

MODALITY IN SPANISH AND COMBINATIONS OF MODAL MEANINGS

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

cond.	conditional
<i>e</i>	seme of evaluation
ind.	indicative
LE	lexical expression of evaluation
LP	lexical expression of potentiality
LR	lexical expression of reality
LV	lexical expression of will
<i>m</i>	choice of mood
MM	modal meaning
MME	modal meaning evaluative
MMI	modal meaning interrogative
MMP	modal meaning potential
MMR	modal meaning real
MMV	modal meaning volitive
<i>p</i>	seme of potentiality
<i>P</i>	potentiality of a whole utterance
pres.	present tense
prob.	probabilitive
<i>R</i>	reality of a whole utterance
subj.	subjunctive
<i>v</i>	seme of will

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PREFACE

This work is dedicated to the analysis of Spanish modality, more concretely, of those areas where several types of modality (later we will use the term *modal meanings*) combine. These areas can be found at all levels of the Spanish modal system; however, they are usually not systematically analysed in works about modality. We aim to study concrete cases where two modal meanings appear at the same time (for example, expressions where personal evaluation combines with speaker's uncertainty or with his will) and situations where one modal meaning gradually changes into another (gradual expressions of reality / potentiality). Our goal is to prove that these areas form a natural part of the Spanish modal systems and are essential for its functioning. The analysis of ways in which several modal meanings combine should also present in a new light some crucial questions regarding the mood selection in Spanish (mainly the opposition indicative / subjunctive).

This work is based on the theoretic concept of Spanish modality formulated by Bohumil Zavadil. In this point, it differs from most works about modality, since we do not use universal terms such as *epistemic*, *deontic* or *root modality*. We do not intend to underestimate the role of universal concepts of modality, however, we believe that for a detailed analysis of concrete areas of Spanish modality, these concepts are not sufficient.

Bohumil Zavadil has presented some key aspects of his modality concept in four Spanish written articles (1968, 1975, 1979a, 1979b) and as a part of a Spanish written monograph about Spanish syntax (Zavadil – Čermák 2008). However, the most coherent presentations of his concept can be found in monographs written in Czech: a monograph about modality (Zavadil 1980) and as a part of a complex grammar of Spanish (Zavadil – Čermák 2010). Since Zavadil's most important contributions to the study of modality are only accessible to readers with good knowledge of the Czech language, the present monograph also aims to present Zavadil's theory to a wider public and point out the possibilities of its use when describing with detail the modality of a concrete language. For this reason, this book (even though it is mainly aimed for linguists interested in Spanish), does not require knowledge of Spanish or Czech from the reader, we provide English translation for all Spanish or Czech quotations (originals are given in footnotes) and translations of all the Spanish constructions that will be analysed.

1.
INTRODUCTION

1.1 MODALITY IN LANGUAGE

It is not easy to define clearly the area of modality, since different authors do not approach it in the same way. In our understanding, modality is a language category that is closely related to the psyche of a speaker and his subjectivity, we define it as **the way in which speaker's personal attitude regarding the content of his utterances is encoded in a concrete language.**

The great amount of works that, directly or marginally, analyse the problems related to modality offers a wide scale of opinions, inspiring insights and theoretical grounds, on the other hand it also leads to terminological and methodological instability.

1.1.1 MODALITY IN LOGIC AND FORMAL SEMANTICS

The category of modality has its roots in logic, however, the relationship between them can be understood in different ways. The original logical criteria are most strictly applied in the concepts formulated by formal semanticists (Lyons: 1986 [1977], Kratzer: 1991, Portner: 2009, Rubinstein: 2012). Angelika Kratzer (1991: 639) defines modality as an area that “has to do with necessity and possibility.” Necessity and possibility are represented in English through the modals *must* and *can*, between them, there are other modal words that are analysed through the semantics of possible worlds. In Romance modality, Kratzer's concept is used for example by Borgonovo – Cummins (2007) for the analysis of Spanish and French modal verbs.

We fully respect the importance and the contribution of formal approaches to modality, however, such a strong union between language and logic is not appropriate for the targets we wish to accomplish. In our understanding, language modality is directly related to the speaker's attitude and subjectivity, external conditions, including truth conditions that have their place in logically based approaches, do not play any role in our analysis.

When applying the logically based concepts to Spanish, we encounter also another problem: their strong connection to analytic resources for expressing modality. This can be observed for example with González Vázquez (2002) who applies a purely logical concept of modality to Spanish. Her study includes only modal verbs and adverbs

and it is, therefore, reduced to the analysis of concrete modalizers that overshadow other ways of expressing modality, especially the verbal moods. In our understanding of modality, the choice of mood is one of the pillars of the Spanish modal system that cannot be left aside.

The role of subjectivity inside a logically based concept is strengthened by Declerck (2001). The author uses the term *t-world* which is “a world which is anchored to a given time *t*” (23), but he differentiates between objective and subjective *t-worlds*:

An *objective t-world* is the unique real world that holds at a given time and which is judged real by an (imaginary) ideal outside observer viewing the world as it is at that given time. A *subjective t-world* is an alternative world which is not judged real by such an ideal outside observer but which is conceived of as real by some consciousness at a certain time. Such a *t-world* consists of the tensed (=anchored in time by their finite verb form) propositions that are deemed true by the world-creating consciousness at the given time. Thus, the situation referred to by *Amsterdam lies in Belgium* (which is counterfactual in the objective *S-world*¹) actualizes in the counterfactual *S-world* existing in the mind of a speaker who is convinced that this assertion is true at *S* (23-24).

We prefer Declerck’s understanding of modality also because of the wide range of expressions that can work as “nonfactual-world creating device” (25). The author uses the term *modalizers*² that comprises not only the traditionally mentioned modal auxiliaries and modal adverbs, but also:

an intensional verb like *believe, suppose, imagine*, an attitudinal verb like *intend, want, hope, wish*, the subjunctive mood, the imperative mood, a conditional clause creating a ‘theoretical world’ [...], a tense auxiliary creating a future world (e.g. *will, be going to, be about to*) or expressing posteriority, an inserted comment clause with an intensional verb (e.g. *I think*), ‘modal backshifting’ [...] or ‘modal conditionalization’ or a combination of the latter two (28).

Our understanding of modality corresponds do Declerck’s in some respects. We also see modality as an area where different language tools play their respective roles and can mutually affect each other, however, the position of the speaker and his subjective way of presenting events is still less salient in Declerck’s concept which translates also into using terms such as *factual world* that refer to the truth condition and that are not relevant in our approach.

1.1.2 MODALITY IN COGNITIVE LINGUISTICS

In cognitive linguistics, modality has been treated in a rather different way. The focus was originally centred on the modals, gradually the problems regarding verbal moods have also become a topic.

1 *S* designates the speech time, *S-world* is: “a world that is anchored to *S*” (Declerck: 2011, 23).

2 We use the term *modalizer* too, however, our definition is narrower, we use it only for lexical expressions of modality, we do not refer to verbal moods as to modalizers.

In cognitive linguistics, modals are approached as so-called *grounding expressions*. These expressions (together with others such as articles, demonstratives or tense markers) allow the speaker to be implicitly present in an utterance (*construal* in cognitive terms). The level of implicitness the speaker incorporates himself with into a construal (without being present explicitly, for example via the use of personal pronouns) translates into the level of *subjectification* (see Langacker 1991a, 1991b, 2003). The terms *subjectivity* and *objectivity* are, therefore, understood in a more specific way than generally.

While this book is not based on cognitive linguistics, we prefer the cognitive approach to the formal one, especially due to the emphasis on psychological (rather than logical) aspects of language and communication in general. Readers interested in purely cognitive approaches to modality can refer to Langacker (1991a, 1991b, 2003) or Traugott (2007, 2011) (for a rather different understanding of subjectification), a comprehensive Czech summary of their theories can be found in Kanasugi (2013). Cognitive approach to selected aspects of Spanish modality is represented by Maldonado (1995), Achard (2000), Vesterinen – Bylund (2013) or Vesterinen (2014). Didactic aspects of a cognitive approach to the Spanish subjunctive are analysed by Ruiz Campillo (2004, 2006, 2008).

1.1.3 MODALITY FROM A CROSS-LINGUISTIC PERSPECTIVE AND UNIVERSAL CONCEPTS

There cannot be much discussion regarding the most influential work that presents modality from the cross-linguistic point of view and concentrates on its manifestations in different languages. The monograph *Mood and Modality* by Frank Palmer (1986, second edition 2001) has been generally accepted as a fundamental work in this area that demonstrates how modality behaves in languages around the world.

In the original concept presented in the first edition (1986), Palmer distinguishes between two basic types of modality: *Epistemic* and *Deontic* that have their respective subtypes (*Declaratives, Judgments, Evidentials* and *Interrogatives* as parts of the Epistemic modality and *Directives, Commisives, Volitives* and *Evaluatives* as parts of the Deontic sphere). In the updated edition from 2001, Palmer changes somewhat the original schema and recognizes also the *Dynamic modality* which, together with the Deontic one, constitutes the basis of the *Event modality*.³ The main difference between Dynamic and Deontic modality is resumed in the following way:

3 In similar contexts, other authors (including Declerck 2001 whose work we mentioned above) prefer the term *Root modality* that has been gaining importance especially since the publication of *The Semantics of the Modal Auxiliaries* by Coates (1983) and is probably more extended nowadays than Event modality.