



THE MODAL VERB SHOULD AND ITS FUNCTION AS PROHIBITION

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ABSTRACT

The main objective of this article is a complete analysis on the modal verb should in a given sample of English grammar books in order to create a comprehensive set of information and simultaneously identify different information presented on this issue. The work is divided into chapters of theoretical introduction, over various issues of occurrence of modal verbs shall and should to a conclusion summarizing the results of the analysis and proving or disproving given hypotheses.

Introduction. In English grammar, modal verbs are a special group of verbs that help to give a special meaning to a full verb and help to express the accurate mood of the information hidden within the utterance. They have many specific features that differentiate them from full verbs. Thanks to them the full verb indicate the right type of modality that is: ability, duty, obligation, possibility, suggestion, feeling, opinion, advisability or arrangement and the speaker is able to express a large scale of various smaller or bigger changes in temper as well as differentiate one's state of mind.

The modal verb *should* is one of modal verbs that help to express large scale of emotions of the sender. What is fascinating, there is no such a modal verb that would have such a large scale of possible uses and would be able to help to create so many various couplings in terms of a morfological service on a syntactical level.

Materials and methods. *“Modality is a kind of mood that the modal helps to create together with the main verb in order to change the communicative function.”* To be linguistically precise, modality covers the functions of modal verbs, and can be defined as the *“manner in which the meaning of a clause is qualified so as to reflect the speaker's judgement of the likelihood of the proposition it expresses.”* [1]

In addition, Palmer further explains term of “modality” as a “semantic term related to the meanings that are usually associated with mood; the relation between mood and modality like that between tense and time.” Moreover, various meanings of modal verbs can be further categorized, which, however, causes disputes among linguists. Some of them divide modality into two categories, the others into three main categories, according to the tense and aspect of the modal [1].



Huddleston et al. further denotes that “*the distinction between mood and modality is like that between aspect and aspectuality: mood is a category of grammar, modality a category of meaning. Mood is the grammaticalisation of modality within the verbal system. The term “mood” is most usually applied to inflectional systems of the verb, as in the contrast between indicative, subjunctive, and imperative in such languages as Latin, French, and German.*” [3]

Results and discussion.

Modal verb *should* is **not only used to refer to the past**, or as a **past form of shall**. It can be used as a less definite, more „tentative“ form of *shall*, **referring to the present** or the **future**. In English grammar, *should* belongs into the group of modal auxiliaries that **do not make up a verb phrase on its own** but help to make up a verb phrase in combination with a main verb. In such combinations it is able to **create a phrase of various modalities**, such as obligation, suggestions, opinions, feelings and giving advices. These are only the basic and most commonly known forms. But there are lots of other possible types of phrases in which the modal verb *should* help to create untypical ranges of form [2].

Historically, the **modals of English**, which are listed in (1), **were derived from** a special class of verbs in **Germanic** (the ancestor of English and the other Germanic languages).

(1) can, could, may, might, must, shall, should, will, would

Modals have always differed from ordinary verbs in Germanic, and in the course of the history of English, they have **diverged from verbs** even further, to the point where they now belong to a syntactic

category of their own as respecting the general attitude to their development, researchers claim that the modal verbs each gained modal properties at a different time of the English history. For example, the **historical predecessor** of today’s form **of modal shall, sculan**, was relatively frequently used to express modality as early as in the early Old English period; however, *cunnan*, the historical counterpart of *can*, is considered to have been quite reluctant to drop its full-verb properties.

Traditionally, linguistic hypotheses are encoded as statements within a grammatical theory and tested by collecting relevant examples and manually verifying that the grammars correctly predict the grammaticality and linguistic structure of those examples. Even **this survey is based on collecting** as much relevant information as possible and later **processed into a review** of various examples proving or disproving the set hypotheses.

The core problem of this analysis will be the modal verbs shall and should and the hypotheses are set on the basis of theoretical grammatical knowledge of facts. Below there are given three hypotheses that should be tested.

Hypothesis 1:

There is only one possible use of modal verb shall, namely in a specific situation of polite questions and rather rare in Modern English.

Hypothesis 2:

There are clear rules in different use of modals should and ought to in British and American English.

Hypothesis 3:



Modal verb should used as putative should can be a complete substitute to subjunctive.

All three hypotheses are tentative and testable answers coming from general knowledge of both tested modals. The questions and discretions included are rather „an educated guess“ that have to be proved.

In the final part of this thesis there is a **conclusion including findings and outcomes of the survey** regarding the hypotheses and explanations of the information **acquired in various grammar books and analysis**. The conclusions are results of the analysis of all the sources mentioned in the list of reference and thus corresponding with the given actual information.

Quirk, R. et al. states that central modal *should* is used to express **two modal meanings**. The **necessity meaning** of *should* can be found in statements where the speaker does not know if the statement is true, but claims that it is true, based on his findings or experiences [2].

This meaning can be termed tentative inference. **Obligational sense** is similar to *must*, but the tone of the speaker is less emphasized.

Ex. **You should do as he says.**

According to Biber, D. et al. personal obligation is the most common meaning of *should* in both conversation and academic prose. It is often used in conversation instead of *must* to express obligation more politely.

Huddleston, R. et al. justifies *should* as the preterite counterpart of *shall* by the relationship between them in backshift and conditionals. Such as in these examples where Huddleston, R. et al displays four possible use:

Ex. **I shall easily finish before she returns.** /original utterance/ Ex. **I knew I should/shall easily finish before she returned.** /backshifted report/ Ex. **If they offer met he job I shall certainly accept.** /open conditional/ Ex. **If they offered met he job I should/shall certainly accept.** /remote conditional/

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