

Сущность категории модальности

Целью статьи является освещение истоков изучения модальности в лингвистике и рассмотрение современных подходов к исследованию данной категории. На современном этапе развития лингвистической науки модальность квалифицируется как унифицированная категория, суть которой составляют субъективные отношения, исходящие от говорящего лица.

Ключевые слова: субъективная модальность, объективная модальность, функционально-семантический подход, точка зрения говорящего

The aim of this article is to cover the background of the investigation of modality in linguistics and to consider the modern approaches to the category under study. At the present stage of the development of the linguistic science, modality is qualified as a unified category, the essence of which is the subjective attitude coming from the speaker.

Keywords: subjective modality, objective modality, functional-semantic approach, the speaker's viewpoint

The necessity to study the category of modality at this stage of the development of the linguistic science is due to various reasons, in particular, due to the orientation of modern linguistics to the identification of universal semantic categories that allow us to describe fundamentally different systems (the category of modality belongs to the number of such categories, for it penetrates all levels of the linguistic system, on the one hand, and it characterizes all speech works, on the other hand) [10, p. 3].

Due to its interdisciplinary affiliation (modality is studied in logic, philosophy and linguistics) the concept of modality has a complex and multi-layered nature, that is why it is a persistent subject of scientific discussions.

Modality is generally defined as a conceptual category showing the speaker's attitude to the content of the utterance and the attitude of the utterance to reality [1, p. 237]. Based on this definition, two types of modality are traditionally distinguished in many linguistic papers:

1) Objective modality, qualified as the attitude of the utterance content to reality. This kind of modality is considered as the gradation of meanings in the range "reality/unreality".

2) Subjective modality, determined as the attitude of the speaker to the content of the utterance. The main meaning of this modality is understood as subjective confidence in the reliability of the presented facts.

It is the interpretation of the category of modality that is most consistently represented in many academic papers and various scientific works (e.g., see [6, p. 303–304]).

However, in addition to the two above mentioned kinds of modality, some linguists single out the third one, that shows the relations between the doer of the action and the action itself. This refers to the modal position of the doer towards the action in terms of the possibility, necessity, or desirability [2, p. 19–20].

It should be noted that there is no unity of opinion in the principles of the approach to distinguishing between objective and subjective modality. In particular, some scholars have fundamentally different viewpoints as to the validity of the differentiation of these modal types. The differentiation of modality into objective and subjective, if it does, appears to be highly conventional. Thus, M. V. Zainullin rightly believes that it is impossible to agree with the opinion that subjective (lexical) modality can be more subjective than objective modality [3, p. 14]. The acceptance of subjective modality would lead to the integrity breach of a unified category of modality. According to the scientist, there is no necessity to distinguish the three types of modal relations (the attitude of the utterance content to reality as stated by the speaker, the attitude of the speaker to the utterance content, the attitude of the doer of the action to the action itself), since all the three types of modal meanings include the attitude of the speaker as an obligatory component of the definition. Thus, modality is qualified as the position of the speaker, his attitude to the relations between the content of the utterance and reality [3, p. 120].

As a matter of fact, the origin of this understanding of modality goes back to the first half of the last century, namely to the works of our linguist A. M. Peshkovsky. In his papers the scientist defines modality as the category that expresses only one modal relation – the speaker's attitude to that connection that he himself establishes between the utterance content and reality [8, p. 107]. At the core of understanding the linguistic modality is the speaker and his attitude towards reality that is expressed through the utterance. The most demonstrative example in this

respect is the one given by N. E. Petrov. Thus, in the sentence *"He must have gone away"* modality shows that the action is considered by the speaker as supposed, and the whole utterance is presented in such a way that it corresponds to reality only hypothetically [7, p. 144].

Thus, all of the above mentioned opinions clearly prove that modality is a unified, integral, and monolithic category, the essence of which is the subjective attitude coming from the speaker. This category does not only describe the world "as it is", but it represents a "subjective" image of the world, that is the world passed through the consciousness and perception of the speaker [9, p. 309]. In other words, along with some information about the world, modality also renders the attitude of the speaker to what he says. This attitude is generally called "evaluation" (evaluation in a broad sense) [4, p. 180]. Taking as the basis the modality definition by E. I. Belyaeva (who defines modality as a language category that expresses the evaluation of the relations between the object of reality and its attribute [2, p. 3]). S. V. Kobyzeva, however, broadens this definition to some extent and qualifies modality as the evaluation of the relations between the object of reality and its attribute, made by him for the purpose of efficient and activating speech communication [5, p. 7]. This addition can be explained by the fact that any message, (formed as an utterance or as a text) is intended for some addressee (listener or reader), and the addresser expresses his thoughts for the addressee. The addresser intends to be understood, he wants the addressee to react to the addresser's thoughts, and to exchange his opinion. In this respect, modality is the "idea of an utterance" [7, p. 148]. Modality is realized through speech communication; it is generated and perfected in its process. Consequently, modality is not only the category of language, but that of speech as well.

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