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THE USE OF "HAVE TO" IN ENGLISH GRAMMAR: A SCIENTIFIC AND ANALYTICAL STUDY

Ahmedov Azimjon

teacher of Andijan State Institute of Foreign Languages.
ORCID: 0009-0007-3405-3150
Azimjonahmedov1203@gmail.com

Olimova Lutfiyabonu Bobirjon qizi

the second grade student of Andijan State Institute of Foreign Languages.

Abstract: *The structure "have to" plays a significant role in expressing obligation and necessity in the . It is widely used in both spoken and written communication to indicate external requirements, rules, and unavoidable duties. Unlike modal verbs, "have to" functions as a semi-modal construction, combining lexical and grammatical properties. This article provides a scientific and analytical examination of "have to," focusing on its grammatical structure, semantic functions, syntactic behavior, and pedagogical importance in English language teaching. Drawing on established grammatical theories and educational research, the study highlights common learner difficulties and discusses effective instructional strategies for mastering the use of "have to" in various communicative contexts.*

Keywords: *have to, obligation, necessity, English grammar, semi-modal verbs, language teaching, modality*

Annotatsiya: *"Have to" konstruktsiyasi ingliz tilida majburiyat va zaruratni ifodalashda muhim o'rin tutadi. U og'zaki va yozma nutqda tashqi talablar, qoidalar hamda muqarrar vazifalarni bildirish uchun keng qo'llaniladi. Modal fe'llardan farqli ravishda, "have to" leksik va grammatik xususiyatlarni o'zida mujassam etgan yarim modal konstruktsiya sifatida faoliyat yuritadi. Mazkur maqolada "have to" konstruktsiyasi ilmiy va tahliliy jihatdan o'rganilib, uning grammatik tuzilishi, semantik funksiyalari, sintaktik xulqi hamda ingliz tilini o'qitishdagi pedagogik ahamiyatiga alohida e'tibor qaratiladi. Tadqiqot tasdiqlangan grammatik nazariyalar va ta'lim sohasidagi ilmiy izlanishlarga tayangan holda, o'rganuvchilar duch keladigan asosiy qiyinchiliklarni aniqlaydi hamda "have to" konstruktsiyasidan turli kommunikativ vaziyatlarda samarali foydalanishni o'rgatishga xizmat qiluvchi metodik strategiyalarni muhokama qiladi.*

Kalit so'zlar: *Have to, majburiyat, zarurat, ingliz tili grammatikasi, yarim modal fe'llar, tilni o'qitish, modallik*

Аннотация: *Конструкция «have to» играет важную роль в выражении обязательства и необходимости в английском языке. Она широко используется как в устной, так и в письменной речи для обозначения внешних требований, правил и неизбежных обязанностей. В отличие от модальных глаголов, «have to» функционирует как полумодальная конструкция, сочетая в себе лексические и грамматические свойства. В данной статье проводится научный и аналитический анализ конструкции «have to», с акцентом на её грамматическую структуру, семантические функции, синтаксическое поведение и педагогическую значимость в обучении английскому языку. Опираясь на устоявшиеся грамматические теории и исследования в области образования, в работе выявляются типичные трудности, с которыми сталкиваются изучающие язык, а также рассматриваются эффективные методические стратегии освоения конструкции «have to» в различных коммуникативных контекстах.*

Ключевые слова: *Have to, обязательство, необходимость, английская грамматика, полумодальные глаголы, преподавание языка, модальность*

The expression of obligation and necessity is a fundamental aspect of human communication, allowing speakers to convey rules, duties, and requirements. In English grammar, this function is fulfilled through a range of modal and semi-modal constructions, among which "have to" occupies a prominent position. Although it is often taught alongside modal verbs such as must and should, linguistic research emphasizes that "have to" differs significantly in both form and function. According to Swan (2016), "have to" is best described as a semi-modal structure because it behaves like a main verb grammatically while expressing modal meaning semantically.

From a grammatical perspective, "have to" consists of the verb have followed by the infinitive marker to and a main verb. Unlike modal verbs, it changes its form according to tense, person, and number. For example, in the present tense, it appears as have to or has to (I have to study, She has to work late), while in the past tense it becomes had to. Murphy (2019) notes that this flexibility allows "have to" to be used across different time frames, making it more versatile than certain modal verbs that lack past or future forms.

Semantically, "have to" is primarily used to express external obligation. This means that the necessity usually comes from an outside authority, rule, or situation rather than from the speaker's personal decision. For instance, the sentence "Students have to wear uniforms" implies an institutional rule, not a personal preference. Huddleston and Pullum (2002) argue that this external source of obligation is the key feature distinguishing "have to" from must, which often conveys the speaker's internal authority or subjective insistence.

Another important function of "have to" is the expression of logical necessity, particularly in informal spoken English. Sentences such as "She has to be at home; the lights are on" demonstrate how "have to" can be used to make strong logical deductions. In this sense, the structure extends beyond obligation and enters the domain of epistemic modality, where it expresses a high degree of certainty based on evidence. Eastwood (1994) highlights that this usage is especially common in everyday communication and should be explicitly taught to advanced learners.

Syntactically, "have to" behaves like an ordinary verb rather than a modal auxiliary. In negative and interrogative forms, it requires the use of the auxiliary do. For example, "Do you have to work tomorrow?" and "She does not have to attend the meeting" illustrate this pattern. Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (2016) emphasize that this syntactic behavior is a frequent source of learner error, as students may incorrectly form negatives and questions by analogy with modal verbs ("Have you to work?" or "She hasn't to go").

The distinction between "have to" and "must" is one of the most challenging areas for learners of English. While both structures express obligation, their pragmatic meanings differ. "Have to" is generally more neutral and objective, whereas "must" can sound more forceful or authoritative. In many contexts, especially in spoken English, "have to" is preferred because it sounds less direct and more polite. Swan (2016) notes that native speakers often replace must with have to in everyday conversation to reduce the level of imposition.

From a pedagogical perspective, teaching "have to" requires careful attention to both form and meaning. Learners must understand not only how to construct sentences grammatically, but also when and why "have to" is used instead of other modal expressions. Ur (2012) argues that contextualized practice is essential for developing this awareness. Role-plays, problem-solving tasks, and rule-based discussions allow learners to experience the communicative function of "have to" in realistic situations.

Common learner difficulties include confusion between have to and must, incorrect verb forms ("She have to go"), and errors in negation ("She don't have to" instead of "She doesn't have to"). Ellis (2008) explains that such errors are often the result of negative transfer from the learner's first language or overgeneralization of modal verb rules. Addressing these issues requires explicit contrastive explanations and repeated exposure to authentic language input.

In academic and professional contexts, "have to" is frequently used to describe regulations, procedures, and obligations imposed by institutions. Sentences such as "Participants have to complete the questionnaire" or "Employees have to follow safety regulations" are common in formal written texts. Huddleston and Pullum (2002) observe

that this usage reinforces the objective and impersonal tone typical of institutional discourse.

In conclusion, "have to" is a crucial grammatical structure in English that enables speakers to express obligation, necessity, and logical certainty. Although it shares certain semantic similarities with modal verbs, its grammatical behavior and pragmatic functions distinguish it as a semi-modal construction. Linguistic and pedagogical research demonstrates that mastery of "have to" is essential for accurate and natural communication in both spoken and written English. Through systematic instruction, contextualized practice, and contrastive analysis with other modal expressions, learners can develop a clear understanding of "have to" and use it effectively across a wide range of communicative situations.

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