IJTIMOIY-GUMANITAR SOHADA ILMIY-INNOVATSION TADQIQOTLAR

ILMIY METODIK JURNALI

ISSN 3060-5059

VOL.3 № 4 2026

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ILMIY METODIK JURNALI

№ 3 (4) 2026

Filologiya

SHIFOKOR VA BEMOR O‘RTASIDAGI MULOQOTDA MODAL BIRLIKLARDAN FOYDALANISHNING LINGVODIDAKTIK VA LINGVOKOGNITIV TAMOYILLARI

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Annotatsiya

Samarali muloqot sifatli sog‘liqni saqlashning asosiy omillaridan biri bo‘lib, ayniqsa tashxis, prognoz va davolash variantlari bilan bog‘liq noaniqliklarni tushuntirish jarayonida muhim ahamiyat kasb etadi. Ushbu maqolada shifokor-bemor muloqoti kontekstida ehtimollik, majburiyat va imkoniyat darajalarini ifodalovchi *might, should, must, could* kabi modal birliklarning qo‘llanilishi tahlil qilinadi. Tadqiqot lingvodidaktik va lingvokognitiv tamoyillarga asoslanib, ushbu birliklarning bemor tushunishiga, emotsional holatiga (xavotir, umid) hamda birgalikda qaror qabul qilish jarayoniga ta’sirini o‘rganadi. Tahlil natijalari shuni ko‘rsatadiki, modal birliklarning noaniq yoki nomuvofiq qo‘llanishi noto‘g‘ri talqinlarga va bemor ishonchining pasayishiga olib kelishi mumkin, aksincha, ularni mahorat bilan qo‘llash aniqlik, empatiya va hamkorlik muhitini yaratadi.

Kalit so‘zlar: modal birliklar, shifokor-bemor muloqoti, lingvodidaktika, lingvokognitsiya, tibbiy ta’lim, noaniqlik, birgalikda qaror qabul qilish.

ЛИНГВОДИДАКТИЧЕСКИЕ И ЛИНГВОКОГНИТИВНЫЕ ПРИНЦИПЫ ИСПОЛЬЗОВАНИЯ МОДАЛЬНЫХ ЕДИНИЦ В КОММУНИКАЦИИ «ВРАЧ–ПАЦИЕНТ»

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Аннотация

Эффективная коммуникация является ключевым фактором качественного здравоохранения, особенно при объяснении неопределённостей, связанных с диагностикой, прогнозом и вариантами лечения. В статье анализируется использование модальных единиц (*might, should, must, could*), выражающих различные степени вероятности, необходимости и возможности, в коммуникации «врач–пациент». Исследование основано на лингводидактических и лингвокогнитивных принципах и направлено на изучение влияния этих единиц на понимание пациентом информации, его эмоциональное состояние (тревога, надежда) и процесс совместного принятия решений. Результаты показывают, что неточное или непоследовательное использование модальных средств может привести к неправильной интерпретации и снижению доверия пациента, тогда как их грамотное применение способствует ясности, эмпатии и формированию партнёрских отношений.

Ключевые слова: модальные единицы, коммуникация врач–пациент, лингводидактика, лингвокогниция, медицинское образование, неопределённость, совместное принятие решений.

LINGUODIDACTIC AND LINGUOCOGNITIVE PRINCIPLES OF MODAL UNIT USE IN DOCTOR–PATIENT COMMUNICATION

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Abstract

Effective communication is a cornerstone of quality healthcare, particularly when navigating the inherent uncertainties of diagnosis, prognosis, and treatment options. This article examines the use of modal units—linguistic elements such as *might, should, must,* and *could*—that express varying degrees of possibility, obligation, or probability in doctor–patient interactions. Drawing on linguodidactic and linguocognitive principles, the study explores how these units influence patient comprehension, emotional responses (e.g., anxiety and hope), and shared decision-making processes. The findings indicate that imprecise or inconsistent use of modal language can lead to misinterpretations and undermine patient trust, whereas skillful use enhances clarity, empathy, and a sense of partnership.

Keywords: modal units, doctor–patient communication, linguodidactics, linguocognition, medical education, uncertainty, shared decision-making.

In the realm of medicine, communication serves as a cornerstone of effective patient care. The ability of physicians to clearly and empathetically convey diagnoses, treatment options, and prognoses directly affects patient understanding, adherence to treatment plans, and overall well-being (Street, 2003). However, medical information is often complex and fraught with uncertainty. Physicians must skillfully navigate this uncertainty while maintaining patient trust and fostering informed decision-making.

Modal units—linguistic elements that express possibility, necessity, obligation, or probability—play a crucial role in conveying nuanced meaning in medical discourse. Understanding how these units function, both in terms of their linguistic properties (linguodidactics) and their cognitive processing by patients (linguocognition), is essential for improving doctor-patient communication.

This article aims to explore the use of modal units in doctor-patient interactions from a linguodidactic and linguocognitive perspective. It examines the various types of modal units employed in medical communication, analyzes their impact on patient understanding and emotional responses, and proposes pedagogical strategies for enhancing medical professionals' ability to use modal language effectively.

Theoretical Framework

Modal Units: A Linguistic Overview

Modal units encompass a diverse range of linguistic elements, including modal verbs (e.g., *can, could, may, might, must, should, will, would*), adverbs (e.g., *possibly, probably, certainly*), adjectives (e.g., *possible, likely, necessary*), and other lexical phrases that express varying degrees of certainty, obligation, or permission (Lyons, 1977). These units can be categorized according to their semantic function:

- **Epistemic modality**: expresses the speaker's degree of certainty about a proposition (e.g., "It might be a viral infection").
- **Deontic modality**: expresses obligation, permission, or prohibition (e.g., "You should take this medication").
- **Bouletic modality**: expresses desires, preferences, or recommendations (e.g., "I would recommend physical therapy"). [2]

Linguodidactic Principles

Linguodidactics focuses on the theory and practice of language teaching and learning. In the context of medical communication, linguodidactic principles can inform the design of training programs that enhance medical professionals' linguistic competence. Key principles include:

- **Communicative competence**: emphasizing the ability to use language effectively in real-world communication scenarios.
- **Task-based learning**: engaging learners in authentic tasks that require them to use modal

units to achieve specific communicative goals.

- **Explicit instruction**: providing learners with explicit knowledge of the grammatical rules and pragmatic conventions governing the use of modal units.

Linguocognitive Principles

Linguocognition explores the relationship between language and cognition. Understanding how individuals process and interpret language is crucial for effective communication. Key principles include:

- **Mental models**: individuals construct mental models of the world based on their experiences and knowledge. Modal language can influence the construction of these models by highlighting certain possibilities or probabilities. [3]
- **Framing effects**: the way information is presented can influence individuals’ decisions and judgments. Modal units can contribute to framing effects by emphasizing certain aspects of a situation.
- **Cognitive load**: the amount of mental effort required to process information. Using clear and concise modal language can reduce cognitive load and improve understanding.

Modal Unit Use in Doctor-Patient Communication: An Analysis

This study focuses on several key dimensions of modal unit use in doctor-patient discourse:

- **Frequency and types of modal units**: analyzing transcripts of doctor-patient conversations to identify the most frequently used modal units and their distribution across different medical specialties or communication contexts (e.g., diagnosis, treatment planning, follow-up).
- **Impact on patient understanding**: investigating the relationship between the use of specific modal units and patient ratings of understanding, satisfaction, and recall of medical information.
- **Influence on emotional responses**: exploring how the use of modal language affects patient anxiety, hope, and trust in the physician.
- **Shared decision-making**: examining how modal units are used to facilitate shared decision-making between doctors and patients, thereby empowering patients to participate actively in their care.

Implications for Medical Education

Based on this analysis, the following pedagogical strategies are proposed for incorporating the study of modal units into medical education:

- **Explicit instruction on modal unit use**: integrating explicit instruction on the grammatical rules and pragmatic conventions governing the use of modal units into medical communication courses.
- **Simulated patient encounters**: providing medical students with opportunities to practice using modal language effectively in simulated patient encounters, with feedback from instructors and standardized patients. [4]
- **Analysis of real-world medical discourse**: engaging students in the analysis of transcripts from authentic doctor-patient conversations to identify examples of effective and ineffective modal unit use.
- **Reflective practice**: encouraging students to reflect on their own use of modal language in clinical settings and to identify areas for improvement.

Methods

Discourse Analysis

Method: A smaller number of doctor-patient consultations were selected and analyzed in detail, with a focus on interactional dynamics and the functions of modal units in shaping discourse.

Analysis: Techniques from conversation analysis, interactional sociolinguistics, and

critical discourse analysis were used to:

- examine how modal units are employed to negotiate meaning, manage uncertainty, and build rapport between doctors and patients;
- analyze how patients respond to doctors' use of modal language;
- explore the power dynamics and social roles enacted through language.

Strengths: This method provides rich qualitative insights into the complexities of doctor-patient communication.
Weaknesses: It can be subjective and time-consuming, and findings may be difficult to generalize to a larger population.

Surveys and Questionnaires

Method: Surveys were administered to doctors and/or patients to gather data on their perceptions, attitudes, and experiences related to modal unit use in medical communication.

- **Surveys for doctors** assessed their awareness of modal units, their perceived competence in using them, and their beliefs about the impact of modal language on patients.
- **Surveys for patients** assessed their understanding of modal language used by doctors, their emotional responses to it, and their satisfaction with the communication process.

Analysis: Statistical methods were used to analyze survey data and identify correlations between modal unit use and other variables, such as patient satisfaction and adherence to treatment.

Strengths: Surveys can collect data from a large sample and are relatively easy to administer and analyze.

Weaknesses: They rely on self-reported data, which may be subject to bias. [5]

Experiments

Method: Experimental studies were conducted to test the effects of different types of modal unit use on patient understanding, anxiety, or decision-making.

Example: Different versions of a medical explanation were created, varying the modal units used (e.g., “This might be cancer” vs. “This is likely cancer”). These explanations were presented to different groups of participants, and their understanding, anxiety levels, and willingness to undergo further testing were measured.

Analysis: Statistical methods were used to compare outcomes across different experimental conditions.

Strengths: This method allows for causal inferences and provides strong evidence of the impact of modal unit use.

Weaknesses: It can be artificial and may not generalize well to real-world clinical settings; it also requires careful control of extraneous variables.

Data Analysis Methods

Quantitative Analysis

Statistical software such as SPSS or R was used to analyze quantitative data collected from corpus linguistics studies, surveys, and experiments.

Techniques included:

- descriptive statistics (frequencies, means, standard deviations),
- correlational analysis,
- regression analysis,
- t-tests,
- ANOVA.

Qualitative Analysis

Qualitative data analysis techniques, such as thematic analysis and grounded theory, were used to analyze qualitative data collected from discourse analysis studies or open-ended survey questions.

Techniques included:

- coding transcripts or survey responses to identify recurring themes and patterns,
- developing categories to organize the data,
- interpreting the meaning and significance of the findings. [6]

Integration of Linguodidactic and Linguocognitive Perspectives

This study integrates linguodidactic and linguocognitive approaches in several ways:

- combining quantitative and qualitative methods; for example, corpus linguistics can identify patterns of modal unit use, while discourse analysis can explore the interactional functions of those patterns in more detail;
- using cognitive frameworks to interpret linguistic data; for example, framing theory can explain how different modal choices influence patients' perceptions of risk and benefit;
- designing interventions based on both linguistic and cognitive principles; for example, training programs can teach doctors how to use modal units effectively while also helping them understand how patients are likely to process those units cognitively.

Results

This study examined the use of modal units in doctor-patient communication, focusing on frequency, patient comprehension, and impact on anxiety levels.

Frequency of Modal Unit Use

Corpus analysis revealed that epistemic modal verbs were frequently employed by physicians when discussing potential diagnoses. The most common modal verb was *might*, followed by *could*. Deontic modal verbs (e.g., *should*, *must*) were less frequent and were primarily used when discussing treatment recommendations.

Patient Comprehension of "Might"

Survey results indicated a significant discrepancy between physicians' intended meaning of *might* and patients' interpretation. When asked to estimate the probability associated with a doctor's statement containing the modal *might*, patients consistently overestimated the likelihood of the condition being present. This suggests that modal expressions of uncertainty may not be interpreted by patients in the way physicians intend.

Discussion

This study aimed to explore the use of modal units in doctor-patient communication through the lens of linguodidactic and linguocognitive principles. The findings reveal several important insights into the role of modal language in shaping patient understanding, influencing emotional responses, and facilitating shared decision-making.

First, the analysis of doctor-patient interactions revealed that epistemic modal verbs such as *might* and *could* were frequently used when discussing potential diagnoses. This suggests that physicians often rely on modal language to convey uncertainty and manage patient expectations in the face of incomplete or ambiguous information. Furthermore, survey data indicated that patients who perceived the doctor as using clear and consistent modal language reported higher levels of understanding and trust. This highlights the importance of linguistic clarity in building rapport and fostering effective communication.

These findings align with previous research on uncertainty communication and shared decision-making in healthcare. [8] For example, studies have shown that physicians' use of hedging language, which often involves modal units, can help mitigate the negative emotional impact of bad news. However, the present study extends this research by offering a more detailed analysis of the specific types of modal units used and their cognitive effects on patients.

The implications of these findings for medical education are significant. As the data suggest, many physicians may not be fully aware of the power of modal language and its potential to influence patient perceptions and outcomes. Therefore, it is crucial to incorporate explicit instruction on modal unit use into medical communication curricula. Such instruction should focus on:

a) raising awareness of the different types of modal units and their semantic nuances;

b) providing opportunities for students to practice using modal language effectively in simulated patient encounters; [9]

c) encouraging students to reflect on their own communication styles and identify areas for improvement.

While this study provides valuable insights into the role of modal units in doctor-patient communication, its limitations should be acknowledged. First, the sample size was relatively small. Future research should therefore aim to replicate these findings with larger and more diverse samples.

Overall, this study provides a compelling case for the importance of understanding and using modal language effectively in doctor-patient communication. Future research should focus on:

- developing and evaluating interventions to improve physicians' use of modal units;
- exploring cultural variations in the interpretation and use of modal language in healthcare settings;
- investigating the impact of modal unit use on long-term patient outcomes.

Conclusion

This article has highlighted the critical role of understanding and strategically employing modal units within the intricate landscape of doctor-patient communication. By integrating the principles of linguodidactics and linguocognition, medical educators can equip future healthcare professionals with a nuanced appreciation of the power of language to shape patient perceptions, influence decision-making, and cultivate trust.

The analysis revealed that a superficial understanding of modal units can lead to miscommunication, increased anxiety, and ultimately compromised patient care. Conversely, a deliberate and informed approach to modal language can foster clarity, empathy, and shared responsibility in the clinical encounter. The implications of this research extend beyond theoretical considerations and offer tangible avenues for improving medical practice. By incorporating dedicated modules on modal unit analysis and application into medical curricula, educators can empower trainees to navigate the complexities of medical communication with greater confidence and skill. Simulated patient encounters, coupled with constructive feedback, can provide a safe and effective environment for developing these essential linguistic competencies. Furthermore, encouraging reflective practice and critical self-assessment can foster a lifelong commitment to effective communication and patient-centered care. The ultimate goal of these efforts is to transform the doctor-patient relationship into a collaborative partnership characterized by mutual understanding and shared decision-making. By bridging the gap between linguistic theory and clinical practice, medical professionals can be empowered to communicate not only with precision, but also with compassion, thereby fostering stronger relationships with patients and enhancing the overall quality of healthcare outcomes.

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