

# THE ROLE OF DEONTIC MODALITY IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK BUSINESS DISCOURSE

Qodirova Mukaddas Tog'ayevna

Associate Professor at Termez State University,

PhD in Philology, Termez, Uzbekistan,

qmuqaddas@mail.ru

## Abstract

This article examines the role of deontic modality in English and Uzbek business discourse, focusing on the expression of obligations, permissions, prohibitions, and recommendations. Through comparative and lexical-semantic analysis, the study highlights how deontic modals are utilized in business communication within both languages, reflecting their distinct cultural approaches. English business discourse is marked by a higher degree of formality and strictness, particularly in the use of obligation and prohibition modals. In contrast, Uzbek discourse emphasizes politeness and respect, favoring permission and recommendation modals. The findings reveal the significant role deontic modality plays in shaping effective communication and strategies in business contexts.

**Keywords:** deontic modality, business discourse, obligation, permission, prohibition, recommendation.

## Introduction

Business discourse is an important area of linguistics, where communication processes in various languages are analyzed. In analyzing business relations between English and Uzbek, the role of deontic modality holds particular significance. The term 'deontic' originates from the ancient Greek word δέον (déon), meaning 'that which is binding or proper.' Its genitive form δέοντος (déontos) can also be translated into Uzbek as 'majburiy' (something obligatory) or "lozim bo'lgan narsa" (necessary) [9].

Deontic modality is a linguistic category through which requirements such as obligation, permission, and prohibition are expressed. It conveys whether ethical or legal demands associated with a person or group should or should not be fulfilled. Deontic modality primarily signifies meanings such as command, requirement, obligation, or permission. For instance, this concept is expressed through modal words like 'must' (qilishi kerak), 'must not' (qilmasligi kerak), and 'may' (ruxsat etiladi). This modality is frequently used in business discourse, legal documents, contracts, and business communication.

In English and Uzbek business communication, various forms of deontic modality exist, which are connected to the language culture, traditions, and social norms. This article aims to explore the role of these linguistic units in business discourse, their functional peculiarities, and how they are expressed in both languages.



## LITERATURE REVIEW

Deontic modality is considered one of the important components of communication in business discourse, as it provides clear information about the obligations, duties, and possibilities of the subject. Generally, deontic modality has always been a relevant topic in linguistic research. The concept of deontic modality was first developed by John Lyons. He emphasized its use to express types such as obligation, permission, and prohibition [7]. Based on his theory, we also analyzed the wide use of deontic modality in business fields. In English, modality is often expressed through modals such as 'must,' 'should,' 'have to' and 'may', while in Uzbek, words like 'kerak', 'lozim' and 'mumkin' serve as indicators of modality.

In Uzbek linguistics, numerous studies have also been conducted on modality [2]; [4]; [5]. Specifically, in J.A. Yoqubov's research, an effort is made to reveal the semantic features of the modality category by connecting logic with linguistics. According to him, 'the category of modality is analyzed on the one hand in connection with the science of logic, and on the other hand, this semantic category is expressed in linguistics through linguistic units. The current relationship between logic and language shows that the convergence of theoretical concepts in these two fields serves as an important factor in the development of distinct languages' [3: 21]. In Uzbek linguistics, M.A. Abdurazoqov explains deontic modality through three components: a) the character of modality; b) the content of modality; c) the condition of modality. He describes the types of modality as follows: 'The character of modality is expressed in accordance with linguistic norms where the action must, can, or cannot be performed. The content of modality, on the other hand, involves the participant in the situation, namely the modal subject expressing the desire' [1:13]. This interpretation is particularly helpful in analyzing linguistic norms in business discourse, especially in cases where actions must or cannot be performed.

## METHODOLOGY

This article analyzes the role of deontic modality in English and Uzbek business discourse. The research is based on cognitive and sociolinguistic approaches. The analysis is conducted based on the three components of deontic modality — the character of modality, the content of modality, and the conditions of modality — as presented by M.A. Abdurazoqov.

In the research, real examples from business texts in English and Uzbek are taken. These texts consist of corporate work documents, business emails, and formal communications in the business field. Each text is analyzed according to the type of deontic modality, focusing on the linguistic expression of obligations, permissions, and prohibitions.

Modality markers are compared using a comparative-analytical method in the examples of English and Uzbek, and through lexical-semantic analysis, the similarities and differences between the two languages are identified.

## RESULTS

In English business discourse, deontic modality plays a significant role, with the obligations and permissions of the subject clearly expressed [6]. For instance, in phrases like 'You **must** submit the report by Friday', the modal 'must' expresses a strict obligation. Such structures are



more common in communication between managers and employees [8]. In English business correspondence, modality is often used to align with strict norms and legal requirements.

In Uzbek business discourse, deontic modality is often associated with social norms and etiquette rules. The phrase 'Siz hisobotni juma kuniga qadar topshirishingiz **kerak**' is one of the most common forms used to express obligation in Uzbek. Unlike in English, obligation-expressing phrases in Uzbek are often conveyed with more politeness and tend to be softer in tone.

As an example from the materials we have studied, we have organized the analysis of some of them into a table. Below, you can see through this table the types of deontic modals in English and Uzbek and how they are used in business discourse.

**Table 1. Deontic Modals in English and Uzbek1-jadval.**

| Type of Deontic Modal         | English Modals        | English Example   | Uzbek Modals  | Uzbek Example   |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------|---|---------------|---|
| Obligation Modals             | must, have to         | You must complete the report by tomorrow.                   | kerak, lozim  | Siz hisobotni ertagacha tayyorlashingiz kerak.                    |
| Permission Modals             | may, can              | You may use this room for the meeting.                      | mumkin        | Siz bu xonadan yig'ilish uchun foydalanishingiz mumkin.           |
| Prohibition Modals            | must not, cannot      | You must not share this information with outsiders.         | mumkin emas   | Siz bu ma'lumotni tashqi odamlarga bermasligingiz kerak.          |
| Weaker Obligation Modals      | should, ought to      | You should attend the conference next week.                 | lozim         | Siz kelasi hafta konferensiyada qatnashishingiz lozim.            |
| Conditional Obligation Modals | will have to, must if | You will have to complete the project if the client agrees. | kerak bo'ladi | Agar mijoz rozi bo'lsa, siz loyihani tugatishingiz kerak bo'ladi. |

Notes: **Obligation modals** indicate that the subject is required to perform a certain task. English: must, have to; Uzbek: kerak, lozim.

**Permission modals** allow the subject to perform a certain action. English: may, can; Uzbek: mumkin.

**Prohibition modals** prevent the subject from performing a certain action. English: must not, cannot; Uzbek: mumkin emas.

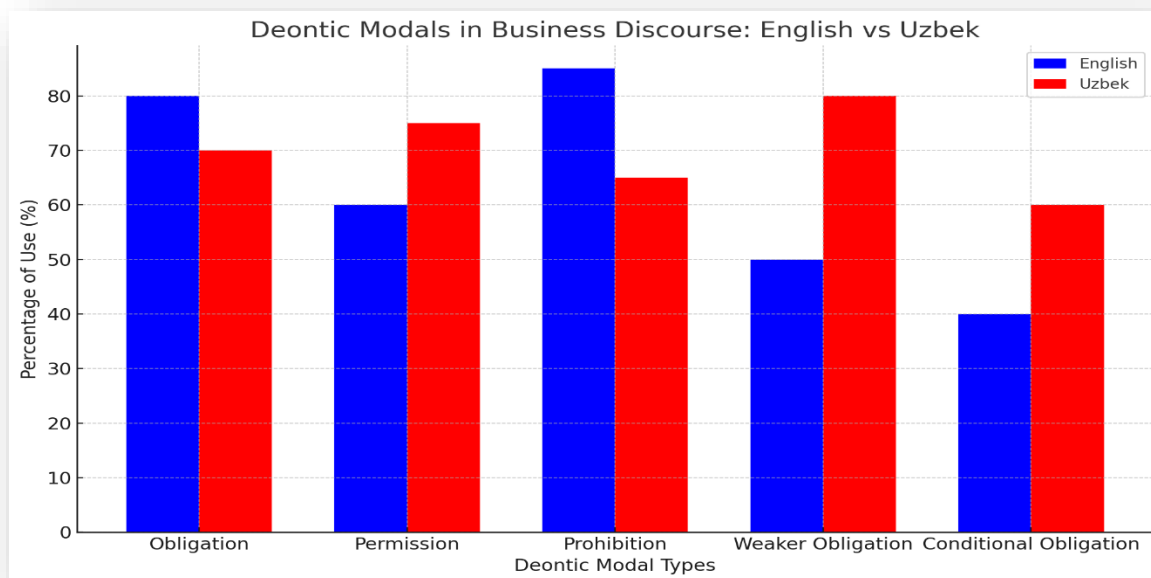
**Weaker obligation** expresses obligation in the form of a recommendation or advice. English: should, ought to; Uzbek: lozim.

**Conditional obligation** expresses obligation depending on certain conditions. English: will have to, must if; Uzbek: kerak bo'ladi.



## DISCUSSION

As a result of studying English and Uzbek business discourses, a clustered bar chart was created to reflect the dynamics of the use of deontic modals in business discourse in both languages. In this chart, the usage percentages of each type of deontic modal in English and Uzbek were compared:



In the above clustered bar chart, the usage of deontic modals in English and Uzbek business discourse is reflected through percentages. Let's analyze each type of deontic modal in detail:

**1. Obligation Modals:** English (80%): Obligation modals are widely used in English business discourse. This indicates a strong focus on obligations and responsibilities in formal and strict business communications in the language. Uzbek (70%): Obligation modals are also widely used in Uzbek, but due to politeness and social culture, these expressions are used slightly less frequently than in English.

**2. Permission Modals:** English (60%): Permission modals are used moderately in English business communication. The formal and explicit expression of permission is important in formal business environments. Uzbek (75%): Permission modals are used more frequently in Uzbek business discourse. This reflects the importance of politeness and social relationships in Uzbek business culture.

**3. Prohibition Modals:** English (85%): Prohibition modals are very common in English. This is related to the strict rules and policies in business. Rules are clearly stated to prevent unauthorized actions or violations by employees. Uzbek (65%): Prohibition modals are used less frequently in Uzbek business communication. This is linked to the politeness-based approach in Uzbek culture and communication style.



**4. Weaker Obligation:** English (50%): Weaker obligation modals are used moderately in English business discourse. These are expressed through phrases in the form of recommendations and advice, but they do not carry the same force as strict obligations. Uzbek (80%): Weaker obligation is used much more frequently in Uzbek. Recommendations and advice are often expressed in a formal, polite manner, reflecting the softer communication style of Uzbek culture.

**5. Conditional Obligation:** English (40%): Conditional obligation is used relatively less in English. It applies mainly when conditions are met and requires less strictness. Uzbek (60%): Conditional obligation is more commonly used in Uzbek, as assigning tasks, distributing work, and expressing obligations based on conditions is characteristic of the business culture.

This shows that in English business discourse, deontic modals are expressed with greater strictness. This is related to the organization of business processes based on clear rules and policies. Obligation and prohibition modals have a high percentage, reflecting the need for high discipline and formality in the business environment. In Uzbek business discourse, politeness and a cultural approach are predominant. Weaker obligation and permission modals stand out with a higher percentage, reflecting the principles of respect, social interaction, and polite communication in Uzbek culture. Uzbek business discourse is often based on polite and indirect expressions, especially when granting permission or giving advice.

## CONCLUSION

In both English and Uzbek, deontic modality plays an important role in business discourse, serving as a key tool for expressing obligations, permissions, prohibitions, and recommendations. English deontic modals are particularly characterized by strictness and formality, ensuring adherence to clear rules in the corporate environment. Uzbek deontic modals, on the other hand, reflect more politeness and cultural respect, often manifested through softer and more indirect expressions. While prohibition and obligation modals are more frequently used in English, permission and recommendation modals are more prevalent in Uzbek. The deontic modals in both languages reflect different cultural approaches to business communication, facilitating effective dialogue and shaping various strategies.

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