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COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE MODAL CATEGORY OF TEXTS OF DECLARATION OF THE SHANGHAI COOPERATION ORGANIZATION IN CHINESE AND RUSSIAN

Research article

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Abstract

Modal category is a special system for expressing political ideology, will and belief in political communication. This article presents a detailed examination of the modal system of the texts of the Declaration of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (hereinafter SCO) in Chinese and Russian from 2001 to 2017 at the levels of deontic modality and epistemic modality in order to fill the gaps in the study of SCO, which focuses on political rights and expand the scope of research on the SCO theory as linguistic studies usually neglect political concepts, as well as deepen the theoretical and practical study of the political discourse.

Keywords: deontic modality; epistemic modality; Declaration of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization; comparison of Chinese and Russian languages.

The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (hereinafter referred to as the SCO) is a permanent intergovernmental international organization founded in 2001 in Shanghai by the leaders of the Russian Federation, the People’s Republic of China, Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Republic of Tajikistan, and the Republic of Uzbekistan. The official languages of the SCO are Chinese and Russian. Meetings of the heads of the SCO member states are held annually and declarations are issued, the name of which is derived from the name of the city where the meeting is taking place, for example, the Tashkent Declaration of 2004, the Dushanbe Declaration of 2008, the Astana Declaration of 2011, the Ufa Declaration of 2015, etc.

The author conducts the study of the modal system within the framework of the SCO political texts, tries to reveal the connection between language and politics, and considers the impact of the practical use of the modal components of Chinese and Russian on the expression of political intentions.

Exploring modality enriches the political and analytical groups in the examination of international relations and helps to find new ways to study language practice in the field of international relations.

There are many various means and ways of expressing modality in Chinese and Russian. The Chinese version of the SCO declarations mainly uses modal verbs to express modality, while the Russian version mostly uses modal predicates, including modal verbs and predicative adverbs expressing modal meaning. We have compiled statistics on the occurrence of modal components in Chinese and Russian texts of the SCO declarations from 2001 to 2017. Statistical results are shown in Table 1:

<table>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Chinese language</td>
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<tr>
<td>Russian language</td>
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Table 1 suggests that, in general, modal components are contained mostly in the Chinese rather than in Russian texts of SCO declarations. In other words, compared to texts in Russian, Chinese texts embody the imperative and directive nature of the language to a greater extent. The Russian political discourse is not so imperative; it is much softer and more flexible, whereas the Chinese strive for uniqueness and firmness which is probably due to the tradition of power.

Deontic modality is an expression of order, obligation, necessity in the form of permission and obligation. Epistemic modality is an expression of possibility, certainty in the form of knowledge and faith. Deontic modality interprets “modality” as a law from the physical world or the socio-psychological world associated with law, regulation and morality (Langaker, 1991), while epistemic modality interprets “modality” as logic, inference, and common sense. In the next chapter we conduct comparative analysis of the modal components in the Chinese and Russian versions of the SCO declarations from two perspectives: deontic and epistemic modality.

1. Components of Deontic Modality

In the text of the SCO declaration in Chinese, words and phrases expressing deontic modality include: 应、有必要、必须、要、应该、应当、须、不应. The text of the SCO declaration in Russian includes such words as должен, необходимость, необходимо, необходимый, обязательный, следует, нужно, не следует, нельзя, не должен. The frequency of their occurrence in the texts of declarations is given in tables 2 (Chinese) and 3 (Russian):

Table 2

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>应</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>18</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 3

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>应</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>有必要</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
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Tables 2 and 3 show that, first of all, although the number of modal components expressing the importance of necessity is much higher in Chinese texts than in Russian (and namely 166 in Chinese texts and 113 in Russian). The word 不应 (no need) is used in Chinese to express negative connotations, whereas Russian texts contain such words as не должен (doesn’t have to), не следует (shouldn’t), нельзя (can’t). Secondly, the expression of modal meaning in Russian texts is usually combined with short participles (подчеркнут (underlined), отмечен (marked)), forming a “subject+predicate” structure or with transitive verbs (признавать (recognize), отметить (mark), подтверждать (confirm), обуславливать (determine), подчеркнуть (underline)), short adjectives (убеждён (convinced)) and phrases (обращать внимание на (pay attention to), исходить из (proceed from)), forming the structure “predicate+object.” This is due to the lexical and grammatical features of the means of linguistic expression of the official business style in Russian:

(1) В этой связи подчеркнута необходимость выстроить систему регионального торгово-экономического сотрудничества… (In this regard, the necessity to build a system of regional trade and economic cooperation was emphasized…) (2017)

(2) Они подтверждают необходимость сохранения единства, суверенитета, территориальной целостности и стабильности в Сирии… (They confirm the necessity to maintain unity, sovereignty, territorial integrity and stability in Syria…) (2016)

(3) Главы государств убеждены в необходимости ускорения реализации проектов, обеспечивающих расширение транспортно-коммуникационных возможностей региона… (The Heads of States are convinced of the necessity to accelerate the implementation of projects that ensure the expansion of transport and communication capabilities of the region…) (2013)

Thirdly, both the Chinese and Russian versions of the SCO declarations, use the third-person plural form as the subject, for example, 成员国重申(Member States confirm), 他们认为(They consider). This contrasts sharply with the declarations of other organizations, such as the declaration of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA), the Declaration of Heads of States members of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (hereinafter – the CSTO Declaration) and the Declaration of the BRICS Summits, in which the first person of the plural form is used as the subject: 我们支持(We support), 我们强调(We emphasize). The Russian version of the CSTO Declaration also uses a large number of definite-personal sentences without a subject: Поддерживаем..., Призываем… In the Russian texts of the SCO declarations,
even along with the usage of predicative adverbs expressing modal meanings: необязательно, следует, нужно, the subject in the
dative case is omitted, while the object is, as a rule, moved to a position before a predicative adverb, for example:

4) Связанные с этим проблемы необходимо решать при участии всех заинтересованных государств посредством
политико-дипломатических усилий. (The problems associated with this, have to be addressed with the participation of all
interested states through political and diplomatic efforts). (2014)

5) Особое внимание следует уделять предотвращению использования террористами компонентов оружия
массового уничтожения и средств его доставки и информационного терроризма. (Particular attention should be paid
to preventing terrorists from using the components of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery as well as
information terrorism). (2005)

Fourth, the Chinese version of the SCO declarations maintains a high degree of consistency in the use of modal
components when referring to the same or similar topics or contents, while the expression of the same semantics in Russian
texts has changed significantly over the years. For example, the SCO declarations use the following expressions when referring
to the topic of “UN Security Council Reform”:

6) Каждая сторона должна продолжать консультации для поиска комплексного подхода к решению
вопроса о реформировании Совета Безопасности ООН с учётом взаимных интересов и озабоченностей и достижения
максимально широкого согласия. В целях сохранения единства членов ООН не следует устанавливать искусственные
временные ограничения на переговорный процесс, а также преждевременно выносить на обсуждение какие-либо
проекты, в том числе вычленяющие отдельные аспекты переговорного процесса, не пользуясь на данном этапе
поддержкой подавляющего большинства стран-членов. (Interested states must continue consultations in order to find an
integrated approach to resolving the issue of reforming the UN Security Council taking into account mutual interests and
concerns and reaching the broadest possible agreement. In order to preserve the unity of the UN member states, artificial
time limits on the negotiation process should not be set, nor should any projects be prematurely brought up for discussion,
including highlighting certain aspects of the negotiation process, which at this stage have no backing of the vast majority of the
member states).

7) Подготовка государством защиты консультаций по поводу реформы Совета
Безопасности ООН не ведёт к достижению максимально широкого согласия. Чтобы
достигнуть такого согласия, не следует устанавливать искусственные временные
рамки для проведения переговоров и не форсировать варианты, что не соответствует
интересам большинства стран-членов ООН. (They believe that in order to achieve the
broadest possible agreement on the reform of the UN Security Council, it is
necessary to continue consultations on finding an integrated approach to its solution, based on the long-term interests of
the UN and ensuring the unity of its member states, without creating an artificial time frame for reform and without forcing
the options that have not received the support of the majority of the UN member states).

8) Следует отметить, что реформирование Совета Безопасности ООН не должно сделано
его более представительным и эффективным путем проведения максимально широких консультаций в рамках поиска
пакетного решения интересов обеспечения сплоченности стран-членов ООН, без создавая искусственные временные
рамки для форсирования вариантов, что не соответствует интересам большинства стран-членов ООН. (They believe that the reform of the UN Security
Council should make it more representative and effective by means of holding the widest possible consultations within
the framework of the search for a “package solution” ensuring the unity of the UN member states and without setting artificial
time frames or forcing options that have not received broad support from the members of the UN).

In the above declarations of 2012, 2014 and 2016, the “не" modal component in Chinese texts was used consistently,
and clearly expressed disagreement with the artificially set UN Security Council reform deadlines or was forcibly promoting
reform programs that were not supported by the majority of UN member states. The modal component "не следует"
(shouldn’t) corresponding to the Chinese text was first used in Russian texts only in the 2012 declaration. In 2014, it was
replaced by the participle "не создавая, не форсируя" (without creating, without forcing) and in 2016 it was replaced by the
preposition "без (установления и форсирования)" (without (establishing and forcing)). The modal value of this component
gradually weakened with the change of the part of speech. Referring to the important role of speech acts and habits in the
international relations Sun Jisheng (2017: 51) indicates that speech habits can create concepts, identities and interests of actors,
and then form a long-term and stable model of interaction between the actors. Through their repetition by the actors, speech
habits are transformed into facts or truth, creating the identity and interests of actors corresponding to speech habits. In
addition, in the process of interaction with other actors, they will form certain speech habits and create stable models of long-
term interaction with other actors. The international community has formed various explicit language rules or implicit speech
habits in accordance with different thematic areas. There are unique language habits in the international military, political,
economic, financial, cultural, humanitarian and other fields. The same actor will consciously or unconsciously use certain
speech habits in different thematic areas. Only this way an actor can gain understanding and recognition of other actors. Given
the important role of speech habits in international relations, we believe that positive speech habits of Chinese texts on the
same topics contribute to the formation of a “safe community” and the creation of relatively stable expectations in the process of interaction between the actors, thereby facilitating communication and mutual understanding between different actors.

Finally, both in Chinese and Russian texts there is a modal component with the highest frequency of use. In Chinese, it is 应, and in Russian it is the word «должен» (must). 应 occurs 22 seven times in Chinese texts, accounting for 66% of the total. Based on the high frequency of usage 应 in Chinese texts, we have analyzed the expression forms corresponding to 应 in the Russian texts. The analysis showed that only 54 expressions corresponding to 应 in the Russian texts used modal elements, which is about 56% in Chinese, respectively: должен (must) (37 times), необходимый (necessary) (4 times), необходимость (necessity) (6 times), необходимо (necessary) (5 times) and следует (should) (2 times). The other 43 expressions did not use modal components corresponding to 24 different types of expressions. Among them, words or phrases with a high frequency of use: важного (important) (37 times), поддерживать/отвечать/подтверждать важность, исходить из важности, важная роль, выступать за (advocate), угрожать (threaten), отвечать целесообразность (mark off the expediency) (37 times), поддерживать приверженность (confirm commitment), считать своевременным (consider it timely), требовать (demand), etc., as well as the direct use of expressions in the form of an imperfect present or future tense. For instance:

(9) 本组织成员国重申，应维护联合国在国际反恐斗争中的核心协调作用。（2008）

Государства-члены ШОС подтверждают приверженность укреплению центральной координирующей роли ООН в организации международного противодействия террористической угрозе. (The SCO member states confirm their commitment to strengthening the central coordinating role of the UN in organizing international response to the terrorist threat).

(10) 成员国表示，应严格遵守《不扩散核武器条约》。（2011）

Государства-члены ШОС выступают за неукоснительное соблюдение положений Договора о нераспространении ядерного оружия. (SCO member states advocate strict compliance with the provisions of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons).

(11) 本组织成员国认为，预防冲突应遵守《联合国宪章》、安理会有关决议及国际法基本准则。（2008）

Государства-члены ШОС исходят из того, что легитимной основой предотвращения конфликтов являются положения Устава ООН, резолюции Совета Безопасности и нормы международного права. (The SCO member states proceed from the fact that the provisions of the UN Charter, Security Council resolutions and international law are the legitimate basis for conflict prevention).

This proves that the majority of Chinese texts use direct and explicit means of expression, the use of modal components is fixed and continuous. However, the modal colouring of Russian texts is relatively weak, such words and phrases as «поддерживать важность» (maintain importance), «выступать за» (advocate), «подтверждать приверженность» (confirm commitment), «считать своевременным» (consider timely), etc. are often used, where the form of the imperfect present tense is replaced by a modal component. It should be noted that from the point of view of tense predicative verbs the present tense is more often used in Russian texts than in Chinese. Lu Fan (1985: 50) calls this phenomenon “obligatory present tense,” that is, the tense that helps to express the meaning of orders in the present tense. Compare, «上海合作组织将利用—Шанхайская организация сотрудничества использует» (the Shanghai Cooperation Organization uses), «上海合作组织各成员国将加强—Государства-участники Шанхайской организации сотрудничества укрепляют» (The member states of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization are strengthening). «为……制定了明确的法律框架—создаются чёткие правовые рамки для…» (a clear legal framework is being created for...). Dan Yang (2011: 55) noted that imperfective verbs highlight events that are in the process of implementation, they have the potential meaning of “achieving change.” The imperfect present of Russian verbs may indicate actions both in the past and future. Indicating actions in the past, past events are reflected and continued through a perceived metaphorical present (Shapiro 1964: 157). Indicating actions in the future, an event is realized in the future, but there is intention, psychological preparation, determination and confidence in its occurrence (Bondarko 1971: 111). Due to the function of hidden reference of the imperfect present tense of Russian verbs, it is widely used as a predicate in Russian texts of SCO declarations replacing special modal words or phrases corresponding to Chinese texts.

There is high and low intensity of the “modality force.” Among the Chinese texts of the SCO declarations, 必须 (necessary) has the highest intensity of deontic modality; it occurs a total of 22 times. We examined the topics and contents of 必须 in the Chinese version of the SCO declarations and found that the most frequently used theme of 必须 is security, this component occurs a total of 9 times. This includes the creation of an international security system, ending the armed conflict in Syria, ensuring the security of space activities, solving the problem of anti-ballistic systems and combating terrorism. The issues of cooperation are second in popularity; the component occurs 6 times and includes cooperation in the political, economic and security fields. In addition, issues of respect for international law, protection of human rights, the principle of equality, and regard for various civilizations and reform of the Security Council are also addressed. Issues such as maintaining international order, combating terrorism, maintaining a positive peace in Syria, countering the intervention of other countries and the importance of the Security Council, have been key points of cooperation between the SCO member states since its establishment. The main goal of the SCO is the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, respect for various civilizations and the pursuit of common development in accordance with its international obligations and domestic legislation. Therefore, the use of high-intensity modal components reflects, on the one hand, the importance attached by the heads of the SCO member states to these issues, and on the other, the relevance of implementing or solving related issues. In Russian texts, the modal components with the highest intensity 必须, необходимый, необходимость (necessary, necessity) are also used more consistently, corresponding to Chinese texts. For instance:

(12) 在人权领域，必须严格和始终尊重各国人民历史传统和民族特点，坚持所有国家主权平等。（2012）
В области прав человека необходимо строго и последовательно уважать исторические традиции и национальные особенности каждого народа, суверенное равенство всех государств. (It is necessary to strictly and consistently respect the historical traditions and national characteristics of each nation in the field of human rights, the sovereign equality of all states).

(13) 为建立该体系，必须在裁军和不扩散领域采取持续有效的措施。（2009）
Для создания такой системы (системы международной безопасности) необходимы последовательные и эффективные меры в сфере разоружения и нераспространения. (Consistent and effective measures in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation are necessary to create such a system (international security system)).

2. Components of Epistemic Modality
Compared with the modal components expressing the values of duty and necessity, the number of modal components expressing the value of probability is rather small in Chinese and Russian texts; however, there are more such components in Chinese than in Russian. In Chinese texts these are the words — 能、可能、有可能、会、可以、不能、不可能 . In Russian texts, these are the words можно (to be able), можно (may), возможно (possible), не мож но (not to be able), невозможно (impossible). The frequency of use of such components in the declarations is given in tables 4 (Chinese) and 5 (Russian).

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<tr>
<th>能</th>
<th>可</th>
<th>能够</th>
<th>可能</th>
<th>会</th>
<th>可以</th>
<th>有可能</th>
<th>不能</th>
<th>不可能</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
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<td>7</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>可能 (be able)</th>
<th>可能 (may)</th>
<th>可能 (possible)</th>
<th>不可能 (not to be able)</th>
<th>不可能 (impossible)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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</table>

Tables 4 and 5 show that, in contrast to modal components expressing the values of duty and necessity, there is a greater number of modal components expressing opportunity in Chinese texts than in Russian and they are more diverse. The most frequently used component of the epistemic modality in Chinese texts is “能 (be able),” which is usually found in texts in the fixed structure “只有 …… 才能 (only if … possible).” In Russian texts, the modal component corresponding to “能” is “мочь” (be able) and “возможно” (possible), which, just like the Chinese component, are often found with the words “only” and “exclusively” enhancing the connotation and indicating the uniqueness of the solution to the problem, and also decisive and consistent convictions of the heads of state. For instance,

(14) 只有在联合国主导下，并严格遵循《联合国宪章》，才能建立有效的全球安全体系。（2007）
Эффективная глобальная система безопасности может создаваться только под эгидой ООН и при строгом соблюдении ее Устава. (An effective global security system can only be created under the auspices of the UN and with the strict observance of its Charter).

(15) 成员国坚信，只有通过所有国家和国际组织及论坛的紧密协作，才能应对恐怖主义、分裂主义、极端主义……等当今全球挑战和威胁。（2014）
Они твердо убеждены, что противодействие таким глобальным вызовам и угрозам современности, как терроризм, сепаратизм, экстремизм … возможно исключительно путем тесного взаимодействия всех государств, международных организаций и форумов (They firmly believe that countering such global challenges and threats of our time as terrorism, separatism, extremism … is possible only through close interaction of all states, international organizations and forums).

Wang Fengying (2010: 60) argues that the relationship between the sentence expressed by the modal verb “be able” and the infinitive, and a speaker’s propositional attitude can have at least three different modal meanings: resolution, assumption, and ability. The first one is the permission of the speakers to perform an action that denotes the infinitive in a certain context; the second type is the speaker’s prediction of whether the action indicated by the infinitive will occur; the third type is the assessment of the speaker concerning the subject of action and its capability to carry out the action indicated by the infinitive. In the texts of the SCO declarations, “能” and “be able” express the third type of modal meaning:

(16) 本组织成员国家……视其为跨国危害，国际社会只有共同努力，才有效应对。（2002）
Государства-члены СОО… рассматривают эти явления как транснациональные угрозы, эффективное противодействие которым может быть организовано только коллективными усилиями международного сообщества. (The SCO member states … consider these phenomena as transnational threats, the effective counteraction of which can only be organized with the help of collective efforts of the international community).

Tables 4 and 5 show that in Chinese texts there are 33 components of epistemic modality, whereas in Russian – only 23. In Russian texts, unused components of epistemic modality usually correspond to Chinese texts in the form of infinitives, imperfect present tense, perfect future tense, prepositional phrases, nouns and components of the deontic modality. For instance:

(17) 企图单纯依靠武力解决问题是完全行不通的，这只会阻碍局部冲突的综合解决……（2008）
Ставка исключительно на силовое решение не имеет перспектив, препятствует комплексному урегулированию локальных конфликтов… (Relying solely on a solution by force has no prospects; it hinders the comprehensive settlement of local conflicts).

(18) 元首们……认为各国内部冲突和危机只能通过政治对话和平解决。（2011）
Отмечено, что внутренние конфликты и кризисы должны урегулироваться исключительно мирными средствами, путем политического диалога. (It is noted that internal conflicts and crises must be resolved exclusively by peaceful means, through political dialogue).

There were four cases of the simultaneous use of the components of the deontic and epistemic modality in the Chinese and Russian versions of the SCO declarations in addition to the separate use of the components of the deontic modality and the components of the epistemic modality. Chinese texts use 情况 also in the whole world). The joint use of the components of deontic and epistemic modality, a high degree of unity of the Chinese and Russian texts testify to the identical degree of attention, linearity and confidence of the SCO member states in the implementation of topical cooperation issues.

(22) 本组织成员国坚信，本组织能够并且应该对成员国范围内及整个世界的安全和发展作出显著的贡献。(2003)

Государства-члены ШОС убеждены, что Организация может и должна внести заметный вклад в безопасное и стабильное развитие не только на ее пространстве, но и в мире в целом. (The SCO member states are convinced that the Organization can and must make a significant contribution to the safe and stable development not only on its territory, but also in the whole world).

(23) 联合国应当首先确保国际政治和安全问题获得有效解决，同时应该也能够根据急剧变化的国际形势进行改革。(2003)

Организацию Объединенных Наций можно и нужно реформировать соответственно быстро меняющейся обстановке в мире, с учетом в первую очередь потребностей эффективного решения проблем мировой политики и безопасности. (The United Nations can and should be reformed according to the rapidly changing world situation, taking into account, first of all, the necessity of an effective solution to the problems of world politics and security).

3. Conclusion

Studying the SCO from the point of view of linguistics is a new perspective that can provide analysis at an empirical level and give deeper understanding and explanation of world politics. The comparison of the modal means of the Chinese and Russian versions of the SCO declarations enables a deeper study of diplomatic strategies and style features of the SCO member states, and reveals trends in the choice of language means due to the current political situations. The analysis of political texts of different periods helps to clarify the discursive characteristics of the Chinese and Russian languages and identify patterns in political thinking.

Конфликт интересов

None declared.

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