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**MODAL VERBS WITH THE MEANING OF REPROACH IN CONTEMPORARY ENGLISH
(ON THE MATERIAL OF N. HORNBY'S NOVEL «HI-FI»)**

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The category of modality is not typical for the Russian-speaking population. This causes difficulties in understanding and learning foreign languages, which have such grammatical category as modality. But when it comes to the English language, where this grammatical category is wide-spread in written and oral speech and has some specific features of its usage, one cannot avoid dealing with modal verbs and trying to understand their meaning. This article describes modality as a peculiar grammatical category and dwells on the group of modal verbs with the meaning of reproach.

Modal verbs do not denote actions or states, but only show the attitude of the speaker towards the action expressed by the infinitive in combination with which they form compound verbal modal predicate. There are 12 modal verbs in English. They are: *can/could, may/might, must, have (got) to, need, be to, should, ought to, shall, will, dare*. Modal verbs may show that the action (or state, or process) is viewed by the speaker as possible, obligatory, doubtful, certain or advisable. [1, p. 232]

According to the meaning, the modal verbs are divided into several groups. They are the modal verbs with the meaning of obligation, necessity and absence of necessity, prohibition, order, possibility, asking for advice, emotional colouring, criticism or reproach and others. [2, p. 143–160]

The aim of this article is to pay attention to the group of the modal verbs with the meaning of *criticism/reproach* and explain the usage of these verbs by the example of the novel «High Fidelity» («Hi-Fi», 1995) written by Nick Hornby.

The modal verbs denoting criticism/reproach like all other modal verbs have a degree of emotional colouring, and sometimes this degree is extremely high. In some cases these modal verbs can express negative relation of the speaker to the action or the state. The modal verbs, which belong to this group, are *can, may, should* and *ought to*. We should mention that such modal verbs as *can* and *may* are used in the forms *could* and *might*, when they are used in this meaning.

Nick Hornby used a great amount of such verbs in his novel «High Fidelity to emphasize the emotions of the main characters and add emotional colouring to their speech and thoughts.

Nick Hornby (17th April 1957) is a British writer. He was born in Redhill, which is in the Surrey County. He got education in Cambridge University, where he studied Literature and then worked as a lecturer of English. At the age of 26, he started his career as a writer and journalist. He began his literature career by writing plays. But they were not successful. Then he started to read Anne Tyler, Raymond Carver, Richard Ford, and Lorrie Moore, whose books inspired him and helped Hornby choose his literary way and style.

His first book was a collection of critical essays on American writers, titled «Contemporary American Fiction» (1992). But Hornby's best-known books are the internationally bestselling novels «High Fidelity» (1995), «About a Boy» (1998), «How To Be Good» (2001), «A Long Way Down» (2005) and «Juliet, Naked» (2009). His non-fiction works include a collection of Hornby's essays on books and culture. He is also the author of «Slam» (2007), which is vintage Hornby for teenagers.

Nick Hornby is the owner of many prestigious awards such as the E.M. Forster Award by the American Academy of Arts and Letters (1999), the National Book Critics Circle Award in the USA (2002), the 2005 Whitbread Novel Award (2005), British Sports Book Awards (2012) and many others. Many films are based on Hornby's books («About a Boy», «A Long Way Down», and «High Fidelity»).

In his book «High Fidelity» Nick Hornby explores the world of breakups, makeups and what it is to be in love [3]. That is why the presence of reproaching and criticizing modal verbs is quite natural.

The modal verb *could* is widespread in the novel in the meaning of criticism. For example:

«But she could have tried to tell me! She could at least have given me another couple of days to put things right! » [4, p. 5].

These thoughts of the main character express his reproach and misunderstanding about his ex-girlfriend and the reason for their breakup. He criticized his partner, who did not explain the reason of the ending of their relationships and did not give him one more chance.

From the grammatical point of view we should mention the usage of such construction as *could + perfect infinitive (have tried/ have given)*. In this case it is the only possible variant, because the main character spoke about the past event and the perfect infinitive shows us this time reference.

«We couldn't fill a room... We couldn't project the way some couples can. » [4, p. 23].

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These words are the opinion of the main character about the breakup of his last relationships. He reproached his girlfriend and himself. He emphasizes that they are absolutely different and even «... *couldn't fill a room*» and it irritates him.

The fact of their difference is a permanent one. Grammatically it is shown by the usage of such construction as *could + non-perfect infinitive (fill/project)*, when we speak about the reproaching meaning of *could*. This construction emphasizes the permanence of the action or state.

All in all we counted 24 cases when the verb *could* is used in the text. Most of the sentences are not negative or interrogative and refer the action to the past. Usually the modal verb *could* in the meaning of reproach is used with the perfect infinitive, but the non-perfect infinitive form is also possible.

The verb *may* is not so common in this meaning, but like the verb *can* it is mostly used when the speaker tells about the past. In the meaning of reproach the verb *may* is used in the form *might*, and usually in the combination with the perfect infinitive.

«*You might as well ask people if they'd like to take a year off and travel around the world with you...*» [4, p. 166].

Here the main character thought about his solitary life and reproached himself that he did not communicate with his friends and colleagues. He made his own private world, where there was no place for others.

Here he reproaches his usual state, that is why the non-perfect infinitive form *ask* was used.

«...*that I might have found within myself, if I'd looked hard enough.*» [4, p. 176].

These words are the reflections of the main character about his life. He thought he was the only reason for all his bad luck. He criticized his past life and the past itself.

This sentence is a kind of the conditional one. Moreover it is a conditional sentence of the second type. The sentences of this type are usually used when we speak about past events which cannot be changed. That is why the usage of *might + perfect infinitive is necessary*. It is worth to say that in this kind of sentences modal verbs *might* and *could* emphasize both reproach and regret.

The verb «*may*» is not as common as the verb *can*, and was used in the text only 6 times.

Speaking about the modal verbs *should* and *ought to* it is worth noting that they are not common in the meaning of reproach, and we did not find any of them in the novel. But in the other resources these verbs are usually used when the speaker relates about the present.

Making a conclusion it is necessary to emphasize the following important points:

1. The most common modal verbs which have the meaning of reproach or criticism are *can* and *may*.
2. The verbs *can* and *may* in the meaning of reproach are always used in the forms *could* and *might* (usually with the perfect infinitive).
3. The form of the infinitive indicates the time reference.
4. The modal verbs *could* and *might* may be observed in the conditional sentences of the second type with the additional meaning of regret.
5. The modal verbs *should* and *ought to* are not common in the meaning of criticism, but if they are found in this meaning, they usually refer the action to the present.
6. The usage of modal verbs in this meaning is common for the colloquial speech.
7. The novel «*High Fidelity*» by Nick Hornby tells the story of man's ups and downs, people's relationships, their breakups and makeups. This is the life story, and as any life it could not do without criticizing and reproaching. The story is full of self-analysis, which makes the usage of such verbs necessary to emphasize the emotional state of a character.

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