

Modals and quasi-modals of obligation and necessity in Indian and Canadian English

Carlos Soriano Jiménez
Universidad de Málaga

ABSTRACT

This study contributes to the existing research regarding the frequency and distribution of modals and quasi-modals in varieties of English. The majority of the authors agree that, during the second half of the 20th century, there has been a general decline in the frequency of core modal auxiliaries of English (Leech, 2013). As a consequence, this has meant an increase in use of semi-modals (Collins, 2009). It has been hypothesized that some of the possible reasons which may explain this new trend have been a great acceptance among speakers of processes of grammaticalization, colloquialization (Leech, 2012) and democratization (Smith, 2012). This interpretation, although widely accepted, has also been questioned by dissenting voices (Millar, 2009). Most of the literature has discussed extensively the differences in relation to this topic between Standard English (SE) and American English (AmE), but there is not such a comprehensive literature concerning other cross-varietal differences of the Outer Circle (Loureiro-Porto, 2019).

Modality encompasses a wide range of different semantic notions. This paper explores the differences of the distribution and use of the modals and semi-modals which convey both deontic and epistemic obligation and necessity in Canadian and Indian English. More precisely, *must* and *need* are compared to its counterparts and its semantically related quasi-modals *have got to* and *need to*. Following Kachru's model of World Englishes (1992), Canadian English (CanE) has been selected as the representative of an Inner Circle variety, whereas Indian English (IE) has been chosen as representative of an Outer Circle variety. The aim of this paper is to provide new insight into the patterns of distribution between these pairs of modals and semi-modals and to outline some possible reasons for the existing differences. For this purpose, the online *Corpus of Global Web-Based English (GloWbE)* has been employed.

KEYWORDS

Modals; obligation; necessity; quasi-modals; Canadian English; Indian English.

REFERENCES

- Collins, P. (2009). *Modals and Quasi-modals in English*. Rodolphi.
- Kachru, B. (1992). World Englishes: approaches, issues and resources. *Language Teaching*, 25(1), 1-14.
- Leech, G. (2013). Where have all the modals gone? An essay on the declining frequency of core modal auxiliaries in recent standard English. In J. Marín-Arrese, M. Carretero,

- J. Hita & J. Van de Auwera (Eds.), *English modality: Core, periphery and evidentiality* (pp. 95-115). Walter de Gruyter.
- Loureiro-Porto, L. (2019). Grammaticalization of semi-modals of necessity in Asian Englishes. *English World-Wide*, 40(2), 115-143.
- Millar, N. (2009). Modal verbs in TIME: Frequency changes 1923-2006. *International journal of corpus linguistics*, 14(2), 191-220.
- Smith, N. (2012). Changes in the modals and semi-modals of strong obligation and epistemic necessity in recent British English. In R. Facchinetti, M. Krug & F. Palmer (Eds.), *Modality in contemporary English* (pp. 241-266). Walter de Gruyter.