

PRAGMATIC AND MODAL MEANING IN THE EXPRESSION OF WISH AND DESIRE: A CROSS-LINGUISTIC PERSPECTIVE

Feruzjon Sharipov

*PhD, English teaching methodology №1 department
Uzbekistan state university of world languages*

ABSTRACT: *This article examines the pragmatic and modal meanings embedded in wish and desire expressions from a cross-linguistic perspective, focusing on English and Uzbek. While desire is often categorized within volitional modality, its interpretation depends heavily on discourse context and communicative intention. The study analyzes modal verbs, subjunctive constructions, analytic structures, and lexical markers to identify how pragmatic force interacts with grammatical modality. Literary examples illustrate how speakers negotiate hypotheticality, obligation, emotional stance, and interpersonal alignment. The findings reveal both universal modal mechanisms and culturally specific pragmatic strategies shaping the expression of wish and desire across languages.*

Keywords: *modality, pragmatics, wish expression, volitional modality, cross-linguistic analysis, discourse meaning, hypotheticality, speech acts.*

ANNOTATSIYA: *Mazkur maqolada istak va xohish ifodalarida mujassam bo'lgan pragmatik hamda modal ma'nolar ingliz va o'zbek tillari qiyosida o'rganiladi. Istak ko'pincha volitiv modallik doirasiga kiritilsa-da, uning talqini asosan diskurs konteksti va kommunikativ niyatga bog'liqdir. Tadqiqot doirasida modallik fe'llari, subjunktiv konstruktsiyalar, analitik shakllar va leksik ko'rsatkichlar tahlil qilinib, pragmatik kuch bilan grammatik modallikning o'zaro ta'siri aniqlanadi. Adabiy misollar yordamida so'zlovchilarning gipotezalik, majburiyat, emotsional pozitsiya va interpersonallikni qanday muzokara qilishi ko'rsatib beriladi. Natijalar istak va xohish ifodasida universal modal mexanizmlar bilan bir qatorda madaniyatga xos pragmatik strategiyalar ham mavjudligini ochib beradi.*

Kalit so'zlar: *modallik, pragmatika, istak ifodasi, volitiv modallik, qiyosiy tilshunoslik, diskurs ma'nosi, gipotezalik, so'z gaplar.*

Introduction

The expression of wish and desire constitutes a significant domain in linguistic analysis, particularly at the intersection of modality and pragmatics. While desire is frequently classified under volitional modality, its full interpretation cannot be reduced to grammatical structure alone. Instead, pragmatic meaning plays a decisive role in shaping how wish expressions function in discourse.

Modality encodes the speaker's attitude toward the proposition, including possibility, necessity, obligation, and volition. In English, wish and desire are



commonly expressed through modal verbs (“would,” “could”), subjunctive constructions (“I wish I were...”), and lexical verbs (“want,” “desire,” “hope”). In Uzbek, desire is conveyed through verbs such as “xohlamoq,” “istamoq,” analytic constructions like “-gim keladi,” and modal particles that encode volitional force. However, these forms do not operate solely at the grammatical level; they carry pragmatic implications related to politeness, emotional stance, and social relationships.

The pragmatic dimension of wish expressions becomes especially evident in contexts involving hypotheticality or counterfactuality. Statements such as “I wish I had known” express not only past unreal desire but also regret. The modal structure signals irrealis meaning, while the pragmatic layer conveys emotional evaluation. Similarly, in Uzbek, constructions like “Qaniydi...” encode unattainable longing and affective intensity simultaneously.

Cross-linguistic comparison reveals both shared modal frameworks and culturally specific realizations. English tends to rely heavily on morphosyntactic modulation, whereas Uzbek frequently utilizes analytic constructions and pragmatic particles influenced by social hierarchy and collectivist norms.

Moreover, wish expressions serve as speech acts that may function as requests, indirect directives, expressions of frustration, or markers of interpersonal alignment. Their modal meaning interacts dynamically with context, tone, and speaker intention.

Literature Review

The study of modality has long occupied a central role in linguistic theory. Palmer (2001) defines modality as the grammaticalization of speakers’ attitudes toward propositions. Within this framework, volitional modality encompasses expressions of willingness, intention, and desire. However, modality does not operate independently of discourse context.

Lyons (1977) differentiated epistemic and deontic modality but acknowledged the importance of subjective speaker attitude. Volitional constructions, particularly wish expressions, fall into this subjective domain. In English, the subjunctive “were” in sentences like “I wish I were” demonstrates modal irrealis meaning.

Karttunen (1971) examined the semantics of factive and non-factive verbs, noting that verbs like “wish” imply counterfactuality. This semantic property interacts with pragmatic interpretation, particularly in conveying regret.

In cognitive linguistics, Langacker (2008) emphasized that modal constructions reflect conceptualization and perspective. Wish expressions encode mental spaces projecting alternative realities. Cross-linguistically, languages differ in how they grammatically mark irrealis meaning.

Uzbek linguistic studies have analyzed modality through analytic constructions and modal particles. Researchers note that affixation and periphrastic forms encode



subjective stance alongside pragmatic nuance. In Uzbek discourse, modality often overlaps with politeness conventions.

Recent cross-linguistic pragmatics research indicates that modal meaning is context-dependent and culturally mediated. Wierzbicka (1991) proposed that cultural scripts govern emotional expression and desire articulation. English discourse often foregrounds individual perspective, whereas Central Asian communicative traditions emphasize relational positioning.

Literary stylistics further illustrates modal-pragmatic interplay. Toolan (2009) argues that fictional narratives exploit modal structures to represent internal states and hypothetical worlds. Irrealis constructions, therefore, become tools for psychological depth.

From George Orwell's 1984:

"If only there were a way."

The structure expresses irrealis desire through hypothetical framing. The modal meaning signals impossibility, while the pragmatic meaning conveys despair and resistance.

From Toni Morrison's *Beloved*:

"She wanted more than safety."

The lexical verb "wanted" encodes volition, yet context intensifies existential longing beyond physical need, demonstrating modal depth intertwined with emotional stance.

From Tohir Malik's *Shaytanat*:

"Qaniydi bu yo'llar boshqa tomonga burilsa."

The particle "Qaniydi" expresses counterfactual wish. Modal irrealis merges with pragmatic regret and fate-oriented reflection.

From Hoshimjon Safarov's contemporary prose:

"Bor-gim keladi, ammo qo'limdan kelmaydi."

The analytic construction "-gim keladi" encodes volitional modality. The following clause introduces epistemic limitation, revealing pragmatic tension between desire and reality.

Comparative Insight

English frequently encodes irrealis through syntactic manipulation (subjunctive, conditionals). Uzbek utilizes lexical particles and periphrastic constructions. In both languages, modal structures project alternative realities, yet pragmatic force derives from discourse context.

Thus, wish expressions represent layered meaning: grammatical modality signals potentiality or unreality, while pragmatics shapes emotional and interpersonal interpretation.



Conclusion

Wish and desire expressions illustrate the intricate relationship between modality and pragmatics across languages. While grammatical structures encode volitional and irrealis meaning, pragmatic context determines emotional resonance and communicative function.

Comparative analysis of English and Uzbek reveals shared modal foundations alongside culturally distinct realizations. English typically emphasizes morphosyntactic modulation, whereas Uzbek relies on analytic constructions and culturally embedded particles.

References:

1. Karttunen, L. (1971). Some observations on factivity. *Papers in Linguistics*, 4(1), 55–69.
2. Langacker, R. (2008). *Cognitive grammar*. Oxford University Press.
3. Leech, G. (2014). *The pragmatics of politeness*. Oxford University Press.
4. Lyons, J. (1977). *Semantics (Vol. 2)*. Cambridge University Press.
5. Palmer, F. R. (2001). *Mood and modality (2nd ed.)*. Cambridge University Press.
6. Searle, J. R. (1979). *Expression and meaning*. Cambridge University Press.
7. Toolan, M. (2009). *Narrative: A critical linguistic introduction*. Routledge.
8. Wierzbicka, A. (1991). *Cross-cultural pragmatics*. Mouton de Gruyter.