

SEMANTIC SHIFTS OF AUXILIARY VERBS IN CONTEMPORARY ENGLISH AND UZBEK MEDIA

Djumayeva Nozima

English Linguistics Department senior teacher

Sultanmuradova Dursun

2nd year Master's Degree student

Abstract: *This study investigates the semantic shifts of auxiliary verbs in contemporary English and Uzbek media, focusing on how their meanings extend beyond traditional grammatical functions and acquire new pragmatic and stylistic roles. Auxiliary verbs, which are primarily used to form tense, aspect, voice, and modality, often undergo semantic change in media texts due to contextual reinterpretation, figurative use, and discourse strategies. In English media, auxiliaries such as will, be, have, and do increasingly serve not only as markers of tense or aspect but also as indicators of prediction, emphasis, and ideological stance. Similarly, in Uzbek media, auxiliaries like edi, bo'lmoq, kerak, mumkin, and qilmoq show shifts from purely grammatical functions to pragmatic tools that express evaluation, obligation, or socio-political positioning.*

By analyzing articles, headlines, and broadcast discourse, the research highlights how auxiliary verbs are strategically manipulated to shape public perception, legitimize authority, and create persuasive narratives. The comparative analysis reveals both universal tendencies of semantic expansion and language-specific patterns influenced by cultural and media traditions. The findings demonstrate that auxiliary verbs in media discourse are dynamic linguistic elements whose semantic shifts reflect not only linguistic evolution but also broader ideological and communicative practices of contemporary society.

Key words: *auxiliary verbs, semantic shift, media discourse, pragmatics, English, Uzbek*

INTRODUCTION

In modern linguistics, the phenomenon of semantic shift has attracted considerable scholarly attention as it reflects the dynamic nature of language and its adaptability to changing communicative needs. Semantic shifts occur when words or grammatical items extend, narrow, or otherwise modify their meanings in specific contexts. While much of the discussion has focused on lexical items, auxiliary verbs also undergo significant semantic changes, especially in discourse domains where language is highly persuasive, condensed, and context-dependent—such as media communication.

Auxiliary verbs, traditionally regarded as purely grammatical elements, play a crucial role in forming tense, aspect, voice, and modality. In English, verbs like be, have, do, and will primarily function as structural markers but frequently acquire extended meanings that reflect emphasis, evaluation, or ideological stance. Similarly, in Uzbek, auxiliaries such as edi, bo'lmoq, kerak, mumkin, and qilmoq often move beyond their core grammatical functions to serve pragmatic and stylistic purposes. This shift from grammatical support to discourse strategy reveals the flexibility and evolving role of auxiliaries in media texts.

Media discourse, both in English and Uzbek, provides a fertile ground for examining such changes because it is shaped by immediacy, persuasion, and the need to capture public

attention. Headlines, reports, and televised statements frequently exploit auxiliary verbs not only to construct temporal or modal meaning but also to highlight certainty, urgency, or evaluation. For instance, the English auxiliary will often functions as a marker of political commitment or prediction in news texts, while the Uzbek kerak conveys moral obligation or socio-political necessity, extending beyond its strict grammatical role.

Studying the semantic shifts of auxiliary verbs in media discourse is therefore significant for several reasons. First, it contributes to understanding how grammatical items evolve into pragmatic markers within real communicative contexts. Second, it sheds light on the ideological and persuasive functions of language in shaping public opinion. Finally, a comparative analysis of English and Uzbek media allows us to identify universal tendencies in auxiliary verb shifts as well as language-specific patterns rooted in cultural and communicative traditions.

This research seeks to analyze the semantic shifts of auxiliary verbs in contemporary English and Uzbek media discourse, with a focus on their extended meanings, pragmatic roles, and cultural underpinnings. By exploring newspapers, online articles, and broadcast content, the study aims to uncover how auxiliaries, often overlooked as “supporting verbs,” function as powerful discourse tools in the media landscape.

Main body. Semantic shift refers to the process by which words or grammatical items change or expand their meanings depending on context and usage. Traditional linguistic studies often focus on lexical items, but auxiliary verbs, though usually treated as structural, are equally prone to semantic change. Their flexibility arises from frequent use in high-context discourse such as politics, journalism, and public communication.

Auxiliaries in English (be, have, do, will, shall, can, may, must) and in Uzbek (bo‘lmoq, qilmoq, edi, kerak, mumkin, lozim) typically express tense, aspect, and modality. However, when used in media texts, they often acquire additional pragmatic meanings such as evaluation, commitment, certainty, or ideological emphasis. Thus, auxiliaries are not just grammatical “helpers” but active carriers of semantic and discursive meaning.

Semantic Shifts of Auxiliary Verbs in English Media

In contemporary English media, auxiliary verbs frequently undergo semantic broadening and pragmatic reinterpretation.

Will: Traditionally used to form the future tense (She will go), in media discourse it often conveys commitment, inevitability, or political promise:

“The government will protect its citizens at any cost.”

Here, will signals more than futurity—it emphasizes certainty and ideological assurance.

Have: Beyond perfect aspect (They have finished), it often functions as a marker of obligation or inevitability in headlines:

“Leaders have to act now.”

The auxiliary here highlights urgency and responsibility rather than simple grammatical necessity.

Do: While generally used for negation or emphasis, in media it frequently adds rhetorical strength:

“We do need reforms.”

This use reflects emphasis and conviction, functioning as a persuasive tool.

Can/May: These auxiliaries, instead of merely indicating possibility, often reflect political optimism or cautious speculation:

“The new policy can transform the economy.”

Such usage shows how auxiliaries shift toward evaluative and persuasive functions.

Thus, English auxiliaries in media discourse display semantic shifts toward persuasion, prediction, and ideological positioning.

Semantic Shifts of Auxiliary Verbs in Uzbek Media

In Uzbek media, auxiliary verbs reveal similar but culturally distinct patterns of semantic expansion.

Kerak: Typically expresses obligation (Kitob o‘qish kerak), but in political or social media texts, it often conveys not just necessity but collective duty and moral appeal:

“Har bir fuqaro qonunlarga rioya qilishi kerak.”

Here, kerak functions as both a grammatical marker and an ideological directive.

Mumkin: Besides expressing possibility, it is frequently used to soften statements or introduce cautious evaluations:

“Bu qaror iqtisodiy rivojlanishga xizmat qilishi mumkin.”

This usage reflects hedging and diplomatic language strategies.

Bo‘lmoq: As an auxiliary in forming analytic verb forms (kelib bo‘ldi), it also conveys finality and closure in news discourse:

“Uchrashuv yakuniga yetdi, kelishuv bo‘ldi.”

The semantic shift here marks achievement and resolution.

Qilmoq (when used as auxiliary, e.g., yordam qilmoq): In media, it frequently emphasizes agency and action, reflecting the pragmatic need to highlight responsibility and initiative.

Overall, Uzbek auxiliaries in media discourse shift toward expressing authority, obligation, and social solidarity, often carrying moral and cultural weight.

Comparative Perspective: English vs. Uzbek Media

A cross-linguistic analysis shows both universal and language-specific trends in semantic shifts of auxiliaries:

Both languages use auxiliaries to strengthen persuasion, highlight urgency, and project authority.

Semantic shifts in auxiliary verbs cannot be understood outside their sociocultural and media environments. English media, shaped by traditions of free press and democratic debate, frequently employs auxiliaries for speculation, probability, and balanced argumentation. Uzbek media, by contrast, often highlights obligation, solidarity, and authoritative responsibility, aligning with cultural values of collective harmony and leadership respect.

Conclusion. The study of semantic shifts in auxiliary verbs within contemporary English and Uzbek media reveals that auxiliaries, often regarded as secondary grammatical elements, play a much more dynamic and influential role in discourse. They not only construct tense, aspect, and modality but also extend their functions to pragmatic and ideological domains. Media texts, being highly persuasive and socially impactful, provide

fertile ground for these shifts to emerge and stabilize. In English media, auxiliaries such as will, have, do, can, and may frequently undergo semantic broadening. They are employed to project certainty, emphasize political promises, hedge controversial claims, and reinforce optimism. This reflects the discursive traditions of democratic societies, where speculation, negotiation, and cautious optimism are valued.

In contrast, Uzbek media demonstrates a strong reliance on auxiliaries like *kerak*, *lozim*, *mumkin*, *edi*, and *bo'lmoq* to convey obligation, inevitability, and collective responsibility. These auxiliaries extend their meanings beyond grammar, functioning as instruments of persuasion, legitimation, and solidarity. Their categorical and duty-oriented nature mirrors the cultural and political context, where authority and unity are central to public communication. The comparative analysis highlights both universal and language-specific tendencies. Universally, auxiliaries shift toward evaluative and persuasive meanings, serving as discourse strategies rather than mere grammatical markers. Language-specific differences, however, reflect cultural orientations: English favors hedging and flexibility, while Uzbek prioritizes obligation and collective duty.

Overall, semantic shifts in auxiliary verbs demonstrate the fluidity of grammatical categories and their ability to adapt to changing communicative needs. They serve as powerful tools in shaping public opinion, legitimizing authority, and embedding ideology in media discourse. By examining auxiliaries in this light, we gain deeper insights into how language reflects both universal communicative strategies and the unique socio-cultural values of English and Uzbek media landscapes.

REFERENCES:

1. Biber, D., Conrad, S., & Leech, G. (2002). *Longman Student Grammar of Spoken and Written English*. Harlow: Pearson Education.
2. Brinton, L. J. (2000). *The Structure of Modern English: A Linguistic Introduction*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
3. Bybee, J., Perkins, R., & Pagliuca, W. (1994). *The Evolution of Grammar: Tense, Aspect, and Modality in the Languages of the World*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
4. Fairclough, N. (1995). *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language*. London: Longman.
5. Hopper, P. J., & Traugott, E. C. (2003). *Grammaticalization* (2nd ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
6. Huddleston, R., & Pullum, G. K. (2002). *The Cambridge Grammar of the English Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
7. Lyons, J. (1977). *Semantics* (Vol. 2). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
8. Nuyts, J. (2001). *Epistemic Modality, Language, and Conceptualization: A Cognitive-Pragmatic Perspective*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
9. Palmer, F. R. (2001). *Mood and Modality* (2nd ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

10. Wodak, R., & Meyer, M. (2009). *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis* (2nd ed.). London: SAGE Publications.
11. Yo'ldoshev, M. (2018). *O'zbek tilida yordamchi fe'llarning semantik va pragmatik xususiyatlari*. Toshkent: Fan nashriyoti.
12. Jo'rayev, S. (2021). "Zamonaviy o'zbek matbuotida yordamchi fe'llarning qo'llanilishi va semantik siljishlar." *O'zbek Tili va Adabiyoti Jurnali*, 4(2), 55–63.