

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18454/RULB.2020.21.1.13>**ТЕРМИНЫ “MOOD” И “MODALITY” В ГРАММАТИКЕ АНГЛИЙСКОГО ЯЗЫКА**

Научная статья

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**Аннотация**

В данной статье рассматриваются терминологические сложности грамматики английского языка, а именно определения терминов «mood», «modality» и «mode». Анализируя то, что понимается в современной лингвистике под явлениями модальности и наклонения, автор приходит к выводу, что в грамматике английского языка эти термины тесно взаимосвязаны. Эта точка зрения подтверждается изучением этимологии терминов «mood», «modality» и «mode» в английском языке и исследованием использования этих терминов в ранних грамматических сочинениях и работах по грамматике современного английского языка. Исследование показало, что грамматический термин «mode» считается вариантом написания слова «mood», произошедшим от латинского «modus». Автор приходит к выводу, что термин «mood» относится к формам глагола, которые можно рассматривать лишь как один из способов выражения модальности «modality». Таким образом, для английского языка, где модальность выражается в форме глагола, термины «mood» и «modality» могут использоваться взаимозаменяемо.

**Ключевые слова:** наклонение, модальность, грамматика английского языка.

**MOOD AND MODALITY: PROBLEM OF TERMINOLOGY**

Research article

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**Abstract**

The aim of the article is to look at the terminology of the English grammar and define the terms “mood”, “modality” and “mode”. The author analyzes the phenomena of Modality and Mood in the modern language and comes to the conclusion that they mean almost the same applied to the English Grammar. This point of view is confirmed by the analysis of the etymology of the terms “modality”, “mode” and “mood” in English and by the study on the usage of these terms in Early and Modern English Grammars. The grammatical term “mood” is considered a variant spelling for “mode”, from Latin “modus”. The author states that mood which is usually restricted to verbal morphology can be seen as merely one way of expressing modality. So for English where the modality is expressed in the form of the verb the terms “mood” and “modality” can be used interchangeably.

**Keywords:** mood, modality, mode, English Grammar.

**Introduction**

In English there is such a grammatical category as mood. Traditionally, the grammar books on modern English say about three moods which are indicative, imperative and conditional or subjunctive mood. The noun “mode” is sometimes used with the same meaning as “mood”. Another language phenomenon is modality. The status of this phenomenon is not clear. It is not just thought as a lexical or grammatical category, which is understood as a group of linguistic elements allocated on the basis of some general property. On grammatical and semantical levels of language, modality usually refers to linguistic means that are used to indicate whether an action of the subject or its statement is real (factual), probable, definite, permitted or forbidden. The article’s aim is to try to determine the status of this phenomenon and the terms which describe it in application to the English Grammar.

**Discussion**

Modality is usually thought to be a complex multifaceted phenomenon, therefore, in scientific literature different points of view are expressed about its nature. In linguistic literature the noun “modality” is used to denote a wide range of phenomena with various semantics, grammatical properties and formal expression at different levels of the language structure.

Modality is traditionally defined as a way of expressing person’s attitude to the content of the statement, the relation of the content of the statement to objective reality. The speaker chooses the means of expressing modality to indicate whether the action denoted by the verb of the sentence is false / true, possible / impossible, obligatory / optional, desirable / undesirable, etc.

Mood is usually described as a grammar set of finite verbal forms expressing the relation of action to reality from the position of the speaker. In traditional grammars, a system of three moods is adopted: indicative, imperative, and subjunctive or conditional. This universal system is borrowed from the Latin grammar. Indicative mood represents action as a fact of reality. An imperative mood expresses an urge to act. The conditional mood expresses a possible, probable, desirable or described action. When choosing a form of mood, the speaker evaluates the action from the point of view of its reality / unreality, possibility / impossibility, desirability / undesirability, etc.

Thus, the content of the category of mood is nothing more than a modality.

## Results

The point of view that the notions of modality and mood are closely connected can be confirmed by the analysis of the origin of the terms “modality” and “mood” in English. If we look at the etymology of the English word “mood” we see that it first meant “emotional condition, state of mind” from Proto-Germanic \*mōða- “intellect, mind, intention”. Along with this word there was a noun “mode” meaning “manner of acting or doing” used in the sense of “inflectional category in conjugation” since the mid-15th century. This noun was derived from the Latin “modus” which meant what we now call “mood” in grammar and entered the English language directly or through French. It is this word that directly refers to grammar, denoting “modes of action” or the forms of the verb. However, many linguists used the noun “mood”. There are several possible reasons for this. The first is the etymology of the word “mood” which meant “mental state”. Since the main verb forms (modes of the verb) are indicative, imperative and conditional, that is, they express mental abilities, such as perception, command and desire, the word “mood” was used to define these categories. According to another version, in the Middle English period there was a simple spelling confusion of the forms “mood” and “mode” (as in Middle English it was spelled “moode”).

In Romano-Germanic languages, the grammar term with the same meaning as English “mood” is derived from the Latin word “modus”: modo – in Spanish and French, Modus – in German and Dutch.

The word “modality” which we widely use in grammar nowadays comes from the Latin “modalis”. It meant “pertaining to or affected by a mode” from Latin “modus” – “measure, style or manner”. This word was not often used in the Latin grammar tradition. Only in Late Latin it appeared in grammar and logic with the meaning of “mood”. Through French it came into the English language and, as researchers note, in the XIX century was occasionally used in the meaning of “those aspects of a thing which relate to its mode” [2, P. 10]. So it is necessary to point out the close connection between the terms “mood (mode)” and “modality”. In the grammars of Donatus and Priscian, which, as it is known, formed the basis of modern English grammars, the concept of mood denotes various inclinations of the mind (modes) [3, P. 317]. The authors distinguished five moods: indicative or definite, imperative, desirable, subjunctive and indefinite. In other Latin grammars, even more moods were considered, for example, the mood of promise, concessions, impersonal mood, gerundial and participial, as well as instructive or recommendatory [8, P. 115], [10, P. 129]. The list of moods, therefore, is nothing more than a list of possible verb forms expressing the speaker’s position (attitude) to the reality (that is modality).

In early treaties on the grammar of the English language the authors do not separate the terms “modality” and “mood”. They use only the term «mood» or «mode» and never say anything about modality including all modal meanings under the category of mood.

L. Murray, for example, describes mood or mode as a form of the verb that states the manner in which the action is represented [9]. The nature of a mood is to signify various intentions of the mind, and various modifications and circumstances of action. The author suggests that there are five moods of verbs in English: the indicative, the imperative, the potential, the subjunctive, and the infinitive.

H. Sweet supposes that there are only two moods: a fact-mood and a thought-mood. In some languages (Latin or German, for example) these moods are called indicative and subjunctive [12]. But sometimes the thought-mood can be divided in to different special groups, for example optative, conditional or permissive mood. In English there are two moods as well. The first one is expressed by inflections and the second one – by auxiliaries (periphrastic mood). The auxiliary forms are the combinations of modal verbs with the infinitive. For example, the combination of the finite forms of the verb “to be” with the to-infinitive (supine, as H. Sweet calls it) is considered as the compulsive mood. This combination is so called because it primarily expresses compulsion or obligation. So in the version of Henry Sweet mood is the same as modality. But the author does not use this term.

The term “modality”, as the researchers note, appeared in European linguistics much later. Its widespread use is associated with the name of the famous philosopher I. Kant. It was he who first used the word “Modalität” in the meaning of the mode of action (Latin “modus”) [11, P. 14-15]. I. Kant considered modality as one of four classes of human judgments:

### I. Categories of quantity:

- Singularity — Plurality
- Integrity (in some translations — “fullness” or “universality”)

### II. Quality Categories:

- Reality
- Denial
- Restriction

### III. Relationship Categories:

- Substance and affiliation (in some translations — “Substance and Accident”)
- Cause and action / effect
- Interaction

### IV. Modality categories:

- Possibility and impossibility
- Existence and nonexistence
- Necessity and eventuality [1, P. 408-409].

It is well-known that language is closely associated with thinking, so linguists began to correlate types of modality (ways of thinking according to Kant) with moods: existence and non-existence corresponded to indicative mood; possibility and impossibility — to conditional; necessity and eventuality – to imperative [7, P. 14], [5, P. 194].

In grammar treaties of the XX century the terms “mood” and “modality” are widely used, but the authors usually do not separate them in their meaning [2, P. 25-26]. So, for example, I. Depraetere, citing R. Huddleston, unites the notions of mood and modality and distinguish the non-inflected mood, which includes the traditionally understood category of mood, and the

analytical mood, forms of which have a modal meaning [6], [4]. The same idea was expressed by Henry Sweet as we stated it above.

### Conclusion

Thus modality can be seen as a meaning of the mood which is considered to be a grammatical way of expression of this meaning. It can be said that mood is a matter of grammatical form, modality a matter of meaning. Mood in that sense can be seen as merely one way of expressing modality. The term “mood” itself is usually restricted to verbal morphology. So for English where the modality is expressed in the form of the verb the terms “mood” and “modality” can be used in some contexts interchangeably.

Modality is a broader semantic concept, which is expressed not only grammatically by the forms of verbs. But if we talk about grammar only, then in English “modality” is just the “mood”. It can be described as a grammatical category within which the indicative forms of the English verbs are opposed to the modal forms that are formed by the modal verbs and infinitive.

This interpretation of the terms allows us to explain the fact that in a number of languages (Russian, for example), these concepts named “naklonenie” and “modal’nost’” are completely different. It is easily explained taking into account the differences in expressing modality in Russian and English. In English it is mainly the grammatical category regularly expressed by the modal verbs (the combination of modal verbs with bare infinitive), but in Russian the class of modal verbs is absent and the means of expressing modality are mainly lexical.

### Конфликт интересов

Не указан.

### Conflict of Interest

None declared.

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