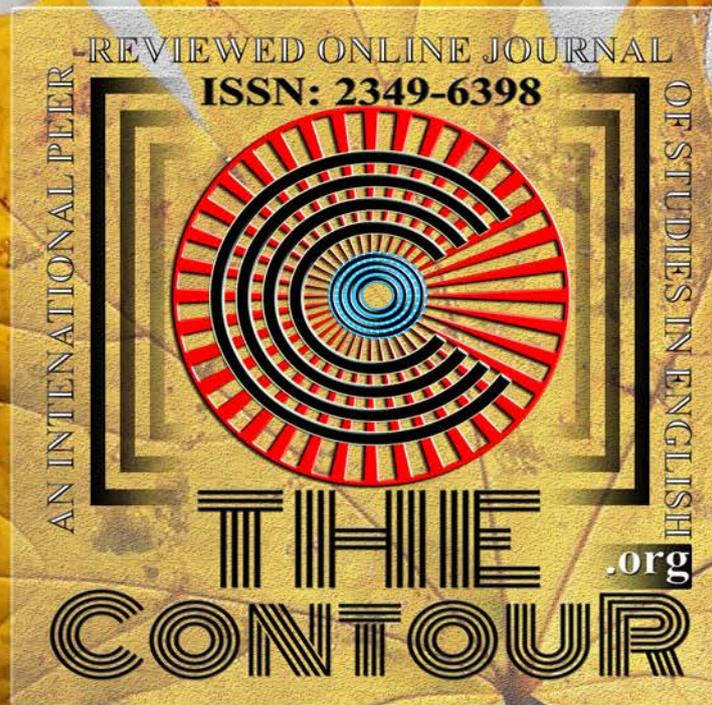


July & October, 2018



Volume 5 | Issue 1 & 2

   [thecontour2014](https://www.thecontour2014.com)



© THE CONTOUR

Volume 5, Issue 1 & 2

ISSN: 2349-6398

Website: www.thecontour.org

E-mail: thecontour.contact@gmail.com

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/TCJournal2014>

Twitter: twitter.com/thecontour2014

July & October, 2018

Editor-in-Chief

Dr. Susanta Kumar Bardhan

Cover Designing & Formatting

Suman Saha

Special Thanks

Samarpan Chatterjee

Publisher

Dr. Susanta Kumar Bardhan,

Suri, Birbhum, 731101, West Bengal,
India



BOOK REVIEW

Mishra, Prashant. 2015. *Modality in Hindi and English: A Socio-Semantic Study*. New Delhi: Bahri Publications. PP. 186.Rs. 899/-.

Reviewed by Dr. Susanta Kumar Bardhan

**Principal, Rampurhat College
West Bengal, India**

Modality is, according to linguist Khlebnikova (1976), “a conceptual category, a type of meaning, or a complex of meanings with various reflexes in languages” and “is expressed principally in a generalized form, in the imperative and conjunctive moods, and also in the lexical meanings of modal verbs and certain lexical units”. It is thus a notional category used to perform various communicative functions. Modality is expressed linguistically by a number of devices like modals, modal auxiliaries, quasi auxiliaries, adjectival and participial expressions, nominal expressions, lexical verbs, etc. (Perkins 1983). In addition, modality is manifested in orthographic devices like punctuation, suprasegmental features like stress and intonation-contour and verbal categories like tense. The use of such devices varies from language to language. It is not that all the languages take resort to similar kind system or device for conveying the modality in speech.

In the book under review, the author Prashant Mishra (2015) has attempted to explore the different ways of expression of modality in Hindi and English from the socio-semantic perspective. This book is, as stated in the Foreword to the book, a result of the author’s extensive research conducted as a part of M. Phil course of study CIEFL, Hyderabad. This book consists of six chapters, two appendices and a detailed bibliography. The first three chapters are devoted to the theoretical issues and aspects related modality, theoretical frameworks prevalent and the theoretical framework proposed for the present study based on hypothesis.

Chapter I introduces the subject and builds the conceptual background by presenting a critique of modality, mood and modal auxiliaries. In it the author has attempted to remove misconceptions relating to various notions prevailing the about the notions of modality, mood and modal auxiliaries. **Chapter II** titled ‘Functional Approaches to the Study of Language’ provides in brief an account of different functional approaches to the study of language contributing the making and development of functional linguistics. It has been argued that the functional approaches like speech act, pragmatics, systemic, cooperative principle, politeness principle, etc., have widened the scope of study of language in relation to its use, usage and applicability in broader societal interaction. The description of different functional concepts and approaches in this chapter leads to the building out of the theoretical framework that has been discussed and applied in the subsequent chapters. **Chapter III** is devoted to the projection of the theoretical framework and the methodology adopted in the collection and the subsequent analyses of the various data. It deals



with the socio-semantic framework and attempts to explain how the approach chosen in this study is different from that of the earlier ones. The earlier approaches were primarily concerned with the formal aspects of language study. A socio-semantic approach based on Hallidayan systemic functional linguistic model gives priority to the social aspect of language use and “takes into consideration non-linguistic details relating to socio-cultural situations and conventions, the goals, the topic, the shared interest and experience” (p 35). The writer has tried to argue that since modals are inherently ambiguous in terms of meaning and are used in various socio-cultural situations in different linguistic discourses, the approach chosen in this study has proved itself to be quite pertinent. For this study, one act plays written in English and Hindi are selected. The next two chapters study the functions of modals as traced in two languages and this study is carried out through various sociological and pragmatic parameters as found in related theories.

In **Chapter IV** titled ‘Modality in English’, a detailed and subtle discussion has been made on the uses of the modal verbs such as *may, might, can, could, will, shall, should, would, must, need, should, ought to* and this based on the use of socio-pragmatic parameters shows that “modals are not only multi-propositional but also multi-functional” (P 98) and they function various illocutionary acts leading to “various illocutionary functions like collaborative, conflictive, convivial and competitive depending on the illocutionary goals and the politeness strategies employed by the speaker” (P 98).

The present writer has used the study made in Chapter IV as the solid background for the study of modal and modality in Hindi in Chapter V. Here the writer has given review of the previous works on Hindi modals and modality. The core study concentrates on the use and function of several Hindi modals such as *sak, pā, par, cāhiye*, and *gā* as found in dramatic discourses from the semantic-pragmatic perspective.

It is thus evident that Chapters IV and V constitute the main work of this study in which the author has tried to analyse some utterances selected from one-act plays written in English and Hindi. Apart from the context of the utterance some sociological and pragmatic parameters have been chosen in order to explain the uses of modals in these two languages. The first attempt has been to trace the ambiguity inherent in the use of modals by paraphrasing the utterances into various meanings. To explore and establish find out the intended sense of the utterance, the study attempts to interpret the utterances produced in the contexts, not in isolation. This gives the work a solid foundation for analysis of the uses and functions of modals in relation to sociological and pragmatic parameters. This analysis reveals “a number of important findings regarding the use of modals in communicative discourses in English as well as in Hindi” (P 172). Here the author sums up his findings in the concluding chapter (Chapter VI, P172):

We discovered that semantic-grammatical approach is not sufficient to interpret the intended meaning of the modals. Contextual evidence, background information and shared knowledge between the interlocutors are necessary to disambiguate the utterance and to interpret the real intent of the speaker. We further noticed that parameters chosen by us for the analysis of modals on English and Hindi had been very well applied to the data of both



the languages. However, the socio-cultural factors that influence the use of modals significantly differ in two languages.

As the present study has looked into the uses of various semantic concepts in the socio-cultural situations and taken into account various communicative aspects modals, it, as claimed by the author, has pedagogical significance too. The book contains a brief account of the pedagogical implications of the study, so far as the teaching of English as a second language is concerned. The chapter concludes with the suggestions and scope for further research in this arena and allied ones. The further research in this line will, as the author hopes, help us understand, distinguish and analyse various socio-cultural situations that influence the use of modals in English and Hindi. Such knowledge is expected to help the English teachers analyse the errors of Hindi learners of English in the use of English modals and thereby guide them to overcome the errors in this area.

The writer deserves appreciation for such a rigorous study concentrated on the linguistic and sociolinguistic aspects of a very important component in our communicative discourse. The meticulously chosen dramatic texts and speeches for the study have given a novel perspective in the arena of socio-semantic study of different linguistic components within the ambit of communication in socio-cultural set-up. Thus, this work, it is firmly hoped, will generate interest among the future researchers in this field to carry out researches on the use and functions of modality and modals in other languages and other such aspects languages from the communicative, semantic-pragmatic perspective. The book has thus added a new and novel arena of knowledge in the world of both theoretical and applied linguistics in wider sense.

Work Cited:

Khlebnikova, I. B. 1976. *The Conjunctive Mood in English*. The Hague: Mouton.

Perkins, M. R. 1983. 'The Core Meanings of English Modals'. *Journal of Linguistics*. 18. 245-273.

Bio-note: Dr. Susanta Kumar Bardhan is Principal, Rampurhat College, West Bengal, India.

CONTOUR