

Linguistic and Cultural Specificity of Introductory Modal Units in Russian and Uzbek

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the national and cultural specificity of the semantic content of introductory modal units in Russian and Uzbek. The study focuses on the ways in which these linguistic units express subjective modality, evaluation, emotions, certainty, and volitional attitudes in relation to culturally determined norms of speech behaviour. The comparative analysis reveals that Russian tends to favour explicit expression of the speaker's individual position, whereas Uzbek more frequently reflects social and interpersonal context, politeness, and communicative harmony. The findings demonstrate that, despite the functional similarity of basic modal meanings in the two languages, their semantic and pragmatic realization is influenced by national and cultural patterns.

Keywords: Introductory modal units, modality, semantic content, national and cultural specificity, Russian language, Uzbek language, comparative analysis

1. INTRODUCTION

The national and cultural specificity of linguistic means is a decisive factor determining the functioning of modal meanings in speech. Introductory modal units, as means of expressing the speaker's subjective attitude towards the information conveyed, directly reflect culturally determined ways of interpreting reality, communicative norms, and value orientations of a linguistic

community. Consequently, contemporary linguistics increasingly recognizes that modality cannot be regarded exclusively as a formal grammatical category. It is closely connected with cognitive and cultural models that determine the expression of evaluation, emotions, certainty, and volitional attitudes [1]. Introductory modal units are among the most sensitive indicators of these models, since they enable speakers to specify or imply their position in accordance with the norms of speech behaviour accepted within a particular community.

Russian and Uzbek languages, belonging to different typological groups and functioning within different cultural traditions, demonstrate differences not only in the formal means of expressing modality but also in the semantic content of introductory modal units. These differences are manifested in the degree of categoricalness of utterances, the means of expressing evaluation and emotions, as well as the choice of communicative strategies [3]. In Russian, the speaker's subjective position tends to be expressed more explicitly, whereas in Uzbek there is a tendency toward indirect and contextually conditioned expression of modal meanings.

A particularly important aspect of national and cultural specificity is the relationship between introductory modal units and norms of politeness, social hierarchy, and addressee orientation. In Uzbek linguistic and speech culture, these factors significantly influence the choice of modal means and the ways in which subjective attitudes are expressed, which is reflected in the semantics of introductory modal units. In Russian, modal means are more strongly oriented towards expressing the individual position of the speaker, which determines different semantic emphases.

From a functional-semantic perspective, modality represents a complex linguistic category through which the speaker expresses an attitude towards the content of an utterance, the degree of certainty of the information presented, its evaluation, and the desirability, possibility, or necessity of a situation [3; 8]. The semantic structure of modality is therefore closely related to the communicative intentions of the speaker. Introductory modal units occupy a particular position within this system because they

allow the speaker to express a subjective assessment without becoming an obligatory structural component of the sentence [4; 7]. Their semantic contribution is consequently determined not only by their lexical meaning but also by the communicative context in which they occur.

The study of introductory modal units is especially relevant in comparative linguistics because formally similar modal meanings may acquire different pragmatic and cultural interpretations in different languages. A modal expression indicating certainty, for example, may function as a direct assertion in one linguistic culture and as a more cautious or socially oriented statement in another. Such differences become particularly important when the languages under comparison belong to different typological and cultural traditions, as is the case with Russian and Uzbek.

In the Russian language, introductory modal units constitute a relatively identifiable group of lexical and syntactic means used to express the speaker's attitude towards the proposition. They can indicate certainty, probability, doubt, evaluation, emotional reaction, or the source of information. Their semantic functions are often relatively explicit, which makes the speaker's subjective position readily identifiable. In Uzbek, comparable modal meanings may be expressed through a combination of lexical, syntactic, contextual, and prosodic means. Consequently, the semantic interpretation of a modal unit may depend more strongly on the communicative situation and the relationship between the participants in discourse.

This difference makes the comparative study of Russian and Uzbek introductory modal units significant not only for theoretical linguistics but also for translation, intercultural communication, and language teaching. Identifying the culturally conditioned components of modal meaning makes it possible to explain why formally corresponding expressions do not always produce equivalent pragmatic effects. A functional-semantic comparison therefore requires consideration of both the common semantic basis of modality and the national-specific ways in which modal meanings are organized and communicated.

Introductory modal units, reflecting the speaker's attitude towards the information conveyed, are closely connected with cultural norms of evaluation, emotional expression, and ways of interaction with the addressee. These differences affect both the choice of modal means and the degree of their explicitness within an utterance.

In Russian, there is a characteristic orientation towards the individual authorial position, which is reflected in the semantics of introductory modal units. The use of introductory words allows the speaker to explicitly indicate their own opinion, evaluation, or degree of certainty without disrupting the grammatical structure of the utterance. Such a strategy corresponds to a cultural orientation towards the verbalization of subjective attitudes and permits a relatively direct expression of evaluation or emotion.

In Uzbek, by contrast, subjective modality is more often realized with consideration of the social and interpersonal context. The semantic content of introductory modal units is frequently oriented towards maintaining communicative harmony, showing respect for the addressee, and observing norms of politeness. As a result, modal meanings are expressed less categorically and more often implicitly, reflecting the collective orientation of the linguistic culture.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study is based on a comparative analysis of introductory modal units functioning in contemporary Russian and Uzbek. The material includes lexical and lexical-syntactic means that express the speaker's attitude towards the content of an utterance, including meanings of certainty, probability, doubt, evaluation, emotional reaction, possibility, necessity, and desirability [3; 8]. Particular attention is paid to units whose semantic interpretation is influenced by the communicative context and by culturally determined norms of interaction.

The comparative method is used to identify similarities and differences in the semantic organization of modal meanings in the two languages. The analysis considers not only the lexical

meaning of individual modal units but also their functional role within the utterance, their relation to the speaker and addressee, and the communicative situation in which they occur. This makes it possible to distinguish universal modal meanings from culturally specific ways of their realization.

The functional-semantic approach is applied to determine the principal semantic groups of introductory modal units. These include epistemic meanings expressing certainty, probability and doubt [3; 8]; evaluative meanings reflecting the speaker's positive or negative assessment; emotive meanings conveying emotional reactions; and volitional meanings associated with desirability, necessity, or intention. The analysis also considers the degree of categoricalness and explicitness with which these meanings are expressed.

A linguocultural approach is used to identify the relationship between modal semantics and national patterns of communication. Particular attention is given to politeness, interpersonal relations, social distance, the status of the participants in communication, and the degree of directness or indirectness characteristic of modal expression. The comparison of Russian and Uzbek material therefore makes it possible to establish not only formal correspondences but also differences in the pragmatic and cultural interpretation of modal units.

The analysis proceeds in three stages. First, the basic semantic meanings of the selected modal units are identified. Second, their functional use in Russian and Uzbek is compared with regard to the speaker's communicative intention. Third, the culturally conditioned features of their semantic and pragmatic realization are determined. Such a procedure allows the study to combine functional-semantic and comparative analysis with a linguocultural interpretation of the material.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The comparative analysis demonstrates that introductory modal units in Russian and Uzbek share a common functional-semantic basis but differ in the ways in which modal meanings are organized and realized in communication. The principal

differences concern the orientation of subjective modality, the degree of explicitness, the expression of evaluation and emotion, and the role of the social and interpersonal context. These differences can be summarized as follows.

Table 1. *Comparative characteristics of introductory modal units by orientation*

Aspect	Russian	Uzbek
Orientation of subjective modality	Orientation towards the individual authorial position	Consideration of the social and interpersonal context
Main means of expression	Introductory modal words expressing the speaker's personal opinion and evaluation	Means taking into account the social context, often lexical-syntactic constructions and contextual markers
Semantic dominant	Individual viewpoint, authorial evaluation	Socially oriented subjectivity
Examples	certainly, probably, it seems, obviously, in my opinion	<i>ehtimol, balki, shekilli</i> + contextual indicators of respect and interpersonal relations
Nature of subjectivity	Strongly individualized, author-centred	Collectively oriented and dependent on the status of the participants in communication

The first significant difference concerns the orientation of subjective modality. In Russian, introductory modal units are predominantly associated with the explicit representation of the speaker's individual position. Expressions such as "certainly," "probably," "it seems," "obviously," and "in my opinion" directly indicate the speaker's degree of certainty, evaluation, or personal judgement [4; 7]. Their semantic function is therefore closely connected with the author-centred organization of the utterance.

In Uzbek, the realization of comparable modal meanings is more strongly dependent on the social and interpersonal context. The units *ehtimol*, *balki*, and *shekilli* may express probability, uncertainty, or supposition, while their interpretation can be influenced by contextual indicators of respect and interpersonal relations. Consequently, the semantic content of a modal unit cannot always be determined exclusively on the basis of its lexical meaning; the communicative situation also contributes to its interpretation.

Another important parameter is the degree of categoricalness. Russian introductory modal units can both strengthen the speaker's assertion and soften it by indicating probability, doubt, or personal opinion [4; 5]. This allows the speaker to regulate the degree of commitment to the proposition while maintaining an explicit authorial position. In Uzbek, modal meanings are more frequently associated with mitigation and indirectness, particularly when the utterance concerns evaluation or interpersonal interaction.

The comparison therefore demonstrates that the two languages share basic modal functions, but these functions are embedded in different communicative patterns. Russian primarily emphasizes the explicit representation of the individual speaker's position, whereas Uzbek gives greater importance to the social context, the relationship between the participants, and the maintenance of communicative harmony.

Evaluative and emotive modal meanings

Evaluative introductory modal units constitute another important group in the comparative analysis. They enable the speaker to express an assessment of the information presented, an event, a situation, or a particular state of affairs. In Russian, evaluative meanings are frequently conveyed through modal expressions that explicitly mark the speaker's judgement. Such units may indicate approval, disapproval, doubt, reservation, or the speaker's emotional reaction to the proposition. Their use contributes to the subjective organization of discourse and makes the speaker's evaluative position relatively transparent [1].

In Uzbek, evaluative modality is likewise associated with the speaker's attitude towards the content of an utterance, but its interpretation may be more closely related to the communicative relationship between the participants. The choice of a modal expression can therefore reflect not only the evaluation itself but also the degree of directness considered appropriate in a particular communicative situation. This feature contributes to the contextual and pragmatic variability of Uzbek modal expressions.

Emotive introductory modal units provide an additional indication of national and cultural differences. In Russian, emotionally marked modal expressions may directly reveal the speaker's reaction to an event or proposition. The emotional component can therefore become an important part of the semantic structure of the utterance. In Uzbek, emotional modality may also convey the speaker's reaction, but its realization can be accompanied by a greater orientation towards interpersonal balance, restraint, and the avoidance of excessive categoricalness.

The distinction between evaluative and emotive meanings is not always absolute. In actual communication, an introductory modal unit may simultaneously express an evaluation and reveal the emotional state of the speaker. This semantic overlap is particularly important for comparative analysis because the same formal type of modal meaning may acquire different pragmatic emphases depending on the linguistic and cultural context.

Thus, the comparison of evaluative and emotive modal meanings confirms that the national and cultural specificity of introductory modal units is manifested not in the existence of completely different modal categories, but primarily in the ways in which common semantic meanings are interpreted and realized in communication.

Necessity, possibility, and desirability

Another important group of modal meanings is associated with possibility, necessity, and desirability. These meanings demonstrate the relationship between the speaker's assessment of a situation and the potential or required realization of an action. In both Russian and Uzbek, modal means can indicate that an event is considered possible, necessary, desirable, or expected. However, the pragmatic interpretation of these meanings may vary depending on the communicative context.

In Russian, expressions of possibility and probability are often used to indicate the speaker's degree of confidence concerning the realization of an event. The speaker can explicitly mark uncertainty or possibility, thereby reducing the categorical nature of the statement. Expressions associated with necessity, in

turn, may convey a stronger degree of commitment and indicate that the speaker considers a particular action or state of affairs obligatory or required.

In Uzbek, the expression of necessity and possibility may be more closely connected with contextual and interpersonal factors. The interpretation of a modal meaning can depend on the relationship between the speaker and the addressee, the social situation, and the degree of directness appropriate to the communicative context. Consequently, modal expressions of necessity may acquire additional pragmatic nuances related to politeness, social responsibility, or the avoidance of excessive categoricalness.

Desirability also represents an important component of modal semantics. In both languages, the speaker may indicate that a particular situation is considered desirable or preferable. At the same time, the ways in which such meanings are communicated can differ according to culturally established patterns of interaction. In Uzbek communication, the expression of desirability may more frequently take into account the interests and expectations of other participants, whereas Russian allows a comparatively direct representation of the speaker's individual preference.

The comparison of these semantic groups demonstrates that modal meanings cannot be analysed independently of their functional and communicative environment. Possibility, necessity, and desirability constitute universal semantic domains, but their concrete realization may reflect differences in cultural norms, interpersonal relations, and communicative strategies.

Pragmatic and interpersonal functions

The pragmatic dimension of introductory modal units becomes particularly important when analysing their national and cultural specificity. Modal expressions do not merely transmit information about the speaker's degree of certainty or evaluation; they also regulate the relationship between the speaker, the addressee, and the propositional content of the utterance [6]. Their choice may therefore indicate the speaker's communicative

intention, degree of involvement, and attitude towards the interlocutor.

In Russian, introductory modal units frequently serve to make the speaker's position explicit. They can strengthen an assertion, express personal confidence, introduce doubt, or soften an evaluation. The speaker can thus consciously regulate the degree of categoricalness of the utterance while maintaining a clearly identifiable individual position.

In Uzbek, pragmatic functions are more closely associated with interpersonal relations and the social context of communication [6]. The choice of a modal expression may depend on the status of the interlocutor, the degree of social distance, and the need to maintain politeness and communicative harmony. As a result, the same basic modal meaning may acquire different pragmatic nuances depending on the participants and the communicative situation.

Indirectness represents one of the important features of this contrast. A speaker may avoid an excessively categorical statement not because the proposition itself is uncertain, but because a more indirect formulation is considered communicatively appropriate. In such cases, introductory modal units contribute to the mitigation of an utterance and help maintain a balanced interaction between the participants.

These differences are especially significant in intercultural communication and translation. A formally corresponding modal expression may preserve its basic semantic meaning while producing a different pragmatic effect in another language. Therefore, successful interpretation requires attention not only to lexical equivalence but also to the cultural and interpersonal conditions under which the modal unit is used.

Cultural specificity of modal semantics

The comparative analysis demonstrates that the semantic content of introductory modal units is influenced by culturally established ways of interpreting reality and organizing interpersonal communication. Although Russian and Uzbek possess comparable modal meanings, the communicative emphasis placed on these meanings may differ. National and

cultural specificity is therefore manifested primarily in the patterns of semantic and pragmatic realization rather than in the basic inventory of modal meanings.

One of the most significant differences concerns the relationship between individual and collective orientations. Russian modal expressions frequently foreground the individual speaker's judgement, opinion, or emotional reaction. The speaker's position is often explicitly verbalized, allowing the addressee to identify the degree of certainty or evaluation directly from the utterance.

Uzbek modal expression demonstrates a stronger orientation towards the social context of communication. The semantic interpretation of a modal unit may be influenced by the relationship between the participants, their social status, and the communicative situation. This orientation contributes to the use of less categorical and more context-dependent forms of expressing subjective attitudes.

The cultural component is also evident in the expression of politeness and communicative restraint. Modal units can function as linguistic mechanisms that regulate the strength of an assertion or evaluation. In Uzbek, such regulation may be particularly important when the speaker expresses an opinion concerning another person or addresses an interlocutor of higher social status.

At the same time, it would be incorrect to regard Russian modal expression as exclusively individualistic or Uzbek modal expression as exclusively collective. Both languages possess a broad range of modal means capable of expressing different degrees of certainty, evaluation, emotion, possibility, and necessity. The distinction concerns the preferred communicative strategies and the contextual conditions under which particular meanings are realized.

Thus, national and cultural specificity should be understood as a continuum of functional and pragmatic preferences rather than as an absolute opposition between the two languages. The same modal meaning can be realized through different linguistic forms and can acquire different communicative nuances depending on cultural expectations, interpersonal relations, and the purposes of communication.

A significant role in the formation of national and cultural specificity is played by the attitude towards the categorical nature of an utterance. This is an important parameter of national and cultural specificity and a component of linguocultural norms. In Russian, introductory modal units can function both as a means of softening an utterance and as a means of strengthening evaluation or certainty. In Uzbek, there is a predominant tendency towards the mitigation and indirect expression of modal meanings, which is reflected in the semantics of modal means and their contextual interpretation.

Evaluative and emotive introductory modal units particularly clearly demonstrate cultural differences. In Russian, they often possess pronounced expressive semantics and are used to convey the speaker's individual emotional state. In Uzbek, emotionally marked modal means generally perform an additional pragmatic function: regulating interpersonal relations and demonstrating respect or restraint.

National and cultural specificity is also reflected in the expression of collective knowledge and responsibility for information. In Uzbek, modal means referring to generally accepted opinions, traditions, or shared knowledge may acquire particular pragmatic significance, whereas similar meanings in Russian may more often function as stylistic or contextual devices.

From the perspective of functional-semantic analysis, it is important to note that culturally determined differences in the semantic content of introductory modal units affect the interpretation of utterances in intercultural communication. Direct comparison of formal means without taking cultural context into account may lead to distortion of the modal meaning and the communicative intention of the speaker. This is particularly relevant to translation and the teaching of Russian and Uzbek as foreign languages.

4. CONCLUSION

The analysis of the national and cultural specificity of the semantic content of introductory modal units in Russian and

Uzbek demonstrates that these linguistic means reflect not only the individual subjective position of the speaker but also culturally determined norms of speech behaviour, value orientations, and communicative strategies characteristic of the respective linguistic communities. Introductory modal units therefore function as important instruments for representing cultural models of evaluation, emotion, and attitudes towards information.

In Russian, the semantic content of introductory modal units is largely oriented towards the explicit expression of the author's position. The speaker generally openly marks the degree of certainty, evaluation, or emotional attitude towards the information conveyed, using specialized introductory words and constructions. This strategy reflects an orientation towards the verbalization of subjective attitudes and permits a relatively high degree of categoricalness.

In Uzbek, by contrast, the semantics of introductory modal units is closely connected with the social and interpersonal context of communication. National and cultural specificity is manifested in the tendency to mitigate evaluations, express emotions indirectly, and take the addressee's status into account. Introductory modal means often perform an additional pragmatic function of maintaining communicative harmony and observing norms of politeness, which determines their implicit character and contextual variability.

The comparative analysis demonstrates that differences in the semantic content of introductory modal units do not affect the basic modal meanings, which are generally universal, but significantly influence the ways in which these meanings are interpreted and pragmatically realized. Russian is characterized by a predominantly individual-authorial strategy of expressing subjective modality, whereas Uzbek demonstrates a predominantly collective- and addressee-oriented strategy.

Thus, the national and cultural specificity of the semantic content of introductory modal units determines differences in the organization of the modal systems of Russian and Uzbek and has a significant impact on intercultural communication, translation, and language teaching. The findings confirm the need to take

cultural factors into account in comparative studies of modality and provide a basis for general conclusions concerning the functional-semantic aspect of introductory modal units.

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