

THE VOLUNTATIVE MODALITY IN BENGALI*

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The aim of this paper is to show what means are used to express voluntative modality in the Bengali language. The article presents a detailed analysis of lexico-syntactic means (modal verbs and modal auxiliaries in construction with infinitives or verbal nouns), of morphological means (the moods), and of lexical means (verbs, nouns, and adjectives). It shows that the means of expressing voluntative modality in Bengali are numerous and varied. Most frequently they express various shades of specific modal relations. On the other hand, one and the same modal expression can be used to express various kinds of modal meaning (for instance, the notional verb in the infinitive form combined with the verb *pārā* can express possibility, permissibility as well as ability to perform an action).

Key words: voluntative modality, necessity, possibility, permissibility, intention, modal verbs, modal auxiliaries, modal words, moods

Modality, usually defined as the category expressing the speaker's attitude to the reality of the utterance, a category which is present in each utterance, presents a complex problem which can be studied from the viewpoint of linguistics, logic and philosophy. These scientific fields apply their own approaches to the study of modality and pay special attention to some of its aspects (for instance, to modality of judgements in logic, to the problem of objective reality in philosophy, to the linguistic means of expressing modality in linguistics and so on). The category of logical modality and this also in relation

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to the linguistic modality, has been studied, for instance, by F. Jahangirov¹ who shows how the borders of logical modality mix up with linguistic modality.

The book by Jahangirov is very useful for every student of modality not only because of his own views on various sides of the problem, but also because it brings a brief analysis of different authors' approaches to it. Thanks to him any reader becomes acquainted with basic ideas regarding modality of such linguists as Husseynzadeh, Kolshanski, Pamfilov, Bondarenko, Petrov, Vinogradov, Zolotova, and Shredovo who develop theories of their predecessors. Jahangirov completes his review by analysis of views of some Germanologists and Turkologists.

Similarly useful is Hladký's² brief review of the study of modality undertaken in former Czechoslovakia. He analyses the views of the Slovak linguist Ďurovič and the Czech linguists Dokulil, Daneš, Kopečný, Šmilauer, Bauer and Grepl, and at the same time he presents his own conception of modality. In his second paper³ he completes this review by comments on the work of Czech Anglicists.

The book by Jahangirov and the paper by Hladký lucidly show how different authors differ in their views on the very concept of modality as well as on its classification. Some of them lay stress on the objective and subjective character of modality, others distinguish wider and narrower ranges of modality, others consider modality as one of four levels of sentence structure or view modality as a wider region of assessment, some analyse the problem of epistemic modality, the relationship between the deontic and epistemic modality and so on.

Linguists also pay adequate attention to the means used to express modality. They are mainly language means (lexical, morphological, syntactic and phonetic), but they can be completed by extra-linguistic means such as gestures and face movements in personal communication.

Although Jahangirov and Hladký analyse the approaches to modality only of a certain, though quite wide group of linguists, they sufficiently illustrate the complexity of the problem of modality as well as the variety of approaches to it. The books and papers by other authors usually present the variations, specifications and supplements to these approaches.

Many authors do not consider modality in its complexity but focus on one partial problem. It is traditionally the modality of necessity, possibility and probability expressed by modal verbs. Grammars and textbooks usually analyse the class of modal verbs, delimitate them by their syntactic or morpho-syntactic

¹ JAHANGIROV, F. *The Investigation of Modality in Germanic Philology and Turkology*, pp. 19-34.

² HLADKÝ, J. *A Brief Comment on Some Previous Works on Modality*, pp. 85-92.

³ HLADKÝ, J. *Parts of Speech and Spheres of Modality in English and Czech*, pp. 87-109.

properties and describe their functions in the text. However, Winter,⁴ for example, focuses on the cognitive functions of modals and their relations to other cognitive functions. He argues "that the relevant cognitive functions determining modal expression are interpersonal *power* relations and the *expectations* of the agents involved in the speech situation."⁵ On the other hand, Talmy⁶ studies modals on the basis of force dynamics. In his view, physical forces are seen as more fundamental than the social.

The great majority of books and articles devoted to modality take into consideration the situation in English or in the Slavonic languages, less frequently they consider modality in some other languages. As far as we know, there is no work on modality in the Bengali language which is the subject of our study. In this paper we focus on one specific sphere of linguistic modality, i.e. the volutative modality, and try to analyse the inventory of means used to express it in this language.

1. CHARACTERIZATION OF VOLUNTATIVE MODALITY

Voluntative modality is the language category and it is characterized, like all language categories, by content and form. The content of voluntative modality is represented by the speaker's attitude to the relationship between the subject and the predicate and its form is represented by means used to express this relationship.

Voluntative modality modifies the content of an utterance from the viewpoint of necessity, obligation, possibility, ability, permissibility or intension of subject to perform an action. Necessity, obligation, possibility and permissibility follow from the body of law or a set of moral principles (deontic modality), a person's desires (bouletic modality), a particular set of circumstances (circumstantial modality), or they consider what means are possible or necessary for achieving a particular goal (teleological modality).⁷

As regards possibility and necessity, Jahangirov considers two types of modality, namely alertic (ontological) and deontic (normative) modality. "In alertic (ontological) meanings/.../ the real condition of the nature and the society, also the psychological state of the person is looked upon as something important. In deontic (normative) meanings/.../ the normatives of society including the moral features and norms of behaviours adopted for a certain

⁴ WINTER, S. Expectations and Linguistic Meanings, pp. 87-123.

⁵ WINTER, S. op. cit., p. 88.

⁶ TALMY, L. Force Dynamics in Language and Cognition, pp. 49-100.

⁷ FINTEL, K. von. Modality and Language, p. 2.

collective, technical, local meanings etc. are taken as something important and these meanings are characterised according to these norms.”⁸

Đurovič⁹ claims that voluntative modality, like modality in general, is the subjective-objective category. As the subjective category it expresses the attitude of the speaker, that is the subject, and it is objective in the sense that the speaker's attitude is expressed by objective means, namely by means of a concrete language system.

2. THE MEANS OF EXPRESSING VOLUNTATIVE MODALITY IN BENGALI

Voluntative modality can be expressed by several means in Bengali. The basic means are the lexico-syntactic, that is the combination of the infinitive of an autosemantic (notional) verb with a modal verb (*pārā*, *cāoyā*), the construction of the infinitive of notional verb + auxiliary verbs *haoyā*, *āch-*, the combination of the infinitive with verbs *deoyā*, *yāoyā*, *pāoyā*, which achieve the function of modal words in this construction, and the combination of the verbal noun with the verb *yāoyā*.

When voluntative modality is expressed in this way, the lexical content, that is, the action which is to be performed, is indicated by the infinitive or the verbal noun and the kind of modal relationship between the subject and the predicate is expressed by the modal or auxiliary verb or the verb which has the function of the modal word. In lexico-syntactic expression of modality the modal meaning is included in the lexical meaning of the modal verb. In combinations of the infinitive with the auxiliary verbs *haoyā*, *āch-* as well as in combinations of the infinitive with the verbs *deoyā*, *yāoyā* and *pāoyā*, and in combinations of the verbal noun with the verb *yāoyā*, the modal meaning results from the construction as a whole, not only from the lexical meanings of these verbs. In all these instances modal relationships are expressed by verbs.

Verbs are also used to express voluntative modality by morphological means, that is by the moods – imperative, indicative and interrogative. If these means are used, a significant role is played by the communicative situation and intonation.

Voluntative modality can also be expressed lexically, that is by notional verbs expressing wishing (*icchā karā*, *icchā haoyā*), adjectives (*ucit*, *sambhab*), and nouns (*darkār*).

⁸ JAHANGIROV, F. The Investigation of Modality in Germanic Philology and Turkology, p. 40.

⁹ ĐUROVIČ, L. *Modálnost'*, p. 23.

2.1 Lexico-syntactic means of expressing voluntative modality

2.1.1 *Infinitive + modal verb*

Modal verbs in construction with infinitives of notional verbs are the basic means of expressing voluntative modality of possibility, ability, permissibility and intention.

The modal verb *pārā* (can) is used to express possibility, physical ability and capability to perform an action, depending on the situation, and also to express permission to perform an action:

- (1) *āmi yete pārī*. I can/may go.
- (2) *āmi bāṅglā balte pārī*. I can/am able/know to speak Bengali.

The modal verb *cāoyā* is used to express the intention of the subject to perform an action:

- (3) *āmi yete cāi*. I want to go.

Combination of the modal verb with the infinitive creates one semantic and grammatical unit. In this unit, the infinitive carries the lexical meaning of the combination, in other words, it indicates the action to which the speaker expresses his attitude, and the modal verb expresses the modal meaning of sentence. At the same time the modal verb forms predicate by its grammatical properties (tense, person, honorifics).

Neither part of this unit can function independently in predicate. Modal verb does not indicate any action existing in reality. It only expresses the relationship of subject to the predicated action.¹⁰ On the other hand, the infinitive has no grammatical categories, therefore it alone cannot form the predication.

- (4) *yete pārī*. /I, we/ can go.
- (5) *yete pārīla*. /You/ could go.
- (6) *yete pārben*. /He, honorific/ will be able to go.
- (7) *yete cāi*. /I, we/ want to go.
- (8) *yete cāile*. /You/ wanted to go.
- (9) *yete cāiben*. /He, honorific/ will be able to go.

¹⁰ ĐUROVIĆ, L. *Modálnost'*, p. 36.

Nevertheless, there are two meanings that can be expressed on infinitive, namely, the emphasis laid on the action which is named by the infinitive and including the action named by the infinitive:

(10) *sekhāne yetei pārc̣he nā*.¹¹ /He/ cannot even go there.

(11) *tāhale bāgh bujhteo pārc̣be nā, tomāke kheteo pārc̣be nā*. The tiger will not be able neither to understand nor to eat you up.

Modal verbs *pārā* and *cāoyā* can be differentiated from other verbs not only by their lexical meaning, but also morpho-syntactically (similarly as the auxiliary verb *haoyā* in modal function).¹² They combine only with the infinitive. They cannot form the dictus of other modal verbs. They do not form imperatives. They have only the modal meaning. They can have a wide range of modal meanings, especially the modal verb *pārā* “can”, which can be used to express that someone is able, capable, knows, may, can perform an action due to some external or internal circumstances. The border between these shades of meaning is not clear. It is often only the context, the concrete communicative situation which helps to distinguish which shade of meaning is meant:

(12) *eṭuku path hēṭe yete pārc̣ba*. /I/ can (I am able/I am allowed) to walk this small distance.

āmi bāṅglā balte pāri. I can speak Bengali (I am able to speak/I know to speak Bengali).

The subject of the action, that is the one who can perform the action, takes the form of the nominative. The subject is the one who performs an action which is expressed by an autosemantic verb and at the same time it is a bearer of modal disposition for performing expressed by the modal verb. It is not usually expressed who or what enables the subject to perform the action indicated by the infinitive (see below).

The infinitive can be omitted, if the infinitive from the preceding sentence could be used:

(13) *sanpūrṇa nije karte pārc̣bonā. āpni āmāke sāhāyya karle, hayto pārc̣bo*.

(Rad 165) I can't all on my own. If you help me, perhaps I'll be able to (i.e. to translate).

¹¹ Longer sentences illustrating the text are taken from following books: U. Rāychaudhuri *Tuṭunir bai*, Sunil Gangopādhyāy *Galpasangraha*, Samareś Basu *Oder balte dāo*, W. Radice *Teach yourself Bengali* (indicated by Rad and the number of the page in brackets), and Bengali Reference Grammar by W. Smith (indicated by Sm and the number of page in brackets).

¹² See pp. 144-145.

Examples of various shades of modal meanings expressed by the verb *pārā*:

be capable, to know

- (14) *chelebelāy āmi iṅgrejī kathā balte pārtām nā*. (Rad 171) I could not/I did not know to speak English as a child.

be able

- (15) *ṭuṇṭunike dharte pārā nā*. She was not able to catch the tailor-bird (because the tailor-bird sat high in the tree = the external circumstance).
se anek ceṣṭā karleo hātir peṭer bhitar theke berute pārā nā. Though he tried very much, he could not get out of the elephant's stomach (because of a small hole in it).

be strong enough

- (16) *tār peṭ emni bhāri hala ye, se ār calte pāre nā*. His stomach is so full that he is not able to walk.

be allowed to

- (17) *tumi ekhan ekṭu rest karte pāra*. Now you can take a rest for a while.

In this sentence, the modal verb *pārā* expresses that something is allowed to be done. The performer of the action has the alternative either to perform or not to perform the action. Negated *pārā* expresses that something must not be done – the performer of the action does not have any alternative either to perform or not to perform the action. In this sense, that is, in a degree of peremptoriness, negated *pārā* presents a negative opposition to the positive must similarly as in expressing “impossibility” by the verb *deoyā*.¹³

- (18) *grām ki tomār kenā nāki? Anya keu āste pāre nā?* Have you bought this village? Any other person must not come?

can = an internal circumstance (fear in this instance):

- (19) *tār par theke bāgher bhaye śiyāl... khābār khūjteo yete pāre nā*. From that time the jackal cannot even go to look for some food in fear of the tiger.

¹³ See p. 146.

can = an external circumstance

(20) *āpnār bāṛite yadi kukur nā thāke, sei sākṣiṭike niye āste pāri*. If there are no dogs in your house, I will be able to bring the witness.¹⁴

As can be seen, in some instances the possibility to perform an action depends on another person, who is never expressed (*āmi yete pāri* I am allowed to), in other instances it depends on the capability of the subject (*āmi bāṅglā balte pāri* I know to speak Bengali) or on an extralinguistic reality. According to Hladký, “If the source of the modal attitude is in the speaker, in his mind, we could talk of internally determined modality. If it is outside the speaker, we could use the expression “external determination”.¹⁵ Modality may be externally determined by the part of the extralinguistic reality outside the speaker and the hearer. In this connection Hladký does not consider the term “attitude to be fully appropriate for this type of modality. Rather than an attitude it is a position that the speaker takes, or more precisely, is given in the communicative situation. Thus ‘attitudinal’ might be used only with instances of internally determined modality, where the speaker functions as an active element in respect of modality, while ‘positional’ might be used for the cases of external determination (the speaker is ‘passive’ in respect of modality, though otherwise he is ‘active’ because he communicates.”¹⁶

The modal verb *cāoyā* (to want) seems to be different from the modal verb *pārā*: it is not used only in the construction with the infinitive, but can occur – as in many other languages with modals – in the object rection:

(21) *baigulo cāi*. /I/ want the books.

(22) *ki cāo?* What do you want

Some authors speak about two meanings of the verb want in this case. For instance Ďurovič¹⁷ in his book on modality in the Slovak and Russian languages does not consider the meaning with the object rection as modal. According to

¹⁴ It is not necessary to say that it is difficult to precisely transmit various shades of modal meanings from one language to another one by an equivalent found in a dictionary. This holds true even about languages which have similar devices for expressing modality, for instance modal verbs and modal auxiliaries. These devices are usually not completely identical as to their content and it is difficult to find strict equivalents to them which would completely render the idea. Therefore it is important to know, as for instance Curts claims in his Tabulation of the German modals, pp. 182-184, what general idea the modal verb conveys.

¹⁵ HLADKÝ, J. A Brief Comment on Some Previous Works on Modality, p. 90.

¹⁶ HLADKÝ, J. op. cit., p. 91.

¹⁷ ĎUROVIČ, L. *Modálnost'*, p. 41.

our view we could perhaps speak about the elliptic construction with the modal verb *cāoyā* (to want) here. "I want these books" could be understood as "I want to have/get/buy these books".¹⁸

The modal verb *cāoyā* is always associated with expression of who wants to perform the action indicated by infinitive. The subject of *cāoyā* is the point of departure and also the addressee of intention. The modal subject is always animate in contrast to modal subject of the modal verb *pārā*, which can also be inanimate (a tree can fall down).

2.1.2 Infinitive + auxiliary verb *haoyā*

In contrast to, for instance, English, German, Swedish or Slovak, but similarly to Russian or Romani, the Bengali language does not have the whole range of modal verbs. There is no modal verb for expressing necessity and obligation (must). This modal relation is expressed by an impersonal construction consisting of the infinitive indicating the action that must be performed and the auxiliary verb *haoyā* (to be), which similarly to modal verbs creates predication by its grammatical properties (person, tense). The auxiliary verb *haoyā* is always in the third person, but it can be in any tense. The logical subject of the action, namely the person, to whom the necessity is directed, is expressed with the help of the dative with the ending *-ke* (in plural *-der*) or the genitive with the ending *-er* (in plural *-der*). The logical subject is the performer of the action expressed by infinitive of autosemantic verb and at the same time he is the bearer of modal disposition for performing expressed by the auxiliary verb *haoyā*. The subject whose will is being asserted is not expressed.

(23) *āmāke yete hay*. I must go.

(24) *sārārāt oder cup karte thākte habe*. They will have to keep silent all the night.

The logical subject often remains unexpressed, it follows from the context:

(25) *kabitā anubād karte cāile, nije kabi hate hay*. (Rad 165) If (you) want to translate poetry, (you) have to be a poet yourself.

If there are more objects in the sentence, the context is inevitable for its unambiguous interpretation:

¹⁸ HLADKÝ, J. In Parts of Speech and Spheres of Modality in English and Czech, p. 99, does not include intention to voluntative modality, as he considers it to be in some way marginal.

(26) *āmāke ghoṛā ene ditei habe*. You will have/it will be necessary for me/I will have to bring the horse.

Frequently the construction infinitive + *hay* is found in which the bearer of the modal disposition is not expressed, especially if the sentence includes the object to which the action is directed:

(27) *ekhan pīprike to niye gaṅgāy phelte hay*. It is necessary to throw the she-ant into the Ganges (the context shows that it is the he-ant that must do it).

When expressing necessity, it is not explicitly expressed who or what puts pressure¹⁹ on the addressee to perform the action indicated by the infinitive. It may be a concrete person (I must go because somebody wants me to go), subordination to some rules (I must eat with a fork because it is a norm in this society), the natural circumstances (I must take an umbrella because it rains) and so on.

The impersonal construction infinitive + *hay* is used to express the categorical necessity/order. The same construction with *hay* in the negative form, that is *hay nā*, can be used to express either the categorical negative volition or non-categorical negative volition:

(28) *cup, cup! Ekhan hāricte habe nā!* Hush, hush. Now you must not (“obligatory that not”) sneeze.

(29) *hāricte habe nā*. /He/ need not walk.

2.1.3 Infinitive + modal word *deoyā*

The voluntative modality of permissibility, in which the stress is laid on the fact that a subject can perform an action named by an infinitive because someone has allowed him to do it, is expressed by the verb *deoyā* “to give” in the function of the modal word “to allow”, “let”. The logical subject takes the suffix *-ke* (in plural *-der*). The subject whose will is being applied, is not expressed:

(30) *āmāke yete dila*. /They/ allowed me to go. /I can/could go.

The performer of the action expressed by the finite verbal form (*tārā dila* “they allowed”) is not identical with the bearer of the modal disposition (*āmi pāri* “I can”).

¹⁹ Definition by ĐUROVIČ, L. *Modálnost*, p. 67.

The verb *deoyā* in negative form can express negative volition close to the categorical prohibition.

(31) *āmāke yete dila nā*. /They/ did not allow me to go (I must not).

2.1.4 Infinitive + modal word *pāoyā*

The verb *pāoyā* with verbs of sensual perception also marginally belongs to the category of modal words. In this construction *pāoyā* loses its lexical meaning “to get” and becomes a modal word expressing slight possibility/ability. The subject of the action and of the modal disposition is identical and takes the nominative form:

(32) *āmi dekhte peyechi*. I have seen/I could see.

(33) *tumi śunte pela*. You heard/You could hear.

2.1.6 Infinitive + verb *yāoyā*

The verb *yāoyā* in connection with the infinitive of the notional verb is close to the modal verb *cāoyā*. It expresses the meaning of wishing, intending or readiness to perform an action:

(34) *se ki ekṭā balte yāitechila*. She wanted (was ready) to say something.

2.1.7 Verbal noun + verb *yāoyā*

The impersonal construction using the verbal noun with *yāoyā* is commonly used to express possibility. The verbal noun is the bearer of lexical meaning of this connection, the verb *yāoyā* indicates modal relationship and forms predication. The verb *yāoyā* can be in any tense, but it must be in the third person. A personal object of the verbal noun takes the object ending *-ke*, an impersonal object has zero ending. There are two types of this construction that are seemingly identical as regards their formal side.

2.1.7.1 *āmāke dekhā yāy*

This model sentence represents the first type of construction. It can be translated as it is possible to see me. In this construction a personal object takes the ending *-ke*, a non-personal object has zero ending.

(35) *baiṭā dekhā yāy*. The book can be seen.

Neither the subject of the action nor the bearer of the modal disposition for performing expressed by the verb *yāoyā* is expressed in this construction. Chatterji²⁰ considers the form with the ending *-ā* in this construction as a passive participle adjective and according to his view the construction “*āmāke dekhā yāy*” would be best explained as being literally with-regard-to-me it-is-seen.” He claims that there is a “slight potentiality implied” in this construction and *āmāke dekhā yāy* translates as I am seen or I may be seen (= they can see me). This construction is often used to express possibility, slight potentiality, especially with verb of sensuous perception, but also with other verbs:

(36) *baiṭā dekhā yāy*. The book can be seen.

(37) *bābār kono kathā śonā gela nā*. There could be heard no father’s words.

(38) *ekhāne murgī pāoyā yābe nā*. It is not possible to get any hen here.

(39) *tāke buṛo balā yāy nā*. It is not possible to call him an old man.

(40) *tāke khūnje pāoyā gela nā*. He could not be found.

2.1.7.2 *āmāke yāoyā yāy*

Although this construction seems to be formally identical with the construction *āmāke dekhā yāy* they differ in that in the impersonal construction *āmāke yāoyā yāy* I can go, the logical subject of action is expressed (it takes the ending *-ke*). He/she is the performer of the action expressed by the autosemantic verb in the form of verbal noun and at the same time he/she is a bearer of the modal disposition for performing expressed by the verb *yāoyā*. In contrast to the construction *āmāke dekhā yāy* where the auxiliary verb *yāoyā* is connected with a transitive verb, in the construction *āmāke yāoyā yāy* the verb *yāoyā* connects with an intransitive verb.

The construction verbal noun + the verb *yāoyā* in the third person is often used to express possibility if it is not necessary to express the performer of action:

(41) *ei rāstā diye bājāre yāoyā yāy?* Is it possible to get to the bazaar by this road?

(42) *prathame ekṭā khasarā thākle, anubādṭā āro bhālo kare yeta – sei rakam kare pāṛā yābe?* (Rad 165) If I had a draft first, the translation could be done better – could it be done in that way?

²⁰ CHATTERJI, S.K. The Origin and Development of the Bengali Language, p. 922.

Bykova²¹ explains the modal meaning of the construction with *yāoyā* on the one hand by the fact that the verb *yāoyā* can have the modal meaning also when it is used independently (*jamijamā bēciyā kalikātāy yāoyā yāk*. It is necessary to sell the land and go to Calcutta), and on the other hand, the modal meaning follows from the semantics of the verb which has the form of a verbal noun.

As can be seen, the verbs *haoyā*, *āch-*, *deoyā*, *pāoyā* and *yāoyā* with the infinitive and the verb *yāoyā* in connection with the verbal noun lost their lexical meaning and achieved the function of modal words that give modal meanings to the connection infinitive/verbal noun + modal word. They become modal auxiliaries. They have the same function as modal verbs but in contrast to them they by themselves do not carry any modal meaning.

2.2 Morphological means of expressing voluntative modality

If modality is not expressed explicitly by modal words (modal verbs and modal auxiliaries) or by verbs of wishing and nouns and adjectives expressing necessity or possibility the modal character of the utterance can be considered only within a wider framework than the sentence, that is, on the level of the text/communicative situation.²² In the written text it is the context that plays an important role while in spoken utterances it is the intonation. This holds true also as regards the voluntative modality expressed by morphological means, that is, by the mood. It is characteristic of voluntative modality expressed by morphological means that both the lexical meaning and the modal meaning are expressed in one word.

2.2.1 Imperative mood

The imperative mood is used to express the necessity or obligation of subject to perform the action named by the verb. The lexical meaning, that is, the action, is indicated by the stem of the verb and the modal meaning is expressed by the imperative ending. The grammatical properties of the verb in the imperative form (person and time) create predication.

(43) *baiṭā niye eso!* Bring the book (=“you must bring the book”).

²¹ BYKOVA, E.M. *Podlezhashcheye i skazuyemoye v sovremennom bengalskom yazyke*, p. 86.

²² JAHANGIROV, F. In his work *The Investigation of Modality in Germanic Philology and Turkology* introduces a useful concept communicative modality, p. 17.

2.2.2 Indicative mood

In a certain context, in a certain communicative situation, the indicative mood can express various shades of voluntative modality of necessity and intention. The modality of a sentence is determined by its context or intonation.

2.2.2.1 Expressing necessity

The verb in the indicative mood in the form of the future tense can express not only the fact that the action named by the verb is to be performed in future but, with proper intonation, it can also express the necessity:

- (44) *rabibāre baiṭā āmāke phire deben*. You will return me the book tomorrow/You must return me the book tomorrow.

2.2.2.2 Expressing intention

The verb in the indicative mood in future tense can be used to express the intention of action.²³

- (45) *āmi cā khābo*. I want to drink tea.

2.2.3 Interrogative mood

The interrogative mood in combination with the future tense and with corresponding intonation is used to express quite a wide range of modal relationships, namely, necessity, request or polite invitation, intention, and possibility to perform an action.

2.2.3.1 Expressing necessity

The verb in the interrogative mood and in the form of the future tense is used to express the lower peremptoriness of necessity: shall I?

- (46) *ḍāktār bābuke khabar deba?* Shall I inform the doctor?

- (47) *eke balbo nā oke balbo?* Shall I tell this person or that person?

It can also express a polite request:

- (48) *jānālāṭā khule deben?* Will you open the window? (=“I ask you to open it, you must open it”)

²³ SMITH, W. L. Bengali Reference Grammar, p. 105.

2.2.3.2 Expressing intention

(49) *ālo nebhābo, nā tumi paṛbe?* Should /I/ turn out the light, or do you want to read?

2.2.3.3 Expressing possibility

(50) *āmi garīb mānuṣ, ghoṛāṭāke kī kare ānba?* I am a poor man, how can I bring the horse?

(51) *kī kare balba koṇṭā satyi koṇṭā mithye?* (Sm105) How can /I/ say which one is true and which false?

2.3. Lexical means of expressing voluntative modality

Voluntative modality can be expressed explicitly by verbs, nouns and adjectives the lexical meaning of which includes intention, necessity or possibility.

2.3.1 Verbs

Verbs of wishing *icche/icchā karā*, *icchā haoyā* express intention. These verbs complement the modal verb *cāoyā*. Similarly to it, they occur in impersonal constructions in connection with the infinitive or verbal noun of an autosemantic verb. The subject of action, which takes the genitive ending *-r* (*-der* in plural), is a performer of action expressed by the autosemantic verb in the infinitive or verbal noun that takes the genitive form as well as the bearer of modal disposition for performing. Modality follows from the lexical meaning of the autosemantic verb (to wish):

(52) *āmār mare yete icche karche*. I want to die.

(53) *āmār yādughar dekhbār icchā karche*. I want to see a museum.

(54) *śiyāler bhāri khete icche hata*. The jakal wanted to eat very much.

Intention is sporadically expressed by the petrified expression *cāi*, which is “the sole survivor of an old passive form. It occurs in impersonal constructions in connection with verbal noun where it corresponds to /I etc./ want. The logical subject takes the genitive. Animate objects take the accusative optionally:²⁴

(55) *tomār deoyā cāi*. You are wanted to give (lit. your giving is wanted).

²⁴ CHATTERJI, S. K. The Origin and Development of the Bengali Language, p. 1004.

In our texts this form occurred only in rection with noun or pronoun:

(56) *bāgh balle: śudhu ei cāi?* Tiger said: do you want only this?

(57) *āmāder meyechele cāi.* We want children.

We can speak about the modal meaning of this petrified verb form in these sentences if we admit that the construction *āmi baiṭā cāi* “I want the book” can be regarded as an elliptic expression of the modal relationship (“I want to have the book”).

2.3.2 Nouns

Necessity can be expressed by the noun *darkār* “necessity”, “need”, “requirement” in the impersonal construction possessive + noun/verbal noun in possessive case + *darkār*:

(58) *bāṅglādeśe āmāder moṭā pośāk darkār chila nā.* (Rad 172) In Bangladesh we didn’t need to wear thick clothes.

In colloquial speech the possessive ending of verbal noun is often dropped.²⁵

(59) *tomār ekbār bhisā-āpise yāoyā darkār.* (Rad 172) You’ll have to make a visit to the visa-office.

2.3.3 Adjectives

2.3.3.1 Expressing necessity

Necessity may be expressed by the adjective *ucit* “fitting”, “proper” in construction with a verbal noun. It expresses a lower degree of peremptoriness (“/one/ ought”, “/one/ should”):²⁶

(60) *e rakam tomār rāg karā ucit nay.* You should not be angry because of this matter.

Smith points out instances where the construction of the adjective *ucit* with the verb of existence *āch-* in the past tense, that is, *chila* corresponds to “should have/ought to have”:²⁷

²⁵ RADICE, W. Teach Yourself Bengali, p. 172.

²⁶ SMITH, W. L. Bengali Reference Grammar, p. 124.

²⁷ SMITH, W. L. Bengali Reference Grammar, p. 125.

(61) *tomāke puliś deoyā ucit chila*. /I/ should have turned you to the police.

(62) *āmāder āge āsā ucit chila*. We ought to have come earlier.

2.3.3.2 Expressing possibility

Possibility can be expressed by the adjective *sambhab* “possible”, “probable”; *asambhab* “impossible”:

(63) *sambhab hale, āmi āste cāi*. If possible, I would like to come.

(64) *yataḥṣaṇ sambhab āmi jānālār pāśe śūye thāktām*. As long as it was possible I used to lie near the window.

3. CONCLUSION

The means of expressing voluntative modality in Bengali are numerous and varied. They include lexico-syntactic means, morphological means, and lexical means. One and the same modal relationship can be expressed in several ways. The selection of means of expression depends on various reasons. Most frequently it is the expression of a specific shade of modality. For instance, expressing necessity with the aid of the construction verbal noun + *ucit* indicates a lower degree of necessity than expressing necessity by the construction *-ke* + *-ite* + *hay*:

(65) *āmār or kabitā paṛā ucit*. I ought to read his poems (but I don’t have to).

(66) *āmāke or kabitā parte hay*. I must read his poems (I have no alternative).

The expression of possibility by different means can also have various shades of possibility:

(67) *āmi yete pāri*. I can go (e.g. due to physical ability or some external conditions).

(68) *āmāke yete dila*. I can go (because somebody let me go).

(69) *āmāke yāoyā yāy*. I can go (“slight possibility”).

It is similar with expression of intention:

(70) *se ki ekṭā balte cāichila*. He wanted to say something.

(71) *se ki ekṭā balte yāitechila*. He wanted (= was ready) to say something.

On the other hand, one and the same modal verb, for instance, *pārā*, can express the whole range of modal meanings (possibility, ability, permissibility). The concrete modal meaning follows from context.²⁸

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²⁸ See pp. 142-143.