

## SEMANTIC CLASSIFICATION OF THE CATEGORY OF MODALITY IN LITERARY TEXTS

*Akhadova Khulkaroy Zarifkhon kizi*

*Uzbekistan State World Languages University  
EFL teacher at the Department of Applied Sciences 2,  
Email: [mme83472@gamil.com](mailto:mme83472@gamil.com)*

**Abstract:** Modality, the way of revealing writer's attitude towards events and heroes of a literary text, is divided into epistemic and root types, which differ from the usage of words and stylistic devices. Stylistic devices have always been essential for selecting the modality including the variability of text genres. The research is aimed at determining how the stylistic devices help to express modality in a literary text. Two short stories which have similar plot, yet the expression of the events totally different, are chosen to analyze the attitude of authors. The stories are written by O. Henry and Abdulla Kakhkhor, which is different in language of author as A. Kakhkhor uses proverbs, phrases to express his opinion about situation while O. Henry is fond of making unexpected ending for the reader.

As a result of the research, the epistemic type of modality make reader feel the narrator in the events or situations. The epistemic modality is mostly addressed in the short stories that are analyzed. The writer's confidence and outlook is activated by perception of external appearances or surroundings.

**Keywords:** Modality, stylistic devices, short story, epistemic, deontic, dynamic

### Introduction

The exploration of modality in literary texts typically follows two fundamental pathways for revealing the author's stance. One path involves a detailed study of modal verbs and their specific role in expressing modality. The other path entails a stylistic analysis of the literary work, examining how the author's linguistic choices—such as expressions related to nature, character portrayal, and environmental descriptions—embody modality.

A significant body of research addresses the representation of authorial modality in literature. Palmer (2003) identifies three key categories: epistemic, dynamic, and deontic. He posits that epistemic modality concerns the writer's judgment about the veracity of a proposition, while dynamic and deontic modalities express assent to the occurrence of an event or state. Palmer further clarifies that deontic modality is influenced by external factors, whereas dynamic modality originates from the subject's internal capacity and agency.

Examples of these modalities are:

1. It must be raining. (epistemic - expressing strong belief or deduction about a current situation)
2. You should finish this by Friday. (deontic - expressing advice, recommendation, or a weaker obligation)
3. She could swim across the river when she was younger. (dynamic - expressing a past ability)

Simpson (2004), like Palmer (2003), explored modality in literary prose by considering different viewpoints. Simpson defines modality as related to the narrator's persona, attitude, and skill, as well as the speaker's belief in the truth of a proposition and their perspective on the event described (Simpson 1993, p. 43). This means modality in stories effectively conveys characters' perceptions, thoughts, and feelings. Simpson (2004) initially (1993) proposed a classification of modality into positive, negative, and neutral. Iwamoto (2007) notes that

positive modality, often employing deontic and boulomaic forms, tends to be binding, compulsory, aggressive, and powerful (p. 181).

## Discussion

The perception of modality is a wide sense reflecting the different attitude by the writer. The types of modality can be identified through the analysis of the literary works.

These categories of modality are being observed through short stories. Although the stories “Last leaf” and “Bemor” (Patient) encompasses similar meaning and idea, the modality of the writers are totally different. “Bemor” begins with epigraph expressing impossibility. “*Osmon yiroq – yer qattiq*” (“Bemor”, A.Khahhor, page 1) – it is translated into English as: *the sky is too high; the earth is too solid*. This proverb is utilized by Uzbek people when they are really in a difficult situation.

Furthermore, “*Bularning hammasi, albatta, pul bilan bo’ladi*” (“Bemor”, A.Khahhor, page 2) – “*This all, definitely requires money*”, this passage shows epistemic modality as the author expresses his opinion with confidence. In addition, adverbial modal – definitely, is addressed to represent his opinion.

Next story, “Last leaf” is about a girl Johnny who was ill with pneumonia and she thought that if the last leaf of the ivy tree which is seen from her window fell she would also die in this moment. This story is written by O. Henry who is popular with unexpected ending short stories.

Epistemic modality is frequently used in this story too. For instance,

- *Young artists must work their way to “Art” by making pictures for magazine stories.* (“Last leaf”, O.Henry)

Here, writer shows his attitude with modal verb “must” and it informs the reader that he strongly confident about this position. And it is obviously seen that the writer represented it by epistemic modality.

## Conclusion

All in all, these two writers use different language and style, they both mostly addressed to the epistemic category of modality. Modality is represented by adverbs, auxiliaries and modal verbs as well. This category is very important in text linguistics as it helps analyze and open the author’s tole in a written work. Throughout the analysis of short stories, the epistemic modality is seen to be mostly used. Therefore, the final results of this article sumps up that the epistemic type of modality makes author in the center of the events and for this reason it is utilized more frequently.

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