. We needn’t have told him a lie even if we didn’t want to tell him the truth.

2) As a regular verb *need* can have all the necessary forms including the verbal. It also expresses necessity. It is followed by the infinitive with *to* and is mainly used in interrogative and negative sentences (like the defective *need*).

E.g. He didn't need to explain.

You don't need to tell me that you are sorry.

Did you need to read all those books?

It should be noted that this *need* is in more common use than the defective one, particularly in American English.

E.g. He needs a new coat.

Does he need my help? He does not need anything.

2.2.3. Shouldn't + Perfect Infinitive, oughtn't to + Perfect Infinitive and needn't + Perfect Infinitive compared

Shouldn't + Perfect infinitive and *oughtn't to + Perfect infinitive* show that an action has been carried out though it was **undesirable**; *needn't + Perfect infinitive* indicates that an action has been carried out though it was **unnecessary**.

E.g. You shouldn't have come (*for you are ill*);

You oughtn't to have written to them (*because your letter upsets*);

You needn't have come (*as the work is finished*);

You needn't have written to them (*because I sent them a telegram*).

III. Conclusion

I will formulate few basic grammatical rules applying to modal verbs:

All verbs are NEVER used with other auxiliary verbs such as *do*, *does*, *did* etc. The negative is formed simply by adding “not” after the verb; questions are formed by inversion of the verb and subject.

2. Modal verbs NEVER change form: you can never add an “-s” or “-ed”, for example.

3. Modal verbs are NEVER followed by *to*, with the exception of *ought to*.

4. Modal verbs are used in conversation. In the past it is possible to find them only in reported speech. The only exceptions are the Past Tense forms *could*, *would*, *had*, and *was* and *might* which maybe used not only in conversations but also in narration.

So, as you can see there are in Modern English these modal verbs: *ought to*, *must*, *shall*, *should*, *will*, *need*, *dare*: *to have* and *to be* can also be used as modal verbs. *May* express possibility/high probability (97%) and permission (3%). The modals used to express permission are *can* (58%), *may* (16%), *could* (13%), and *might* (13%), *could* (17%), *will* (17%). The three most frequent modals are *would* (28% of all modal occurrences), *could* (17%), and *will* (17%).

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