

## THE FUTURE TENSE CATEGORY OF ENGLISH VERB: LINGUISTIC ASPECT

POLINA DENCHYK, student

ALLA M. KROKHMAL, Associate Professor, PhD in Pedagogy, Scientific Supervisor

*O. M. Beketov National University of Urban Economy in Kharkiv*

The grammatical category of the future tense and the means of its expression are widely studied by domestic and foreign researchers. Within the framework of this article, we will examine the peculiarities of the meaning of the future tense and offer our own conclusions regarding its qualification.

The status of the future tense is not clear to a large extent because of the peculiarity of its morphological form (*grammatical form shall / will + infinitive*, different lexical and grammatical means of expression: *to be going to + infinitive*, *to be about + infinitive*, *to be + infinitive* etc.), which is stimulated by the semantic content of the category of the future, reflecting also modal characteristics of action. Orientation to the future is often determined by the speaker himself, depends on his choice and on his intention to present the future fact as a reality that will take place regardless of any conditions. A. I. Smirnitsky also wrote about this feature: «Such a moment appears to be allocated only for a given occasion, at the discretion of the author of the speech, according to what and how he wants to say».

Several grammarians, among them I. Busch and H. Helbig, consider the hierarchy of meanings and emphasize the primary character of modal meaning. They identify the expression of the intended action as the primary variant of the future tense, and consider the temporal only as secondary, neither excluding nor denying it altogether. It should be noted that when a speaker describes an event as a fact which belongs to the future, the present form of the verb is used. For example: *Tomorrow is Saturday; The term starts at the beginning of October.*

The modal character of the meaning of the future tense is expressed through the verbs *shall / will*. In our opinion, this is explained by different types of modality, which are embedded in the concept of futureness. L.S. Barkhudarov consistently argued against the recognition of *shall / will* verbs as means of expressing the future tense. He argued that, firstly, combinations with these forms do not differ from combinations with other modal verbs, that is, the reference to the future is determined contextually. Secondly, the modes of expressing futureness are very versatile. Thirdly, these combinations are not regarded as analytic forms, because they are not constructed from morphemes (like the passive voice: *be + ... en*). Finally, the fact of the past *should / would* contradict the very idea of futureness. L.S. Barkhudarov rightly concludes that English has a way of attributing action to the sphere of the future, but it does not yet follow that there is a special category of the future tense in the system of English verb forms. In traditional grammar, R. Kingdon introduced the concept of "modal tenses" and

combined the future tense and the conditional inclination. In his opinion, the verbs *shall / will, should / would* have the same strong modal meaning as other modal verbs and concluded that although modal verbs are rather clearly and consistently distinguished in meaning, their relation to time is largely unclear, therefore making distinctions between them in expressing time is artificial and even confusing.

Two things need to be emphasized: 1) The verbs with *shall / will* are not used in condition clauses or in sentences with a time circumstance, which are quite widespread: *If you press this button, the door will slide back*; 2) the construction *be going to + infinitive* is increasingly used to express the idea of the future: *I'm going to stay at home today; It's going to rain*, etc. The special character of *shall/will* is also proved by the fact that it is not used with modal verbs, i.e., it falls under the general rule that two modal verbs cannot be combined in one construction. All of the above allows us to consider the analytic forms with *shall/will* verbs as means of expressing modality: in them, the modal meaning of presumption is weightier than the idea of futureless expressed by these forms, which, in turn, contains a modal connotation of indefiniteness.

The modal meaning of presumption may be contrasted with the modal sign of «certainty» in the simple present forms, which are also capable of expressing the semantics of the future tense. V. M. Kolmogortseva stresses that the differentiation in the use of the two correlated forms (future indefinite and present indefinite) is along the lines of the modal characteristics of the utterance. Cf. e.g: «*We sail at midnight*», - *said Tommy and Roy commented: «I'll bet anyone that he rings up Crawford within five minutes*». Therefore, the use of the present tense with the meaning of the future allows the speaker to express confidence in the implementation of the action, i.e., to express the attitude to it. A similar conclusion is made by N. V. Ermakova, who stresses that this meaning is created primarily by the context (linguistic and situational), indicating the attribution of the action to the near, distant or indefinite future. The modal verbs *can, must, ought, to be to, to have to, shall, will* give the construction *modal verb + infinitive* a connotative meaning of certainty, and the modal verb *may* and forms *might, could, should, would* - a connotative meaning of uncertainty. The author points out that a variety of contextual means (negation, modal words like *surely, perhaps, perhaps, possibly*, having a reinforcing character) increase the expressiveness of constructions.

Summing up the brief review of opinions on the nature of the meaning of the future tense in modern English, we can say that the idea of the primacy of the modal meaning of the future tense has a considerable spread in modern linguistics. The term "modal tense" in the perspective of the future, from our point of view, represents a zone of modality specific to the English language, that is, a special inclination of futureness. It should be used to denote a category, considering, however, that the temporal meaning is common to all means of expressing the future tense and guarantees the unity of this category in terms of its content, and

the specific future meaning is the basis of all modal nuances and ways of expressing the future.

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POLINA DENCHYK, student

VICTORIA O. OSTAPCHENKO, Außerordentliche Professorin, Doktorin der Philologie, Sprachberaterin

*O. M. Beketov Nationale Universität für Stadtwirtschaft in Charkiw*

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