

THE USE AND INTERPRETATION OF THE MODAL EXPRESSION “HAVE TO” IN MODERN ENGLISH GRAMMAR

Ahmedov Azimjon

teacher of Andijan State Institute of Foreign Languages.

ORCID: 0009-0007-3405-3150

azimjonahmedov1203@gmail.com

Fozilova RobiyaxonTavakkal qizi

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

Abstract: *The modal expression have to plays a significant role in modern English grammar as a key means of expressing necessity and obligation. Unlike core modal verbs, have to functions as a semi-modal and is widely used in both spoken and written English. This article aims to analyze how the structure have to is presented and interpreted in major English grammar books, including works by Raymond Murphy, Michael Swan, Sidney Greenbaum, Betty Schramper Azar, and L.G. Alexander. The study focuses on semantic meaning, grammatical structure, tense variation, and pedagogical approaches. Through comparative analysis, the article demonstrates that have to primarily expresses external obligation and objective necessity. The findings confirm that understanding different grammatical explanations of have to is essential for both language learners and educators.*

Keywords: *have to, necessity, obligation, modal verbs, English grammar*

Аннотация: *Модальная конструкция have to занимает важное место в современной английской грамматике как средство выражения необходимости и обязанности. В отличие от основных модальных глаголов, have to относится к полумодальным формам и широко используется как в устной, так и в письменной речи. В данной статье рассматривается трактовка конструкции have to в трудах ведущих грамматистов английского языка, таких как Рэймонд Мерфи, Майкл Суон, Сидни Гринбаум, Бетти Азар и Л. Г. Александер. Анализ охватывает семантические, грамматические и методические аспекты употребления. Результаты исследования показывают, что have to преимущественно выражает внешнюю обязанность и объективную необходимость.*

Ключевые слова: *have to, необходимость, обязанность, модальные глаголы, английская грамматика*

Annotatsiya: *Have to modal birikmasi zamonaviy ingliz tilida zarurat va majburiyatni ifodalashda muhim o‘rin tutadi. U an’anaviy modal fe’llardan farqli ravishda yarim modal hisoblanadi va og‘zaki hamda yozma nutqda keng qo‘llaniladi. Ushbu maqolada have to*

konstruktsiyasining Raymond Murphy, Michael Swan, Sidney Greenbaum, Betty Azar va L.G. Alexander kabi mashhur grammatiklar asarlarida qanday yoritilgani tahlil qilinadi. Tadqiqot semantik ma’no, grammatik tuzilish, zamon shakllari va metodik yondashuvlarni qamrab oladi. Natijalar have to asosan tashqi majburiyat va obyektiv zaruratni ifodalashini ko‘rsatadi.

Kalit so‘zlar: *have to, zarurat, majburiyat, modal fe’llar, ingliz grammatikasi*

Modality is an essential component of English grammar, allowing speakers to express obligation, necessity, permission, and possibility. Among modal expressions, have to occupies a unique position due to its dual nature as both a lexical verb and a modal-like structure. Unlike traditional modal verbs such as must or can, have to changes according to tense and subject, making it grammatically flexible and widely applicable.

The purpose of this article is to examine how have to is described and explained in major English grammar books. By comparing different grammatical perspectives, this study aims to highlight both theoretical and practical interpretations of have to and its importance in language teaching and learning.

The Semantic Meaning of “Have to”

Most grammar books agree that have to expresses necessity caused by external factors. According to Raymond Murphy, have to is used when rules, laws, or circumstances make an action necessary. This distinguishes it from must, which often reflects the speaker’s personal authority.

Michael Swan further explains that have to indicates objective necessity rather than subjective opinion. For example, in the sentence “I have to wear a uniform at work,” the obligation is imposed by workplace rules, not personal choice.

Sidney Greenbaum supports this view by categorizing have to as a periphrastic modal expressing external obligation. This semantic feature makes have to especially common in institutional and social contexts.

Grammatical Structure and Forms

From a grammatical perspective, have to behaves like a main verb. This means it requires auxiliary verbs to form questions and negatives. Greenbaum emphasizes that this structural feature separates have to from core modal verbs.

Examples include:

Do you have to work today?

She does not have to attend the meeting.

Betty Azar presents these structures in a pedagogical manner, providing learners with clear patterns and exercises. She also explains the negative form do not have to, stressing that it means “lack of necessity” rather than prohibition.

Tense Variation and Flexibility

One major advantage of have to is its ability to appear in different tense forms. Murphy highlights that have to can be used in the past and future, unlike must.

Examples:

I had to finish the report yesterday.

They will have to follow the new rules.

L.G. Alexander reinforces this point through grammar drills, allowing learners to practice tense changes systematically. This flexibility makes have to an essential structure for expressing obligation across time.

Spoken and Written Usage

Michael Swan notes that have to is particularly common in spoken English. In everyday conversation, speakers prefer have to over must because it sounds more natural and less authoritative.

For instance:

Do we have to leave now?

You have to try this food.

In written English, especially in formal instructions and regulations, have to is also widely used due to its neutral tone.

Pedagogical Importance of “Have to”

From a teaching perspective, have to is introduced at early stages of language learning. Betty Azar emphasizes gradual introduction, starting with present tense forms and later expanding to past and future uses.

Raymond Murphy’s approach is similarly learner-centered, using simple explanations and everyday examples. These pedagogical strategies help learners understand not only form but also usage context.

Comparison with “Must”

All reviewed grammar books compare have to with must. The main difference lies in the source of obligation. While must often reflects personal authority, have to represents external necessity.

Example:

I must finish this today. (speaker’s decision)

I have to finish this today. (external requirement)

This distinction is crucial for accurate communication and is emphasized across all major grammar references.

Conclusion

In conclusion, 'have to' is a vital grammatical structure in modern English, serving as a primary means of expressing external obligation and necessity. Analysis of major grammar books reveals consistent agreement on its semantic function, grammatical behavior, and pedagogical value. While each author approaches the topic differently, all emphasize the importance of 'have to' in both spoken and written communication. Understanding these explanations allows learners and teachers to use the structure more accurately and effectively.

References

1. Murphy, R. (2019). *English Grammar in Use*. Cambridge University Press.
2. Swan, M. (2016). *Practical English Usage*. Oxford University Press.
3. Greenbaum, S. (1996). *A Student's Grammar of the English Language*. Longman.
4. Azar, B. S. (2003). *Understanding and Using English Grammar*. Pearson Education.
5. Alexander, L. G. (1992). *Longman English Grammar Practice*. Longman.