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ISOMORPHISM OF MODAL VERBS AS LINGUOCULTURAL FACTOR IN THE GERMAN LANGUAGE REALITY

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Abstract

Modal verbs form the core of such a universal linguistic category as modality, which conveys the characteristics of a phrase from the point of view of its objective relationship to reality and a subjective assessment of its content. Modality is closely related to the human factor, it develops and changes along with the historically changing consciousness of a person and society, therefore, the study of its linguistic, socio-cultural and communicative-pragmatic aspects is everlastingly relevant. Modality is a text-generating category. In this regard, the still little studied problem of contextual isomorphism of modal verbs, by which we mean equivalence, the identity of the transmission of the same meaning by different verb forms, is relevant. The aim of our research was an attempt to consider the phenomenon of isomorphism of modal verbs in the modern German language and to substantiate its linguocultural specificity. The research was carried out on the material of parallel German-Russian artistic contexts from the National Corpus of the Russian language. The study has shown that in the semantics of every modal verb in German there is an immanent meaning that reflects a certain type of modality, which, depending on the situational context, is complemented by other modality types meanings. Isomorphism of these verbs is associated with their etymology - transferring shades of a person's state of mind. The rudiments of these meanings are also manifested in the isomorphism of modal verbs as markers of politeness in the cultural practice in the modern German-speaking countries.

Keywords: Context meaning, immanent meaning, isomorphism, linguocultural factor, modality, modal verb.

1. Introduction

Modal verbs form the core of modality as a linguistic category (lat. Modus - measure, method) expressing different types of statement attitude to reality, as well as different types of "subjective qualifications of the communicated" (Yartseva, 1998, p. 112). On the one hand, it is one of the most well-established, and on the other hand, the most controversial concepts in modern linguistics (Zeleneckij & Novozhilova, 2003, p. 73). The category of modality is closely related to the human factor and "should be especially sensitive to the changes that occur in a person, in his historically changing consciousness" (Miloserdova, 1991, p. 35). In this regard, the study of its communicative-pragmatic and linguocultural aspects is everlastingly relevant.

2. Problem Statement

The text-centric nature of modern linguistic research has forced us to take a fresh look at the approaches to the word systematization by parts of speech and their role in a statement. In this regard, the still little studied problem of contextual isomorphism of modal verbs, by which we mean equivalence, the identity of the transmission of the same meaning by different verb forms, is relevant. It manifests itself especially vividly in artistic contexts, which, on the one hand, are a fictitious concept of the world created by the author, but, on the other hand, provide a linguocultural characteristic of the real world in which the author himself lives.

3. Research Questions

The linguistic means of implementing this category, present at all levels of the language, are becoming more and more differentiated and are consolidated in textbooks on the theory and practice of language and lexicographic sources. Modality is considered an important text-forming category.

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of our research is to consider the phenomenon of isomorphism of modal verbs können, dürfen, mögen, müssen, sollen, wollen (about 1000 contexts in total) using practical material from German-Russian parallel texts of the National Corpus of the Russian Language (National Corpus of the Russian Language, n.d.) and try to substantiate the linguocultural specifics of this phenomenon.

5. Research Methods

The main method for studying the semantic structure of these linguistic units is contextual interpretation, since "the understanding of an individual phrase or the entire text depends on the context in the broadest sense of the word, i.e. from the speech situation, from the knowledge base of the speaker and the listener, from their goals and strategies of behavior at the moment" (Krongauz, 2005, p. 302).

6.   Findings

6.1.   Phenomenon of isomorphism of modal verbs

The variability of linguistic units and the polysemy of their semantic structure reflects the very way of existence and development of the language. But at the same time, there is such an interesting phenomenon as the uniformity of ways of expressing modal shades in statements in the German language, that is, their isomorphism (from the Greek isos - equal, equivalent and morphe - form) (Academic.ru, n.d.).

6.1.1. The concept of isomorphism in linguistics

According to Arakin (2005), "the term 'isomorphism' was introduced into linguistic use by the Polish linguist E. Kurilovich from mathematics, where it means the identity, the similarity of the internal structure of two systems of numbers" (p. 23). The scientist himself identifies isomorphism as the "uniformity of structure" units at different language levels and, accordingly, "uniformity of relations" between them at these levels, that is, establishing "similarity not only of microsystems, but also subsystems and entire systems of a number of languages" (Arakin, 2005, p. 24). Arakin bases his typological description of languages on this concept. Many explanatory Russian and German dictionaries still either reflect only the concepts of the natural sciences associated with isomorphism in chemistry and mathematics, or there is no such dictionary entry at all (Dictionary of Foreign Words in Russian, 1997, p. 258; Dictionary of Foreign Words, 2003, p. 249, Duden Deutsches Universalwörterbuch, 2001; Soviet Encyclopedic Dictionary, 1986, p. 392; Kuznecov, 2004; Lekhin & Petrov, 1997). In dictionaries of linguistic terms, as a rule, the definition of E. Kurilovich is given (Bußmann, 1990, p. 356-357), or the concept of the isomorphism theory (levels of language) is being introduced, postulating "the absence of a qualitative difference between different levels (tiers) of the language", requiring "therefore the application of the same methods to their study and description and principles" (Ahmanova, 2004, p. 473) and actively developed in translation studies.

We consider isomorphism in linguistics as a concept that reflects the phenomenon of contextually determined identity of word forms, that is, not as "isomorphic meanings" of a linguistic unit, but as the transfer of the same meaning by different forms. Of particular interest is the appearance in a modal context of verbs with opposite immanent semantics.

6.1.2. Inventory of modal verbs group in german language

When we talk about modal verbs in the German language, we immediately name the six "classical" ones that make up the core of their group: *können, dürfen, mögen, müssen, sollen, wollen*, and then add verbs and constructions that are increasingly used not as significant, but as modifying. For example, in the Duden grammar, *brauchen* is on this list - to need (Duden, 2009, p. 556). Modal verbs also include *lassen, haben / sein + zu + Infinitiv, wünschen*, the construction Futur (Duden, 2009, p. 556), etc., which gives the statement different shades of desirability. In the three-volume grammar published by the Institute of the German Language in Mannheim, as in many other modern grammars, *mögen* is immediately presented in the form *möchte-* (IDS-Grammatik, 1997, p. 1252), and the authors of some textbooks add the form *möchten* in the infinitive to the group of modal verbs, thus separating it from the verb *mögen* (Delfin, 2002, p. 75). All this suggests that the inventory of the group of modal verbs in modern German is not only constantly

replenished, but also the semantics of its core is differentiated, and the autonomy of individual word forms is also observed.

6.1.2.1. Immanent meanings of modal verbs

The immanent meanings of modal verbs are their original, etymologically determined meanings. The verbs können, dürfen, mögen, müssen, sollen, wollen belong to the so-called Präterito-Präsentia group, which have lost their present forms, so native speakers began to use preterite forms instead. There are no clearly substantiated reasons for this phenomenon in the history of the German language; there is only a statement of the fact that they were originally etymologically significant, constituted a group of verbs with the meaning of "state of mind" in a broad sense and had synonymous signs (Zhirmunskij, 1976, p. 58-59). Perhaps their modal semantics is associated with the replacement of the present by the preterite (the result of an action in the past became a state in the present). On this basis, the verb wissen fits well here, which historically refers to Präterito-Präsentia, but does not have modal semantics (Hentschel & Weydt, 2013, p. 64). Such a "pre-modal" semantics was in the verb können - "to know, to understand" (Duden. Herkunftswörterbuch, 2005, 478; Etymologisches ... 2002, p 345; Köbler, 1995; Mackensen, 1988, p. 229), in the verb dürfen - "to need, to lack", mögen - "to have power, to be able", müssen - "to have an opportunity, to be bound by an oath", sollen - "to be obliged, to have a duty - schuldig sein" (Zhirmunskij, 1976, p. 59), and only wollen (from the indoeur. "desire, choice, will") has retained its original meaning today. Basically, the authors of etymological dictionaries and grammars of the German language are united within the given definitions of the premodal meanings of these verbs. In the course of the history of the language, these verbs have undergone many changes in development, for example, müssen and dürfen, mögen and können were changed semantically, which is still found in the epistemic use of these verbs: so mag (= kann) es gewesen sein.

Summarizing the definitions of modern meanings of modal verbs, which are given in dictionaries and textbooks (Duden online, DWDS, Wahrig, IDS-Grammatik, Helbig & Buscha, etc.), we can give them the following characteristic:

- the verb *können* means to be able, to have the opportunity, right, ability, permission to do something;
- the verb *dürfen* means: have permission; have the right to do something, is often used in negative statements containing a wish or request, softens unambiguous statements, expresses the degree of probability;
- the verb *mögen* in its modal use expresses the realization of someone's desire or agreement with this desire, as well as the possible degree of probability of an event, an assumption;
- the verb *müssen* is characterized as a necessity dictated by external pressure, social norms, internal personal obligations, logic, the will of the speaker.
- the verb *sollen* is presented as an expression of the will of someone who is not the grammatical subject in the statement, as an expression of extreme necessity, as a transfer of someone else's words and someone else's opinion.
- the verb *wollen* expresses the will, desire, intention to do something.

They can be used in the text in their full, significant sense, for example: *Er muss zum Unterricht - It's time for him to study;* and can play a service role, giving different shades of modality to another, significant, verb, for example: *Er muss seine Pflicht erfüllen - He must do his duty. Er muss sehr müde sein, hält sich kaum auf den Beinen - He's definitely tired, can barely keep up.*

Based on dictionary entries and grammar data, we take the meanings of the modal verbs listed above as the basis for their semantic structure.

6.1.2.2. Contextual meanings of modal verbs

Contextual meanings are the concretization of semantics (ambiguity) in a given context. An analysis of the contextual use of modal verbs has shown that it is a quite typical situation when the modal verbs appear in certain contexts not only with the immanent component of their semantics but also along with meanings that are not typical for them. For example, the question: *Du, können wir nicht sprechen?* is unambiguously interpreted as an imperative: *Wollen wir sprechen!* The verb *können* receives incentive semantics in an interrogative construction with *nicht*, which can be considered an incentive marker. Or in a situation of emotional turmoil, the inability to contain emotions, the verb *müssen* clearly acquires the semantics of the verb *können*: *Er musste lachen / weinen ...* We regard this phenomenon of German modal verbs as the result of the fact that in modern use they have retained the rudiments of their old meanings, and we consider their isomorphism as a linguocultural factor.

6.1.3. Isomorphism of modal verbs in the context of modality of desirability

To express the meaning of desirability in descending order of modal strength, the verbs *müssen* (confident intense expression of will), *sollen* (prescription, distant expression of will) and *wollen* (explicit desire) are used. In combination with some linguistic marker units, these meanings can be conveyed by other modal verbs for which this semantics is generally not typical. For example, in the following context, a confident guess, which is usually conveyed by the verb *müssen*, can be expressed by the verb *dürfen* with the characteristic marker - the amplifying particle *nur*:

- *Es würde nicht schwer sein, in den schlesischen Bädern eine Auswahl zu treffen, Salzbrunn gut, und Reinerz, wegen der Nervenkomplikation, noch besser. Aber es darf nur Hohen-Cremmen sein. Denn, meine gnädigste Frau, was Ihrer Frau Tochter Genesung bringen kann, ist nicht Luft allein. - It would be possible to recommend some resort in Silesia - it would be nice to Salzbrunn or even Reinerz, given her nervous state. However, I personally think that it should be Gauguin-Kremmen. Your daughter, dear madam, needs more than just fresh air.*

Theodor Fontane. Effi Briest (1894-1895) Theodore Fontane. Effie Brist

The following example can be interpreted as a prescription, however, here it is expressed not by the usual verb *sollen*, but by the verb *dürfen*.

- *Ich bin aber eine schlechte Katholikin und bin ganz davon abgekommen, und vielleicht geht es mir deshalb so schlecht; ja, man darf nicht von seinem Glauben lassen und muß alles ordentlich mitmachen. - But I am a bad Catholic, I have completely abandoned my religion, and maybe*

that is why my life is so bad. Yes! You must not forget your faith, you must do everything as it should be.

Theodor Fontane. Effi Briest (1894-1895) Theodore Fontane. Effie Brist

Factors such as the presence of negation and an impersonal generalized grammatical subject in a sentence can influence the choice of a modal verb.

As mentioned above, the verb *wollen* least of all others changed its original essence - the obvious expression of will. In the same sense, we encountered contexts with the verb *sollen* in interrogative constructions of the rhetorical type, for example:

Warum soll ich nicht verlieren? = Ich will nicht verlieren Sollte ich das vergessen? = Ich will nicht vergessen

6.1.4. Isomorphism of modal verbs in the context of modality of possibility

To express the meanings of the modality of possibility, in descending order of modal strength, the verbs *können* (postulation of possibility), *dürfen* (permission, permission) and *mögen* (realization of someone's desire) are used.

When analyzing contexts in the text corpus, we came across examples where the semantics of a possibility is conveyed not by *können*, but by *sollen*. This can be influenced by the interrogative form of the sentence and the strong emotional coloring of the statement - a matter of life and death.

(3) Und wovon soll ich leben? - And what will I live on? (= How can I live?)

Heinrich Böll. Ansichten eines Clowns (1963) Heinrich Böll. Through the eyes of a clown

The following example demonstrates a situation in which the verb *sollen* is used instead of the verb *dürfen*, although the semantics does not imply any recommendation, or prescription, or anyone's will, but rather only an admission, permission. One of the reasons for this, similar to example (2), in our opinion, is a generalized impersonal grammatical subject.

- *Den Kindern von Nichtkönigen oder Nichtmillionären, jedenfalls den Jungen, wird zuerst einmal zugebrüllt: "Du bist hier nicht zu Hause", eine dreifache Unterstellung, weil vorausgesetzt wird, daß manie sich zu Hause wohl fühlt, wenn man sich wie ein Schwein benimmt, und daß man sich als Kind um keinen Preis wohl fühlen soll. - At non-royal and non-millionaire children, especially if they are boys, everyone yells: "You are not at home here," a three times false pedagogical premise: firstly, it is established that at home children behave like pigs, and secondly, it is assumed that children feel they behave well only if they behave like pigs, and, thirdly, the child is taught that he is not allowed to feel good anywhere.*

Heinrich Böll. Ansichten eines Clowns (1963) Heinrich Böll. Through the eyes of a clown

The original non-modal meaning of *mögen* is to love, from which the development of the meanings of desire and possibility came, therefore there is a semantic connection between the verbs *mögen* and *wollen* - their isomorphism, as we see in the following example:

(6) Der liebe Gott wird das nicht wollen ... - The Lord will not allow ... (= Der liebe Gott mag es nicht).

Thomas Mann. Buddenbrooks (1896-1900) Thomas Mann. Buddenbrooks

6.2. Isomorphism of modal verbs as markers of polite speech

From the point of view of cultural linguistics, language not only reflects reality, but interprets it, creating a special reality in which a person lives (Maslova, 2001, p. 5). The isomorphism of modal verbs in German is present when they are used as markers of polite speech. The category of politeness is not only an important factor in the successful implementation of human communication but, as a linguo-social-cultural phenomenon, it forms the cultural characteristics of a nation, that is, it becomes a component of the cultural picture of the world of people speaking a particular language. The picture of the world usually means "the primary all-encompassing image of the world, which is at the center of the human worldview" (Serebrennikov, 1988, p. 21).

Politeness is called by some researchers a particular type of discourse: "Due to the fact that discourse is a communicative category, various communicative variables can be relevant for its classification. Therefore, we can point out the following types of discourse: [...], by the emotional position of the agent (hate discourse, politeness discourse)..." (Nevolina et al., 2019, p. 502)

The linguistic-socio-cultural basis of the category of politeness is expressed in speech etiquette and communication stereotypes of members of society, transmitting various culturally determined manifestations of their polite and friendly attitude towards each other. So in the business environment in Germany and Austria there is a clear observance of the status of communication between team members, but it is so veiled in language that a representative of another culture may not feel it. For example, even if the Austrian chief of a company makes an urgent request to his secretary, this request will sound very polite (*Könnten Sie bitte das kopieren? - lit .:Could you please copy this?*), while in the Russian polite language appeal, only the word "*please*" will be indicating politeness, and the request itself is expressed as an imperative (*Please make copies of these documents*). Reukova (2005) cites in her research an example from the practice of intercultural corporate communication, when an Austrian manager, having made a request in this form to a Russian colleague, did not get the results of his assignment, since she simply did not understand the pragmatics of the statement (p. 50). As we can see, and probably someone already knows from their own experience, the cultural barrier can be much more dangerous and unpleasant than the language one. It is made of absolutely transparent glass and is imperceptible until you break your forehead against this invisible barrier (Ter-Minasova, 2000, p. 34). Therefore, knowledge of the socio-cultural characteristics of polite behavior and mastery of the corresponding speech patterns are very important for foreign language communication.

German has certain linguistic structures in which modal verbs are used primarily to give a polite tone to speech. In this case, it is not their semantics that dominates, but their pragmatics, modal meanings fade into the background, which causes the isomorphism of these verbs. For example, as a rule, the seller turns to the buyer with an offer to help, which is framed as a question: *Help you? - lit .: Can I be useful to you?* In German it will sound both *Kann ich Ihnen behilflich sein?* and *Darf ich Ihnen behilflich sein?* Both phrases are interchangeable, since in this speech cliché the category of politeness comes to the fore, and the internal semantics of physical possibility in the verb *können* and obtaining permission from the verb *dürfen* have no meaning and are obscured. The authors of textbooks of German as a foreign language also draw attention to this feature of these modal verbs, pointing, for example, in polite turns to the functional synonymy not only of *können* and *dürfen*, but also of other verbs: "Bei der höflichen Bitte benutzt man

entweder die Modalverben *könnte* und *dürfte*, die Hilfsverben *wäre* und *hätte* oder die Umschreibung mit *würde* (in a polite request, either the modal verbs *könnte* and *dürfte*, or the auxiliary verbs *wäre* and *hätte*, or the descriptive construction with *würde* are used)" (Hauptkurs, 1997, p. 121). In our empirical material, we found quite a few examples that clearly demonstrate this fact, for example, (7):

- *Und nehmen Sie die kleine braune Zigarre zu sich, die auf dem Tischchen liegt. Eine 'Little- Rose'. Dr. Hungertobel hat sie extra dagelassen, Sie können ruhig in diesem Zimmer rauchen. - And now take a small brown cigar from the table. This is Little Rose. Dr. Hungertobel left her on purpose. You can smoke safely in this room.*

Friedrich Dürrenmatt. Der Verdacht (1953) Friedrich Dürrenmatt. Suspicion

In this context, the verb können can be replaced with dürfen, which does not change, in general, the pragmatics of a polite statement.

In the following example (8), the same can be said about replacing dürfen with können:

b) *Mehr als meine Angaben brauchen Sie nicht zu wissen, auch nicht, wer der Arzt ist, gegen den sich das Pamphlet richtet. Meine Behauptungen sollen Sie nicht irritieren; daß sie stimmen, dürfen Siemir glauben, ich bürge dafür." - You don't need to know more than what is written here, who is the doctor and against whom the pamphlet is directed. You can rest assured, I can vouch for this: my statements are not fiction.*

Friedrich Dürrenmatt. Der Verdacht (1953) Friedrich Dürrenmatt. Suspicion

As we can see, the translator felt it very well. Researchers also note the frequent use of latent performatives with the first-person verbs müssen and können as polite phrases (Reukova, 2005, p. 70). For example, in the sentence Ich muss dich bitten, die Mütze abzusetzen, this construction softens the explicit requirement: Please take off your hat. Muss can be replaced with möchte, since this is the role that this verb takes on. And in the sentence Und ich kann Ihnen eigentlich nur empfehlen, die Frage in Gelassenheit an sich herankommen zu lassen, the modal verb können in the 1st person form makes the speaker's recommendation unobtrusive and delicate: I advise you not to deal with this issue yet, let everything decide by itself. The kann form in this context is similar to the darf form.

Another clichéd polite construction, formed by modal verbs, is a little outdated - Darf ich + zu + Infinitiv,… Infinitiv + zu wollen? - which is also a hidden performative.

For example, in (9), using this construction, a pompous-polite invitation was transmitted to the visitor to enter the office:

7. *Mein Mann hat mir bereits gesagt. Aber ich empfange Sie hier in meines Mannes Zimmer. ... er ist drüben auf dem Amt und kann jeden Augenblick zurück sein. ... Darf ich Sie bitten, bei mir eintreten zu wollen? - My husband told me. I receive you here in my husband's room. ... He's in the office across the street and will be back soon. May I ask you to come to me?*

Theodor Fontane. Effi Briest (1894-1895) Theodore Fontane. Effie Brist

The translator tried to convey this performative in the same pompous Russian way, using the verb мочь (to be able). Although it would be no less polite to translate this remark using the not so often use verb позволить (to allow), which is closer in semantics to the form Darf ich: Will you allow me to invite you to your husband's office? As the analysis of contexts with these constructions shows, the main purpose of the modal verbs that are used in them is to form the speech of the communication participants correctly and politely.

7.   Conclusion

Summing up this stage of the research, we can say that in the semantics of each modal verb in the German language there is a central, immanent meaning that reflects a certain type of modality, and, depending on the situational, grammatical, lexical context, it is supplemented by the meanings of other types of modality. Differentiation of the meanings of modal verbs shows their close systemic connection when different verb forms convey the same semantic and pragmatic characteristics. Having analyzed such phenomena on the basis of the corpus of parallel texts, we can say that the phenomenon of isomorphism of the studied group of verbs is associated with their etymology. As significant words, they originally expressed the state of mind of a person and in modern use, they have retained rudiments of their old meanings, which allows us to consider their isomorphism as a linguocultural factor. When modal verbs are used as markers of polite speech, they tend to be in relatively stable speech constructions, and their semantics fade into the background, giving way to pragmatics.

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