# ХАРАКТЕРНЫЕ ЧЕРТЫ АНГЛИЙСКИХ МОДАЛЬНЫХ ФРАЗ ПРЕДПОЧТЕНИЯ-СРАВНЕНИЯ В СИСТЕМЕ ОЦЕНОЧНОЙ МОДАЛЬНОСТИ

Научная статья

**Шамина Н.В. ***
ORCID: 0000-0001-5522-5205;
Мордовский Национальный исследовательский государственный университет им. Н. П. Огарёва, Саранск, Россия

* Корреспондирующий автор (mopcap[at]mail.ru)

**Аннотация**

В статье рассматриваются модальные фразы предпочтения-сравнения с точки зрения их семантических и прагматических характеристик, а также модальные функции, реализуемые в высказывании средствами английского языка. Автор предпринимает актуальный комплексный подход к изучению предпочтительно-сравнительной модальности как полимодальности, выраженной в форме модальных фраз, в контексте анализа проблем аксиологической модальности художественного текста. В результате проведенного исследования были углублены представления о модальности художественного текста. Автор приходит к выводу, что логическая основа предпочтения-сравнения структурирована грамматическими средствами, определяющими отношения между субъектом и объектом предпочтения.

**Ключевые слова:** категория оценки, модальность, полимодальность, фразы предпочтения-сравнения, художественный текст.

# THE CHARACTERISTICS OF ENGLISH PREFERENCE-COMPARISON MODAL PHRASES IN THE EVALUATION MODALITY SYSTEM

Research article

**Shamina N.V. ***
[1] ORCID: 0000-0001-5522-5205;
Mordovia National Research N. P. Ogarev State University, Saransk, Russia

* Corresponding author (mopcap[at]mail.ru)

**Abstract**

The article considers the modal phrases of preference-comparison in terms of their semantic and pragmatic characteristics, as well as the modal functions implemented in the utterance by means of the English language. The author takes an up-to-date comprehensive approach to the study of comparative modality as a polymodality expressed in the form of modal phrases in the context of the analysis of the problems of axiological modality of a literary text. As a result of the conducted research, the ideas about the modality of the literary text were deepened. The author concludes that the logical basis of preference-comparison is structured by grammatical means that determine the relationship between the subject and the object of preference.

**Keywords**: evaluation category, modality, polymodality, preference-comparison phrases, literary text.

## Introduction

The relevance of the modal phrases topic is predetermined by its inclusion in the context of the most controversial problems of modern linguistics, which focuses on anthropocentric and modal semantics. Special attention is paid to the correlation of the preference modality with other types of axiological modalities, as well as the typology of logical modalities and the logical laws of constructing preference-comparison modal phrases. The scientific novelty of the research is determined by the current complex approach to the study of the comparison-preference modality as a polymodality. The latter is expressed in the form of modal phrases in the context of the axiological modality analysis. The aim of the study is to analyze the modal phrases of preference-comparison in terms of their semantic and pragmatic characteristics and modal functions implemented in the utterance by the English language means. The goal is to solve the following tasks: 1. to consider the characteristics of modal phrases and modal means of text formation in the system of evaluative modality; 2. to make a typology of logical modalities; 3. to analyze preference in the system of axiological modalities, to study the language models of expressing the preference-comparison modality in English literary texts (see, e.g.: [16]).

## Research methods

The methods of semantic-syntactic analysis, logical-semantic analysis, contextual and transformational analysis formed the methodological basis of the study. The theoretical significance of the article is determined by the deepening of scientific ideas about the literary text modality, as well as the syntactic, logical, and the grammatical features of preference-comparison modal phrases in the preferential statements system. The main research results achieved in this work can be further applied for lectures and seminars, the preparation of scientific research, the course, final qualifying works, and this is the practical significance of the work. Modality, considered as a broad semantic category that largely determines the sentence's semantic structure, is the object of linguistic researchers' close attention, which has intensified in recent years in connection with the active development of functional semantics and cognitive linguistics (see, e.g.: [8], [21], [22]). The consideration and study of the modality category in its relation to the evaluation category involves an appeal to the concept expressed in the S. Bally's, E. M. Wolf's [4], V. N. Teliya's studies. The difference is that modality intersects with evaluativeness, the modal values are often absorbed by the evaluative ones. The reference to the subjective modality pragmatic aspects actualizes the problems of the

relationship between pragmatics and evaluation. Linguists express the view that "evaluation is the essence that organizes the linguistic pragmatics beginning" [19, P. 201].

The evaluation modality category analysis led the researchers to the conclusion that there are two types of evaluation: absolute and comparative. The absolute modality uses the categories "good or bad" and assumes a comparison based on common social stereotypes. The comparative one, on the contrary, uses the concepts of "better or worse" and is based on the comparison of objects with each other. In this case, the stereotype formation is preceded by a comparison. The two main types of comparison axiological values can be distinguished as "general assessment and private assessment" [3, P. 198]. Yu. D. Apresyan highlights general, aesthetic, ethical, utilitarian, and truthful assessment [1, P. 64]. From E. M. Wolf's point of view, assessments are divided into emotional (feelings) and rational (opinions) ones. Yet the researcher minds that the division is conditional, and the ways of expressing the two assessment types in language differ, "showing which principle underlies the judgment about the object's value, emotional or rational one" [4, P. 40]. T. V. Romanova divides assessments into "ethical, aesthetic, logical and emotional", as well as "monosubject and polysubject, monomodal and polymodal", which are different, often opposite assessments of the same object [15, P. 70]. E. M. Wolf distinguishes such assessment properties as emotivity, expressiveness, affectivity, intensification, and, as a result, distinguishes emotive assessment as a special type of assessment. T. E. Milevskaya defines such authorship types as the author-narrator, the author-character, the author-commentator: "The author-narrator, first, demonstrates an assessment at the level of selection of facts and events. In this situation, even the memory selectivity is characteristic. Secondly, he selects linguistic evaluative means for the narration of these facts and events. The author-character exists in the described situation and, most likely, only illustrates it. The author-commentator is the bearer of an explicit assessment from the point of view of today. Implicitly, there is 'a rating scale and stereotypes' in his assessment, which he focuses on as a representative of a certain emotional, social and cultural type. Thus, we observe the situation of speech and evaluation coincidence in two of the three author's hypostases" [13, P. 17–21]. So, a particular text category can be considered from two points of view: first, at the level of function, and, secondly, as a means, at the level of the way of expressing text formation.

### Discussion

In modern linguistics it is generally accepted that the modality is based on the evaluation category. T. V. Markelova notes: "Evaluation belongs to the number of human categories proper. It is set by the person's physical and mental nature, his being and feeling, it sets his thinking and activity, attitude to other people and objects of reality, his perception of art" [10, P. 67]. The assessment is dynamic and relative in each specific situation, since different subjects can evaluate various aspects of what is happening in different ways, individually and subjectively. We can say that the surrounding objects appear in the subjective, individual perception from different qualitative and functional sides, which makes it possible for the evaluation category to exist [12]. In modern linguistics, the evaluation category is studied at several levels, including both the word and the utterance and the text. According to some researchers, "the most difficult object in terms of axiological description is the text, since in the text, as in a complex linguistic object, all the problems associated with the evaluativeness of the word and the evaluativeness of the utterance are found» [11, P. 100]. Analyzing the meaning of the evaluation category, A. N. Maksimov denotes the relationship between preference and evaluation, since, in his opinion, "it is in preference that such properties of evaluation as relativity and dynamism come to the fore. Indeed, preferences do not emphasize the positive or negative properties of a thing as such, but define such things' properties that allow us to state their advantages over others in a given situation. In another situation, preference may be given to the opposite properties" [9, P. 32]. We can say that any statement that is actualized in a communicative situation, either explicitly or implicitly, contains an assessment.

Next, we will determine the ratio of preference statements with phrases of a moral and ethical nature. The first thing to note is that these statements are similar in content, since the preference and comparison phrases express the speaker's subjective ideas and desires. Moral and ethical statements, in turn, are aimed at solving the situation of moral choice, express ideas about "bad" and "good", "should" and "should not", "goodness and evil". Moral and ethical statements are also aimed at education, instruction, indication of correct behavior, proper choice. Moral and ethical statements are based on both universal and national-specific concepts that contain information about traditions, moral foundations and norms of social behavior. Thus, moral and ethical statements tell about the values accepted in a particular cultural community (see, for example: [16], [17]).

As for the problem of the optative and preferential statements relations, according to A. N. Maksimov, "the main difference between optative and preferential statements is that they do not express comparison and choice" [9, P. 188]. It is also possible to distinguish between the situations of their use, in which the subject of the statement realizes his desire, in such words as *"I want to sleep"*, *"I would like to have lunch now"* and does not imply the choice of certain alternatives. Thus, the modality of optative utterances can be characterized as "passive dreaminess", rather than as "volitional choice", active choice in preferential utterances. The differences between optative and preferential statements can also be made according to the main characteristics. Optative utterances are characterized by the coreference of the speaker and the subject of desire, as well as the addressability and causation of the action. The purpose of optative utterances is to express the feelings and desires of the subject of the utterance, they do not have an addressee and do not imply an embodiment. This is their main difference from imperative statements with a specific addressee, the main purpose of which is to order the execution of an action. Since there are exceptions to each rule, in some situations, optative statements may converge in characteristics with imperative ones, expressing a relaxed urge.

Let us consider the main aspects of the differences between pure comparisons and modal preference-comparison phrases, based on the scientific ideas of A. N. Maksimov [9]. First of all, the comparison proposals are aimed at stating the non-equivalent amount of the attribute of individual objects, without referring to the analysis of their utility for the subject. Comparing one object with another, the subject of the statement is in a situation of alienation from these objects. In the preference-comparison modal phrases, the dominant goal is the situation of choice, when the comparison is made not as an object, but as useful, utilitarian one in this particular situation for the subject. To a small extent, the comparative degrees of

adjectives, such as *"better"* or *"worse"*, *"bigger"* or *"smaller"*, which are immanent in comparative sentences, are used in constructions with the preference for comparison modality. Thus, comparison phrases can be considered as the basis of the comparison preference modality.

One of the most relevant areas of research in the field of modality category analysis is the search for directions of correspondence between "modal categories in logic and language, the presentation of the grounds for the synthesis of logical and linguistic understanding of modality by establishing a correlation between the categories of modality and the categories of language means used to express the category of logical modality in speech" [7, P. 71]. The first type of logical modality is called aletic, epistemic, or cognitive modality. This type of modality has an ancient origin and was developed by Aristotle, who characterized the aletic modality as follows: "Aletic modality is a characteristic of a statement that includes such modal operators as "necessary", "possible", "impossible" (quoted by: [2, p. 32]). Epistemic modality was developed by I. Kant, who distinguished solid knowledge, assumption and faith. Modern logic defines the content of epistemic modality as follows: "We can distinguish, in particular, epistemic modal concepts related to provability: "provable", "refutable", "unsolvable" [6, pp. 77–78]. Consequently, modern modal logic involves the study of the epistemic modality of statements containing various kinds of theoretical and cognitive processes [16], [18]. Summarizing the above, we can conclude that both the aletic and epistemic modalities are predetermined by the limited knowledge of the subject of the utterance.

There is a problem of distinguishing between the two types of modality. In some cases, the terms mentioned above are interpreted as synonymous. In linguistics, these modality types are distinguished by different classes of language means. Thus, epistemic modality, understood as a reflection on the cognitive mode of the knowledge subject, is usually expressed by such verbs as *"I know"*, *"I admit"*, *"I believe"*. At the same time, the aletic modality expression as the assessment of a statement's truth occurs through *"perhaps"*, *"of course"*, *"most likely"*, *"obviously"*, *"probably"*, *"possibly"*, and in certain cases – through the modal predicates *"can"*, *"may"*, *"might"*, *"must"*.

In modern linguistics, the concept of "epistemic modality" appeared only in the XXth century. A number of works by such researchers as Yu. D. Apresyan [1], E. V. Paducheva [14], M. A. Dmitrovskaya [5] are devoted to verbs that characterize intellectual activity. Another type of logical modality is the deontic modality, which is expressed by the modal means of the values of duty, possibility, and resolution. Deontic modality is aimed at describing and characterizing an action from the point of view of a certain system of norms. Normative logic studies the normative characteristic of an action and is expressed in terms of "mandatory", "prohibited", "permitted", and "indifferent". The idea that norms are based on logic was developed over the millennia by Aristotle, the Stoics, medieval philosophers, G. Leibniz, D. Hume. For the first time, the idea of creating a normative concepts formal theory was put forward by E. Malley in the work "Elements of the Logic of Will", 1926 [20]. But this work was predetermined by I. Bentham's ideas, who proposed the term "deontology" itself, dedicated to the section of ethics, which deals with the problems of duty and moral requirements ("Deontology, or The Science of Morality», 1834). In the XX century, the problems of the norms study were dealt with by G. H. von Vrigt, A. A. Ivin (see, e.g.: [6]).

Summarizing the above, it should be noted that the sign of "positivity", or "preference", in the sense of "utility" can be considered both from an objective and subjective point of view. It can be assumed that situations have some objective properties that, in the general opinion of researchers, are interpreted as due and proper, and, as a result, are preferred. These objective properties are aimed at determining what this object should actually be, and what it should not be. In other words, a particular object can be called preferred in a situation where it meets specific requirements. For instance, the equipment must be comfortable, ergonomic and reliable, otherwise work or creativity will not be effective. On the contrary, it is possible to distinguish such properties of objects that the subject prefers individually, regardless of general standards and opinions. For example, the phrase *"This is a larger room"* may express a subjective preference for a person who likes spacious rooms. The statement *"This is a brighter tie"* may express an individual preference for a person whose taste prefers bright ties. Therefore, it is possible to make a conditional distinction between objective and subjective preferences.

Next, we will consider the main situations of grammatical use of the comparative *"better"*. First of all, it can be applied in a sentence as a circumstance of measure and degree and, therefore, take a proper position in relation to the verb (*be better*, *love / like better*). The comparative better can be used as an adjective, for example, *"That's a better deed than many"*. In this variant, the modality of preference is the speaker's relation to the entire propositive name expressed in the sentence. *"Had better"*, *"would rather"*, *"would sooner"* are a relatively small group of phrases that provide the preference-comparison modality expression. These phrases are correctly considered as an analog of the word *"prefer"*. These phrases' analysis shows that the words *"had"* or *"would"* do not have a separate meaning in them, due to the fact that other forms are not used in these idioms, as well as in colloquial modern speech, they are abbreviated to the letter *'d*. It is fair to assume that these phrases can be considered as the most commonly used schemes for expressing the preference-comparison modality.

As for the meaning and purpose of the framework construction *"what more… than…?"*, then it can be considered as a means of maximizing the superiority of one object or action in relation to others. The most common use of this phrase is in situations of emotionally expressed comparison-preference, for example: *"What more do we need than a glass of sherry to talk over the latest happenings of the world"*. The modality of preference-comparison can also be expressed by the structure of the sentence, which implies the inclusion of such conjunctions as *or*, *or else*, *either or*, *otherwise*, comparative conjunctions *rather than*, *in preference to*. The comparison operation can be considered as the implementation of the process of selecting the most priority, relevant option. The choice of an object by comparing the preference is due to a number of objective and subjective circumstances and can be defined as the object's positive properties, its beneficial qualities in this particular situation and the person's necessity or individual preferences.

### Conclusion

In a literary text, the modality of preference-comparison is realized through a complex set of lexical and grammatical means. Logical structure of modal phrases preference-comparison is a systematic relationship between the number of arguments that can be represented in the following structure: subject, object, preference, and other objects of comparison,

rational justification of the choice, emotional description of the preferred properties of the object of choice. Based on the analysis of a number of sentences from literary texts, it can be concluded that will expression phrases can be considered as constructions of abbreviated preference. From such abbreviated phrases, it is possible to restore the alternatives from which the choice was made. In addition, the preference-comparison phrases are similar in the ways of expression.

Thus, the present article notes the complex nature of statements of preference and comparison. The study examines a number of lexemes with the meaning of the preference-comparison modality, such as *"prefer"*, *"choose"*, *"favour"*, *"taste"*, as well as analytical combinations of *"would rather"*, *"had better"* and phrases with the adjective or adverb *"better"*. We can say that they represent a certain synthesis of the modalities of will, desirability, and comparison. The article briefly analyzes the lexical and grammatical means of expressing the modality of preference-comparison. The logical basis of preference-comparison is structured by grammatical means that determine the relationship between the subject and the object of preference, the comparative relationship between them, aimed at ensuring the choice of an object from possible alternatives. Lexical means fill the logical basis built up by grammatical means.

| **Конфликт интересов** | **Conflict of Interest** |
|---|---|
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