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FROM ONOMASIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE: ASPECTUAL AND MODAL FEATURES IN AZERBAIJANI

Research article

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**Abstract**

Aspectuality and modality engage a significant role in the grammatical-semantic theory of linguistics and are fields with sides that remain highly controversial topics. Recent researches highlight their functions in shaping the meaning of linguistic expressions. It is well understood that modality represents the truth value or reliability of statements in connection with the external environment. As a part of the interpersonal meta function, modality can be recognized as the evaluation of certainty or probability.

Recent analyses suggest that modality, which does not rely on absolute truth, is associated with "presentation issues" grounded in socially constructed and debated criteria. In this regard, the expression and evaluation of modality are closely linked to its purpose of presentation, the needs of speech participants, and other such factors.

Aspectuality, on the other hand, verifies temporality within a sentence via fundamental qualities. It considers elements such as the beginning, duration, and completion of any action. It is expressed through diverse grammatical, lexical, and, in some languages, semantic means. Like other Turkic languages, Azerbaijani has an interconnected structure for modality and aspectuality. These fields are studied together as a system, where modality and aspectuality interact and complement each other.

From an onomasiological perspective, researching aspectual and modal features in Azerbaijani involves understanding how these linguistic elements are represented in relation to meaning. Onomasiology examines the different ways to express a concept across languages, and the present article researches how aspect and modality are realized within the indicative mood of Azerbaijani.

**Keywords:** aspect, modality, moods, indicative mood, tenses in Azerbaijani.

С ОНОМАСИОЛОГИЧЕСКОЙ ТОЧКИ ЗРЕНИЯ: АСПЕКТУАЛЬНЫЕ И МОДАЛЬНЫЕ ПРИЗНАКИ В  
АЗЕРБАЙДЖАНСКОМ ЯЗЫКЕ

Научная статья

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**Аннотация**

Аспектуальность и модальность играют важную роль в грамматико-семантической теории лингвистики и являются областями со сторонами, которые остаются весьма спорными темами. Недавние исследования подчеркивают их функции в формировании смысла языковых выражений. Общеизвестно, что модальность представляет собой истинностное значение или надежность утверждений в связи с внешней средой. Как часть межличностной мета-функции модальность может быть признана как оценка определенности или вероятности.

Недавние анализы показывают, что модальность, которая не опирается на абсолютную истину, связана с «вопросами представления», основанными на социально сконструированных и обсуждаемых критериях. В этом отношении выражение и оценка модальности тесно связаны с ее целью представления, потребностями участников речи и другими подобными факторами.

Аспектуальность, с другой стороны, проверяет временность в предложении с помощью фундаментальных качеств. Она рассматривает такие элементы, как начало, продолжительность и завершение любого действия. Она выражается с помощью различных грамматических, лексических и, в некоторых языках, семантических средств. Как и другие тюркские языки, азербайджанский имеет взаимосвязанную структуру модальности и аспектуальности. Эти области изучаются вместе как система, в которой модальность и аспектуальность взаимодействуют и дополняют друг друга.

С ономасиологической точки зрения исследование аспектуальных и модальных особенностей в азербайджанском языке включает понимание того, как эти языковые элементы представлены в отношении значения. Ономазиология изучает различные способы выражения концепции в языках, и в данной статье рассматривается, как в соответствии с этим подходом реализуются аспект и модальность в изъявительном наклонении азербайджанского языка.

**Ключевые слова:** аспект, модальность, наклонения, изъявительное наклонение, времена в Азербайджанском языке.

## Introduction

It is clear that Azerbaijani is one of the most beautiful languages in the world and is one of the principle means of communication and the official state language of the inhabitants of the Republic of Azerbaijan. The latest statistics indicates that Azerbaijani is also the first language of 30 million Azerbaijanis living in the Islamic Republic of Iran. This language is also spoken in southwestern Asia and western Türkiye. Currently, more than 50 million people use this language. Based on genealogical classification, the Azerbaijani language belongs to the Turkic branch of the Ural- Altaic language family. According to typological classification, it is classified as part of the agglutinative language group. All word roots in the Azerbaijani are independent words possessing both lexical and grammatical significance. In Azerbaijani, grammatical meanings and relationships are formed by monosemic inflexions which follow the stem and the root of a word. The Azerbaijani language has witnessed a great process of historical development and traces its origins to 1,300 years ago. Due to its richness and variability, Azerbaijani has been, and continues to be, the subject of extensive study by a wide range of linguistics, researchers. Therefore, it is necessary to create a broad consensus regarding the accurate and comprehensive description of the Azerbaijani language. Nevertheless, the remaining problems need to be analyzed. One field whose characterization remains particularly insufficiently explored is aspectuality, which is only beginning to be studied in linguistics, along with modality, a domain that has persistently attracted the interest of linguists but has yet to produce widely accepted conclusions.

According to Slavic linguistics such as A.V.Bondarko, A.A.Shakhmatov, European linguists including W.Abraham, E.Leis, S.Schmid and others, as well as Azerbaijani linguists such as Z.Budagova, I.Abbasov, M.Musayev, aspectuality and modality are functional-semantic categories that are closely interconnected. It is obvious that the concept of realness which lies in the correspondence between external reality and the truth constructed within the text, plays an important role in this relationship. Modality contributes to analyze this type of concept. The impact of realness is obtained by some stylistic means. But not with standing this, originality itself is a complex experience related to the origin of the text, its formation and use.

Modality as a linguistic phenomenon is somewhat similar to the field of aspectuality, which expresses the property of action in a general sense [1, P. 376]. It connects all levels of language and in this regard intersects with aspectuality. Aspectuality encompasses the grammatical, syntactic, and semantic relations within the language. Similar to aspectuality, modality also shows different types of relations between statements and objective reality, through features at different levels of language. Differently to aspectuality, modality conveys ideas such as necessity or possibility. In any language aspectuality and modality demonstrate the attitude between time and reality. Additionally, these two categories reflect when the situation, event happened, as well as how the speaker's intention to clarify is manifested in relation to the social context.

In this article, the functional-semantic analysis of the field of aspectuality and modality in the Azerbaijani is based on a complex analytical method consisting of the comparative-historical and cognitive approaches.

## Main results and discussion

Aspectuality studies the way of subjective describing and evaluating any action, presenting the action in question according to one's own point of view of the speaker. In contrast, modality deals very different relational concepts (like imperative, indicative, desire, subjunctive, obligative, necessity) with the same grammatical structures. It has been mentioned that aspectuality in Azerbaijani is rarely used as a linguistic term by linguistics. In quantitative side, modality is often used as a linguistic term. In Azerbaijani linguistics, aspectual and modal markers are mainly the indicative mood.

Undoubtedly, although the main ways of expressing modality in the Azerbaijani are considered to be modal words, it can also be said with the reference to the knowledge learned in the background of general linguistics: Modal words are the main means of expressing modality, but they do not constitute the entirety of modality. Azerbaijani linguists such as Z.Alizadeh, M.Huseynzadeh, F.Zeynalov, N.Agazadeh and others have commented the main principles of modality and acknowledge the role of verb forms for expressing modality [2], [8], [10], [17]. According to I.Abbasov, F.Jahangirov and others, who have mentioned various means of expressing modality in the Azerbaijani language, one of the tools that brings a tone of modality to speech is the use of the verb forms [1], [5].

One of main representation of modality in Azerbaijani is the category of verb forms which also includes markers that express the concept of time and person. There is no any sign as a suffix for the modality function however, is executed with the help of the verb's forms category and their suffixes. Given that, the category of modality "disappears" within the forms of the verb. We know that while modality expresses the attitude towards reality in a sentence, verb moods mainly the report form, express the relationship of the action to the moment of speech. Through a quantitative lens, Jafarov was one of the linguists who largely connects grammatical modality with verbs. Consequently he considers it correct to describe modality via verbs [7, P. 29].

In S.Schmid's book, she introduces an onomasiological model for describing, classifying, and analyzing the cross-linguistic content category of aspectuality. "*Aspectuality is understood here as a complex category because its complete realisation, its "definitive" form, results from the combination of its three perspectives: it is thus complex at the level of the onomasiological foundation, the structuring of the category as such*" [15, P. 5].

Italian linguist L. Serianni, who researched the Italian language, its historical development way, and its grammatical structures, explains aspectuality this way: "*aspectuality is considered a significant grammatical-semantic category in linguistics, which characterizes the temporal structure of events and reflects the speaker's approach on their progression, completion, or repetition*" [16, P. 390]. It provides insights into how events unfold over time, shaping the nuances of meaning in verbal expressions. This domain is intricately linked to the morphological category of verbs and serves an important role in constructing temporal meanings within a linguistic framework. In linguistics, is regarded as a constituent of the broader aspectual domain a micro-field that encapsulates the manner in which an event unfolds temporally.

In Azerbaijani linguistics, aspect refers to a category of style expressed through morphological means and closely related to the verbal morphology. Despite the fact that, the research, study aspectuality has not yet been extensively developed among Azerbaijani linguists, this field has been studied within the categories of verbal mood, tense and form relations. However,

aspectuality has a wider range than the category of tense. Since aspectuality embodies the internal temporality of any action, it should be accepted as more fundamental and universal than tense.

The aspectual meanings in the Azerbaijani remain underexplored and have yet to be systematically studied as an autonomous linguistic category. It is linked because of the complexities of its verb- tense system and this problem is similar to other Turkic languages. Each tense in the Azerbaijani language encodes not only temporality but also aspectuality and modality, including these categories within its verbal system in a manner that reflects their interdependent nature. Aspectual properties express themselves in the sentence, that is, at the syntactic level. The verb displaying the action becomes a predicate as a main sentence member, then the predicate is demonstrated by various forms of mood, which consents to describe of these fields within the linguistic framework. In Azerbaijani, forms of mood expand the possibilities of the language by integrating these two fields. Through the forms of the mood, both modality and aspectuality are conveyed alongside temporality. This connection clarifies the semantic properties of the sentence and exposes different grammatical details in the syntax of the sentence. A.Javadov, M.Huseinzade, F.Jahangirov and other many international linguists such as F.R.Palmer, S.Chung, A.Timberlake and others consider forms of mood as important grammatical means of expressing logical modality. There are 6 simple forms of mood in the Azerbaijani: imperative, indicative, optative, obligatory, necessary, and conditional [10, P. 162].

In the indicative mood, the representation of the action in the past, present and future tenses is approved or denied. Using the suffixes  $-ar^2$ ,  $-acaq^2$ ,  $-ir^4$ ,  $-di^4$ ,  $-miş^4$  modal interactions such as real, true, narrative, probable, affirmative, negative, etc. are expressed in the performance of the action. The grammatical indicators that indicate the aspectual structure of the indicative mood – whether the action is completed or ongoing – are also tense suffixes and the particles "idi"/"imiş" added to them, respectively [10, P. 166], [12, P. 147–150], [13, P. 235–254].

The concept can be expressed as follows, with reference to the example of modality nuances that convey a true, real attitude through the use of the suffix “ $-ir^4$ ”. These suffixes are added according to the rules of harmony to the root, reflects the highest degree of actuality and veracity of an event that occurs simultaneously with the speech moment, thereby signaling affirmative modality. As a grammatical marker of the present tense, this suffix not only locates the action in the present temporal framework but also inherently denotes the aspectual feature of the action being ongoing. In other words, it includes both the temporal immediacy and the continuous nature of the event as it unfolds in real-time.

Example:

*Qapının zəngi çalınır. Dilşad gedib qapını açır. Əvvəlcə Sadıq Sadıqov, sonra Xuduş ilə Ağasəlim gəlir* (The doorbell rings. Dilshad goes and opens the door. First comes Sadig Sadigov, then Khudush and Aghasalim. Sadigov).

In this example, the use of “ $-ir^4$ ” not only signals the temporal immediacy of the events described but also emphasizes their continuity and sequential occurrence, thereby enhancing the narrative’s alignment with real-time perception.

Modern Azerbaijani linguist G.Bayramova, in her study related to figurative language, analyzed how the present tense can also be used to indicate the future tense in Azerbaijani language. According to Bayramova, when we talk about the future in a language, the using of the present tense form is hypercoding and gives the secondary meaning – decisiveness and confidence [4, P. 2]. We conclude that, this case also involves a modal feature, reflecting the speaker's certainty and confidence in the realization of the event.

“ $-di^4$ ” are the witnessed past tense suffixes and based on the principles of harmony of Azerbaijani language, also these grammatical suffixes concern to the verb stem (the root). These grammatical suffixes demonstrate a description of the event occurring prior to the moment of enunciation conveyed through testimonial evidence. From the point of view of the modality, while these suffixes have shades of expressing a real, true attitude, their aspectual features are realized in different forms. Before we look at them, let us analyze A. Akhundov's viewpoint on this issue:

*“The witnessed past tense is used to refer to action that it was performed only once, not repeatedly, or inversely, that it was not performed at all; it indicates the one time execution of the action”.*

This viewpoint is entirely consistent with the example and reflects the aspectual features associated with a specific moment or non repeating features of the event.

Example:

*Mənə elə gəldi ki, bu gənc leytenantı haradasa görmüşəm* (I thought I had seen this young lieutenant somewhere).

Using the suffixes “ $-miş^4$ ” that demonstrate the occurrence of an event without primary observation, but through narration (*nəql*) by the speaker is characterized the reality, probability or possibility in the past. Verbs with these suffixes express modal connotations such as narration or the result of performing an action [7, P. 33]. As opposed to this, some linguistics write that these suffixes represent perfective aspect and also a modality of evidentiality/testimoniality [11, P. 95], [14, P. 135].

It is noteworthy that in modern Azerbaijani, the narrative past tense is expressed through a variety of morphological markers. Specifically, for the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> persons, the narrative past tense can be formed not only with the suffix “ $-miş^4$ ” but also with the suffix “ $-ib^4$ ”. This morphological variation underscores the dynamic nature of Azerbaijani verb morphology and reflects the intricate processes involved in the expression of temporal and narrative aspects. Such observations are integral to a comprehensive understanding of the language’s morphosyntactic system.

Example:

1. *Müəllim gəlmiş* (The teacher came).

2. *Müəllim gəlib* (The teacher came).

There is no temporal difference between the sentences. Across both sentences, the action is reported in a non-testimonial way, that is, by only reporting the result of an action that occurred in the past [10, P. 151].

“ $-acaq^2$ ”, definite future tense exponents are used to express a modal determined attitude. These embody the fact of execution in the future after the moment of speech. Let's see how to translate Azerbaijani verbs with these definite future suffixes into English. When translating Azerbaijani verbs with these suffixes into English, the forms used are:

(1) "Simple future tense";

- (2) "Present continuous" for actions that are expected to occur in the near future;  
 (3) "to be going to + verb" for planned actions.

Example:

- (1) *O, bir də belə etməyəcək* (He won't do that again).  
 (2) *O, sabah rəsm çəkməyəcək* (He is not painting tomorrow).  
 (3) *O, ayın sonuna kimi vacib bir imtahan verəcək* (He is going to take an important exam at the end of the month).

If these given examples are analyzed within the framework of aspectuality, we can notice that, the action will be completed and will not continue (since the sentence is in the negative).

Example:

*İşi vaxtında bitirərlər* (They will (probably) finish the work on time).

"ar<sup>2</sup>" are the suffixes of the indefinite future tense and show the modality for the probability relation. This form expresses the probability of an event that may take place in the indefinite future after the moment of speech and highlights the features of the action such as continuation, repetition, completion or beginning with regard to aspectual considerations [3, P. 102]. Within this context, the uncertainty of the time of the action's realization demands special attention to its internal dynamics. The characteristic features of the action and its relations to other clause elements also play an important role in determining shades of meaning. The uncertainty/probability expressed by this form in Azerbaijani is presented through modal words with corresponding shades of meaning when translated into English.

### Conclusion

This study has examined the interaction between aspectuality and modality in the Azerbaijani language, particularly in the context of indicative mood. It provides important insights into the way these categories shape meaning and expression. We have discussed how these features are used in Azerbaijani to convey nuanced temporal, aspectual, and modal distinctions. This onomasiological approach is capable of contributing to a deeper understanding of the communicative functions of aspect and modality in the Azerbaijani indicative mood.

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### Conflict of Interest

None declared.

### Review

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