TEACHING MAIN WAYS OF EXPRESSING NECESSITY IN ENGLISH

Angela CĂLĂRAȘ,
Alecu Russo State University of Bălți

Abstract: *Articolul abordează un subiect foarte important din domeniul gramaticii limbii engleze şi este dedicat predării modalităţilor principale de exprimare a*

necesităţii în limba engleză. Accent se pune pe statutul verbelor modale în limba engleză oferind o analiză a verbului modal must şi a echivalenţilor săi din perspectiva predării în şcoală. Articolul dat urmareste să identifice metode şi strategii effective care ar facilita predarea si asimilarea mai uşoara a acestei teme gramaticale în timpul orelor de limba engleză.

Key words: *modal verbs, modal word, equivalents, approaches, methods, necessity, obligation, advice.*

Grammar has always been central to teaching a foreign language, it was even synonymous with teaching a foreign language. However, for some time after the rise of communicative language teaching the status of grammar in the curriculum was rather uncertain. Some linguists considered that it was not necessary to teach grammar as it would develop automatically. Yet, nowadays it is widely accepted that grammar is an important resource in using language communicatively.

The aim of the given research is teaching main ways of expressing necessity in English therefore special attention would be paid to modal verbs of necessity which should be taught at school pointing out their general characteristics, revealing and analyzing main teaching methods and techniques.

It is known that modality has always remained a disputable subject among the linguists. Many scholars have exerted great efforts to determine the notion, the number and the type of modalities through different approaches.

Modal verbs represent a group of words whose function is to characterize the contents of the sentence as fact, potentially or urge without actually being part of that sentence. Not all the linguists group modal words into a separate grammatical category thus, relating modal verbs to adverbs of mood in the English language. The meaning of these words often depends not only on the denotation but also on their position within a sentence. Linguists claim that being placed at the beginning of the sentence the modal word renders positive appreciation by the speaker of the information stated in it, but if it is used at the end of the sentence the modal word gives final appraisal of expression(Choi 2006: p 83).

Speaking about modal words of necessity, it is worth remarking that "naturally" may take any position in the sentence and sometimes it is used

as an affirmative answer. "Evidently" expresses logical conclusion, which is based on the observation of a fact's manifestation, while "obviously" expresses logical conclusion which is based on past experience, and, therefore it appears before the verb. It is obvious that there are few words that can express necessity in English. So, as in can be seen the use of words, expressing necessity, depends on the context and communicative situation (Штелинг 2012: 73).

Necessity can be expressed by such modal verbs as *must* and *have to*, *will, would, ought to* and *should*. It has been remarked that m*ust* and *have to* are used less frequently than other verbs to express necessity in British English bur are very often used in while American English.. The difference between *must* and *have to* is considered the difference between "<u>factual</u>" necessity and "<u>theoretical</u>" necessity which is neutralized in the specific speech. The Romanian equivalents of these verbs are: *must* – trebue, neapărat, ar trebui , *have to* - e obligat , trebue , este (a fost) necesar . *Will* expresses a conclusion, which is based on the speaker's competence. It also expresses "prognostication". *Will* is used for designation of habitual events and it is worth pointing out that the difference between *must* and *will* is both in the source and on the ground of conclusion. Thus, we can easily see that *must* expresses conclusion from observing facts and phenomena and *will* expresses conclusion from the speaker's own information and knowledge. *Would* expresses necessity and can also express prediction in the past, at the same time it can be used as the past form of the verb *will*, while *ought to* or *should* express the logical meaning of necessity in weak forms. The equivalents of these verbs in Romanian are: *should* – ar trebui, *ought to* – dator, ar fi bine, ar fi de dorit. And, of course, the verb *need* can also express necessity, it is used in negative and interrogative sentences mostly and has only present tense form, its Romanian equivalents are - *e nevoie, nu e nevoie.*

The word "necessity" is a general term used for describing the main meaning of the modal verb *must* and its substitutes *have to*, *have got to*, and *need*. The modal verb *must* expresses strong necessity to do something, with such shades of meaning as *necessity, obligation, duty, responsibility, requirement.* The phrase *have to* is the most common substitute for *must* in the meaning "necessity".

It is stated that the modal verb *must* in the meaning of "strong

necessity" forms only the present tense. The future is expressed by the present tense with the help of the context and adverbs or adverbial phrases indicating the future time, for example*: tomorrow, soon, next week, in an hour.* For example: *She must talk to them immediately./ We must obey the rules./If he wants to go to university, he must pass the exams first./ He must pay the bills today.*

In the meaning "strong necessity" the modal verb *must* does not have the past form. The substitute phrase *had to* (necessity) is typically used instead of *must* in the past tense, with a little change in meaning. For example: *Father must go to the bank today.* (Strong necessity)

He has to go to the bank today. (Necessity)

Father had to go to the bank yesterday.

(In the last case we have *Necessity*, with the following meaning: It was necessary for him to go to the bank yesterday, and he went there.)

It is evident that *must* is stronger, stricter, and more categorical than *have to*. *Must* implies that the action expressed by the infinitive is absolutely necessary. *Have to* in the meaning "necessity" is used in affirmative statements and questions in the present, past, and future. Negative questions with *have to* are also possible in this meaning (Palmer 1990: 134).

Scholars consider that the verb *have to* is used in both formal and informal English in speech and writing, and many native speakers use *have to* instead of *must* in many cases, especially in American English. For example:

He must write a report. (Strong necessity):

He has to write a report. (Necessity)

He must finish his report tomorrow. (Strong necessity):

He has to finish it tomorrow. (Necessity)

He will have to finish his report tomorrow. (Necessity)

He had to rewrite several pages of the report yesterday.

It can be observed that in some cases the difference between *must* and *have to* is bigger than "strong necessity" versus "necessity". *Must* shows that the speaker considers that the action specified by the main verb is necessary, and it's the right thing to do (i.e., the speaker expresses personal opinion), while *have to* just states the fact that this action is

necessary. In order to prove it we can read and compare the following sentences:

Pupils must go to school. (It's obligatory, and it's the right thing to do.)

Pupils have to go to school. (It's obligatory.)

She must help them. (It's necessary, and it's the right thing to do.)

She has to help them. (It's necessary.)

They must read this story. It is very captivating.

They have to read this story. We are going to discuss it in class

And, of course, the modal verb *should* can be used instead of *must* if the speaker wants to sound less categorical. For example:

He must do it today. (Strong necessity, obligation).

He should do it today. (Advice, recommendation).

We must inform the teacher about it. (Strong necessity, obligation).

We should inform the teacher about it. (Advice, recommendation).

As for the substitute phrase *have got to*, it is used mostly in conversational English. Thus, it should be remembered that h*ave got to* has only the present tense form and expresses necessity to do something in the present and future, mostly in affirmative statements, though negative questions are also possible. *Have to* is often used instead of *have got to* in questions: (*We've got to leave; I've got to meet her immediately; She's got to exercise more. She's getting fat).*The phrase *have got to* does not have the past form, so *had to* is normally used instead of it in the past.

According to linguistic literature the verb *need* is frequently used with a noun object after it*: You need money; They need healthy food; she needs help*. Followed by an infinitive, *need* expresses necessity to do something and can be used as a less categorical substitute for *must*: (Kratzer 2013: 124). For example: *We need to see him; She needs to exercise more*; *Do they need to buy bread and cheese for lunch? – Yes, they do. No, they don't.*

It should be remarked that the verbs *must*, *to be to, should* and *ought to* in their negative forms do not express absence of necessity. *Must not* does not have the meaning "absence of necessity". *Must not* and its contraction *mustn't* express strong necessity "not to do something". This meaning of *must* in the negative is often called "prohibition"(*You mustn't cross the street when the lights are red.; Children mustn't play with*

matches). Must can be used in the meaning of "strong necessity" in the present and future and it is replaced with *had to* for "necessity" in the past. Yet, in a number of cases *must* can be replaced with *have to* (necessity) or *should* (advice) if we tend to sound less categorical. And , of course, students can use *don't have to; don't need to* if there is no necessity to do something. In the cases of absence of necessity the negative forms of *to have to* and *need* are used. For example: They *don't have to go there; We needn't go there*.

The two verbs generally differ in that *needn't + infinitive* indicates that the speaker gives authority for the non-performance of some action, whereas *don't (doesn't) have + infinitive* is used when absence of necessity is based on external circumstances (Голубева 2008: 94).

She needn't come here. (I'll manage to do everything myself without your help.)

They don't have to come to the university tomorrow. (There will be no lessons tomorrow.)

Thus, we see that modal verbs are the most frequently used means of expressing necessity in English. Being extremely numerous and often interchangeable they can render all the nuances of these categories in all communicative situations.

On the whole, modality can be expressed not only by separate words but also by certain phrases. And, it is worth mentioning that the English language is marked by the existence of such phrases expressing necessity: *It is +modal word. For example: It is obvious, it is evident* etc. At the same time it must be stressed that these modal phrases are used mainly in the scientific speech.

Modal constructions in English are very close in their form and function to modal phrases. The structural difference between them is in the absence of the subject and predicate elements in the constructions under consideration. Thus, we know that *necessity* is expressed by the construction: *to be bound + Infinitive*, which expresses logical conclusion. It can also be rendered by *to be bound to*, which means logical supposition about an event in the future: *He is bound to finish his work next week.*

Thus, we can state that modal phrases and modal constructions not being always ascribed to a separate category prove to be really useful in expressing necessity and supposition. And it is very important to know how

to teach them to students so that they see and understand the right meaning of each modal verb and their equivalents. Every teacher knows his class well and he/she should use some interesting and useful methods in order to make his/her students understand and use them in speech.

It should be emphasized that modal verbs do not have an exact or sometimes not even a close translation in students' mother tongue, therefore, they can be difficult to teach. According to methodological literature there are some steps of teaching modal verbs of necessity.

And it is up to the teacher what methods and techniques he/she uses in class while introducing, explaining and teaching modal verbs to students. Of course, depending on the level of the class teachers can narrow or expand, thus *introducing all modals* at a lesson.

In this case, the teacher can start by introducing all the modal verbs she/he wishes to talk about. This may include *must, will, would, shall, should*, and *ought to* but, depending on the level of the class, teachers can narrow it down to those they feel are most important. Obviously there are no images that can help students understand the meanings of these words so teachers can *do pronunciation practice* simply by pointing to the words on the board. In introduction the teacher can cover some general rules that apply to all modal verbs that are also called defective verbs, therefore, unlike most verbs, no -s is needed to form the third person singular. The teacher should give several examples and make her/his students understand that, for example, *He should ....*is correct, while *He write...* is incorrect. Additionally, modals always require another verb because they cannot function as the main verb in a sentence and they only have present tense forms. This may seem like a long and confusing introduction but it is the best one after the pronunciation practice to simply write the modals and their rules off to the side of the board for reference.

During other classes the usage of modals can be to make suggestions and give advice, to talk about obligations and prohibitions, where teachers must also explain students the difference between *ought to* and *should to* saying that the correct action would be for instance *We ought to see a doctor* or *He should be quiet while the teacher is talking*. Teachers may find that for some classes it is not necessary to cover all the different uses of modal verbs so they may choose what is most important and then cover those items thoroughly before moving on to the next topic.

When teachers cover many different uses of modal verbs in class, they should be sure to have a lesson which combines them again. This *combinations* method allows teachers to start with all the words they plan to cover in the first class and finish in the same way. Since students have been focusing on just one use at a time, this lesson will show the range of uses these words have and really challenge them. In order to involve students in activities and make the lesson engaging, teachers can use such tasks as *fill in the blank* and *multiple choice worksheets* and, of course, they can conduct *role plays* based on different uses of modal verbs, too.

Teachers know their class very well and whenever they work with new grammar material, they should always *think of* and *give a basic example* in order to make students remember and understand the right usage of these structures. Thus, during the lesson teachers should give an example of how to make sentences using a basic modal verb such as *must* (*We must visit a doctor now*, where the verb expresses necessity). Teachers should draw students' attention and explain that the verb following the modal verb must be used in its basic or infinitive form but without the particle *to*. And, of course, they will work with examples using *he* or *she* to show that no -*s* is added to modal verbs in the third person singular.

To be sure that students have a good understanding of how modals function, teachers make their students work during lessons also *using negative and interogative (question) forms* and the best way to prove how modal verbs are used in the negative and question forms is to provide examples. Thus, students' attention should be drawn to the fact that the word *not* must follow the modal verb and not the verb it modifies. Then interrogative forms should be used to show that in order to form a question, we simply invert the subject and the modal verb, for example: *Must I/ he do the homework?*

Every teacher can affirm that guided work is sure to help students use modal verbs correctly.

So, teachers should ask students to provide their own examples by asking them guided questions such as *Do you have to go to the library today? When do you have to visit your grandma? When or where do I have to stay after classes?* In case teachers see that students seem confused or uncertain, they give suggestions for students to choose the right variants. And if they seem comfortable and confident, questions that produce a

negative response should be used.

And it is obvious that one of the key factors for a productive lesson is to *have students work independently*. Thus, teachers should motivate and allow the students to independently produce sentences using modal verbs by putting them into groups and having them interview each other. Teachers carefully remind students how to make sentences using modal verbs, have them use as many verbs as they can and encourage them to be inventive with their questions and answers. And after students have finished their interview, they read aloud their interview answers.

In conclusion it can be noted that the most useful means of expressing necessity in English are modal words and modal verbs. Alongside with the moods they serve to express all shades of the speaker's attitude towards reality and the utterance. And teachers should be very careful and creative in order to work out interesting and engaging activities while introducing, explaining and working with modal verbs and their equivalents in class so that the students understand and use them in speech correctly.

References:

Choi, S. *Acquisition of modality. The Expression of modality.* Berlin/New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 2006.

Kratzer, A. *Modals and conditionals*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.

Palmer, F. R. *Modality and the English modals*. London / New York: Longman, 1990.

Palmer, F. R. *Modality in English: Theoretical, descriptive and typological issues.* London / New York: Longman, 1990.

Salkie R. *Probability and necessity in English and German\ Languages in Contrast*. London / New York: Longman, 2001.

Бархударов, Л.С. *Грамматика английского языка*. Москва: Книжный дом "Либроком", 2012.

Голубева, Т.М. *Модальные глаголы (английский как второй язык)*. Москва: РИФ "Интеграф",2008.

Гордон, Е.М. *Грамматика современного английского языка (A Grammar of Present-day English):уч.для вузов*, Москва: Книжный дом "Университет". 2003.