NEED

Non-modal verb

On the one hand, the verb **need** can be used as an ordinary verb and has the same forms as an ordinary verb. The third person singular ends with an **s**, and questions and negatives are formed with **do**. As an ordinary verb, need is normally followed by an infinitive with **to**:

- Paco needed to speak English. Do you need to improve your English too? ~ No, I don't need to improve my English. But I need a dictionary because I have problems with vocabulary.

- You don't need to look for an interpretor in Africa if you can speak English.

In this sense, when we are talking about **necessity**, we generally prefer **need to / do not need to**.

Modal verb

In the other format, **need** behaves as a modal verb, like **can, could**, **must should**, etc. It has the same forms as modal auxiliary verbs: the third person singular has no **s**, questions and negatives are made without **do**. In this format, **need** is followed by an infinitive without **to**:

- You needn't speak Spanish in Sierra Leone. You need speak English.
- Sonia, need I phone you when I leave? ~ No, you needn't. I will phone you.

In this sense, we are talking more about **obligation** and giving **permission** to someone **not to do something**. Note also that as a modal verb it is most commonly used in **negative sentences** and sometimes in **questions**.

Compare the following alternatives to **needn't** and **need to** in the examples below:

- You needn't travel by plane if you don't want to.
  Don't feel obliged to travel by plane if you don't want to.

- You don't need to be bilingual to communicate in another language.
  You don't have to be a bilingual person to communicate in another language.

doesn't dare to - daren't