



Unit 4 (b)

Modality

The area between “yes” and “no”

Grammar presentation given on 28.xi.2017

Robert Spence
Angewandte Sprachwissenschaft
Universität des Saarlandes



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- 5 To understand the difference between the two ways in which [negative] POLARITY can be expressed – [direct] and [transferred].
- 6 To understand the difference between the [median] VALUE of MODALITY (‘will’) and the [outer] VALUES (either [high] ‘must’ or [low] ‘may’), by studying how they interact with [transferred] [negative] POLARITY.



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- 7 Have I forgotten anything?



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 - [low] needn't, doesn't/didn't need to, doesn't/didn't have to

The image shows two large, stylized Greek letters, gamma (γ) and rho (ρ), in a dark teal color. They are positioned in the upper right quadrant of the slide, overlapping the 'Modality' header and the 'Goals' bar.

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- *need* and *dare* are 'on the way out' of the system
- *better* may be 'on the way in' (we better let it in, bettern't we?)
- Even if verbs come in, or go out, or shift around within the system – wenn du magst ('wenn du das tun willst'); wenn du vermagst, das zu tun ('wenn du das tun kannst') – the ARCHITECTURE of the system remains the same, with [high], [median], [low] values.

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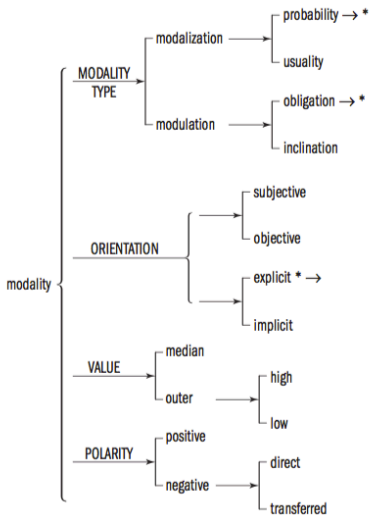
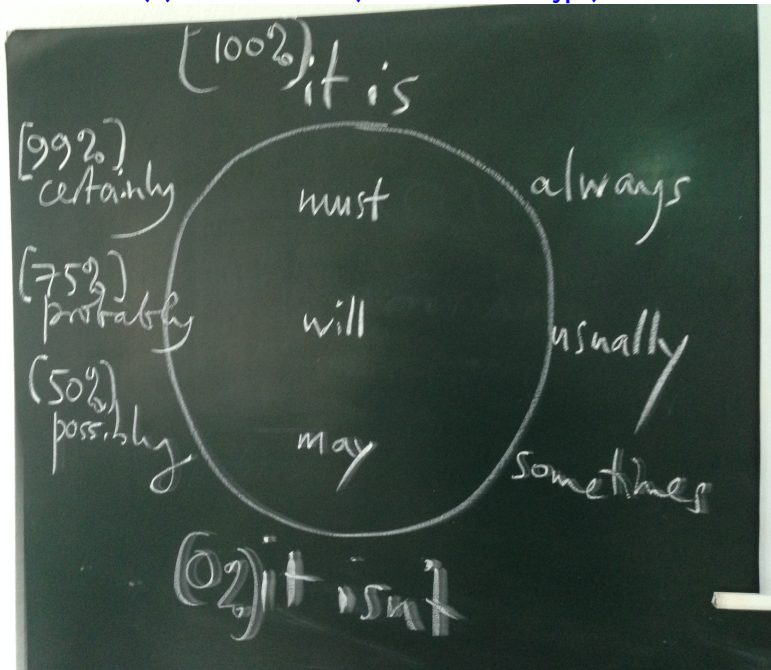


Fig. 4-25 System network of MODALITY

Simultaneous systems, so $4 \times 4 \times 3 \times 3$ combinations; in reality (* → → *) only 12×9 .

MODALITY TYPE and VALUE (1) — MODALIZATION (the “indicative” type)





- This is MODALIZATION (the “indicative” type of MODALITY).
- It spans the gap between “it is” and “it isn’t”.
- It is typically expressed by either a modal verb, or a modal adverb, or both together:
 - that’ll be Professor Steiner at the door (‘right now’)
 - that’s probably Professor Steiner at the door
 - that’ll probably be Professor Steiner at the door
- There are two dimensions:
 - PROBABILITY (certainly/probably/possibly) and USUALITY (“indefinite frequency”) (always/usually/sometimes)

PROBABILITY and USUALITY compared:

Modality

γρ

Goals

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- cf. flipping a coin: probability of Heads is 50%, so if you flipped the coin 100 times you would expect to get Heads approx. 50 times and Tails approx. 50 times.



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- Two different ways of expressing less-than-certain knowledge: paradigmatically ('either-yes-or-no': how likely?) or syntagmatically ('both-yes-and-no': how often? (how usual?))



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- Adverbs expressing usuality are sometimes called 'adverbs of indefinite frequency'; like modal adverbs of probability they are part of the Mood element, just like the Subject and the Finite and the Polarity – because they're not just part of WHAT you're asserting, they're part of the ACT OF ASSERTING it !!

'Double' modality

Modality

γρ

Goals



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- if it's the same VALUE each time, it counts once:
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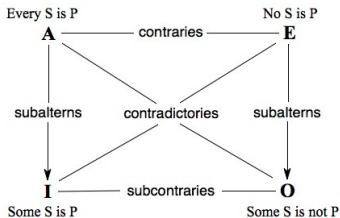
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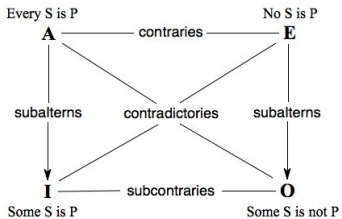


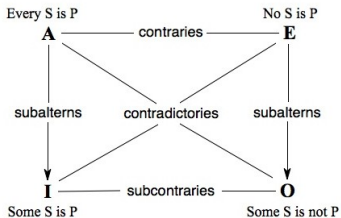
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 - that certainly might be him -> it's certain that it's possible that it's him

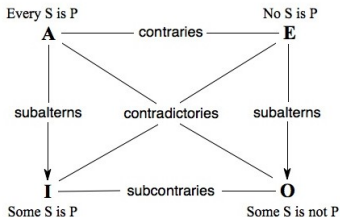


- Term “A” (= universal affirmative): *All Australians are the descendants of convicts* (cf. *Australians are certainly... Australians are always...*)
- Term “I” (= particular affirmative): *Some Australians are...* (cf. *Australians are possibly... Australians are sometimes...*)

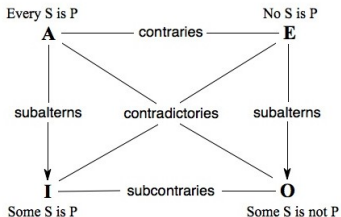




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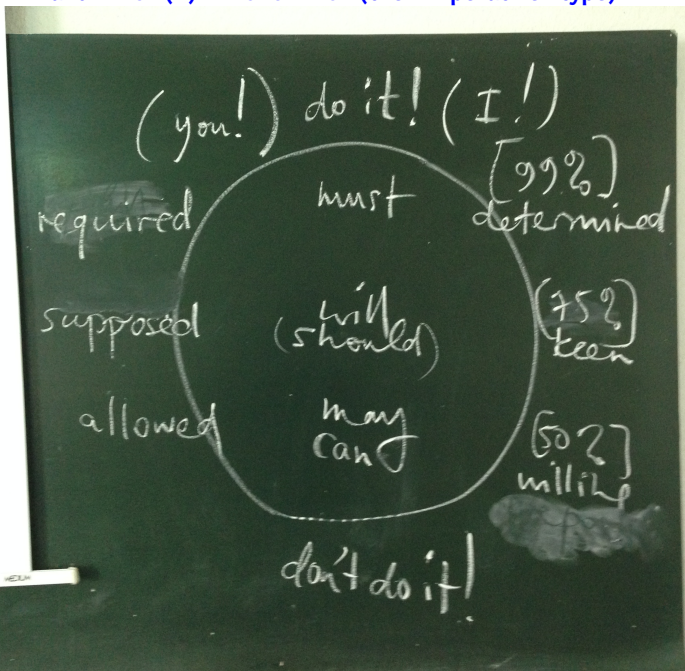


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 - 1) In real life, if we're absolutely certain, we just say "they are"; if we say "they must be", it means that we're slightly less than 100% certain
 - 2) We add a term for 'less certain than certain, but more certain than possible': (*they'll be descendants of convicts* etc.)

MODALITY TYPE and VALUE (2) — MODULATION (the “imperative” type)



MODULATION: OBLIGATION and INCLINATION (a.k.a. READINESS/ABILITY)

γρ

Goals

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γρ

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- This is MODULATION (the “imperative” type of MODALITY).
- It spans the gap between “do it!” and “don’t do it!”



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- This is MODULATION (the “imperative” type of MODALITY).
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- INCLINATION (a.k.a. READINESS/ABILITY) (‘I!’) (‘want to’) (determined / keen / willing)

Knowledge and Power

Modality

γρ

Goals



- Modality expresses intermediate degrees of knowledge and power.



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- Modality expresses intermediate degrees of knowledge and power.
- Modalization: Probability ('epistemic modality')
- Modulation: Obligation ('deontic modality')

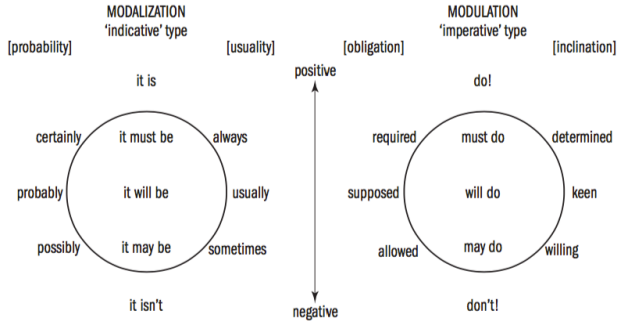


Fig. 10-6 Diagram showing relation of modality to polarity and mood

Combining [outer] VALUE and [transferred] [negative] POLARITY (1)

(100%) it isn't

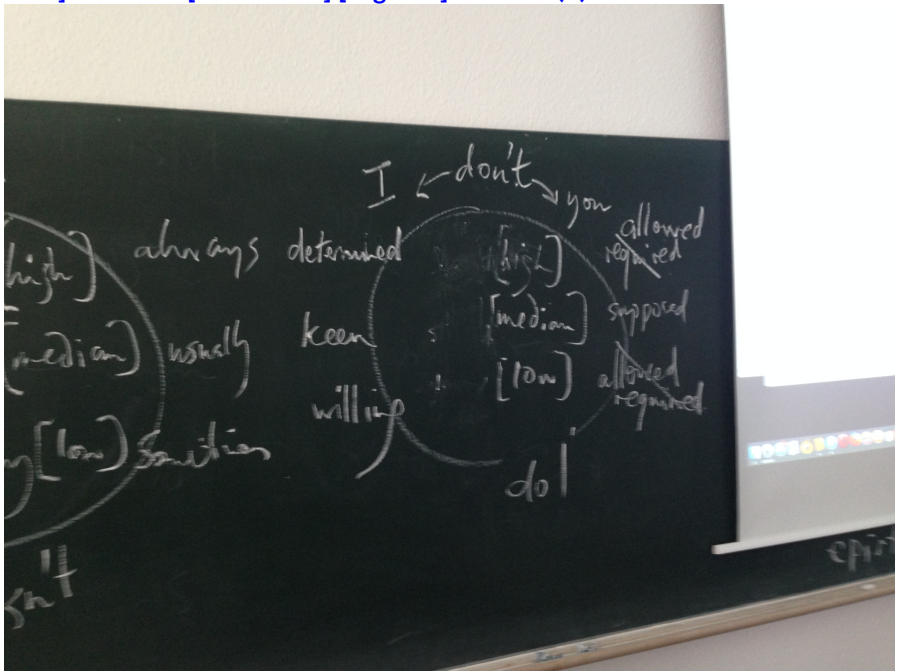
~~(99%)~~
certain possible [high]

(75%)
probable [medium]

~~(50%)~~
possible certain [low]

(0%) it is

[outer] VALUE and [transferred] [negative] POLARITY (2)





[outer] VALUE and [transferred] [negative] POLARITY (3)

Note that probability, in itself, can only ever be positive, never negative (i.e. it is always somewhere between p 0 (0%) and p 1 (100%)). However, you can 'metaphorically' 'transfer' the negative marker – from the process itself to the Modality on the process. In so doing, you cause something interesting to happen:

[outer:high]

[negative:direct]

[negative:transferred]

it's **certain** that it isn't him – it isn't **possible** that it's him

[median]

[negative:direct]

[negative:transferred]

it's **probable** that it isn't him – it isn't **probable** that it's him

[outer:low]

[negative:direct]

[negative:transferred]

it's **possible** that it isn't him – it isn't **certain** that it's him

Similar things happen with all four types of modality. (Try it!)



ORIENTATION [subjective] / [objective] and EXPLICITNESS [implicit] / [explicit]

The explicit forms (which are ‘grammatical metaphors’) are only possible with PROBABILITY and OBLIGATION, not (yet) with USUALITY or INCLINATION.

For highschool literary appreciation essays choose explicitly subjective assessments of probability.

For university science essays dress up your assessments of probability by making them explicitly objective.



ORIENTATION [subjective] / [objective] and EXPLICITNESS [implicit] / [explicit]

The explicit forms (which are ‘grammatical metaphors’) are only possible with PROBABILITY and OBLIGATION, not (yet) with USUALITY or INCLINATION.

- 1) I know that he did it (subjective: explicit) MOST SUBJECTIVE

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ORIENTATION [subjective] / [objective] and EXPLICITNESS [implicit] / [explicit]

The explicit forms (which are ‘grammatical metaphors’) are only possible with PROBABILITY and OBLIGATION, not (yet) with USUALITY or INCLINATION.

- 1) I know that he did it (subjective: explicit) MOST SUBJECTIVE
- 2) he must have done it (subjective: implicit)

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ORIENTATION [subjective] / [objective] and EXPLICITNESS [implicit] / [explicit]

The explicit forms (which are ‘grammatical metaphors’) are only possible with PROBABILITY and OBLIGATION, not (yet) with USUALITY or INCLINATION.

- 1) I know that he did it (subjective: explicit) MOST SUBJECTIVE
- 2) he must have done it (subjective: implicit)
- 3) he certainly did it (objective: implicit)

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ORIENTATION [subjective] / [objective] and EXPLICITNESS [implicit] / [explicit]

The explicit forms (which are ‘grammatical metaphors’) are only possible with PROBABILITY and OBLIGATION, not (yet) with USUALITY or INCLINATION.

- 1) I know that he did it (subjective: explicit) MOST SUBJECTIVE
- 2) he must have done it (subjective: implicit)
- 3) he certainly did it (objective: implicit)
- 4) it's certain that he did it (objective: explicit) MOST OBJECTIVE

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ORIENTATION [subjective] / [objective] and EXPLICITNESS [implicit] / [explicit]

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- 1) I know that he did it (subjective: explicit) MOST SUBJECTIVE
- 2) he must have done it (subjective: implicit)
- 3) he certainly did it (objective: implicit)
- 4) it's certain that he did it (objective: explicit) MOST OBJECTIVE
- 1) I demand that he do it (subjective: explicit) MOST SUBJECTIVE

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ORIENTATION [subjective] / [objective] and EXPLICITNESS [implicit] / [explicit]

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- 2) he must have done it (subjective: implicit)
- 3) he certainly did it (objective: implicit)
- 4) it's certain that he did it (objective: explicit) MOST OBJECTIVE

- 1) I demand that he do it (subjective: explicit) MOST SUBJECTIVE
- 2) he must do it (subjective: implicit)

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ORIENTATION [subjective] / [objective] and EXPLICITNESS [implicit] / [explicit]

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- 1) I know that he did it (subjective: explicit) MOST SUBJECTIVE
- 2) he must have done it (subjective: implicit)
- 3) he certainly did it (objective: implicit)
- 4) it's certain that he did it (objective: explicit) MOST OBJECTIVE

- 1) I demand that he do it (subjective: explicit) MOST SUBJECTIVE
- 2) he must do it (subjective: implicit)
- 3) he's required to do it (objective: implicit)

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ORIENTATION [subjective] / [objective] and EXPLICITNESS [implicit] / [explicit]

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- 4) it's certain that he did it (objective: explicit) MOST OBJECTIVE

- 1) I demand that he do it (subjective: explicit) MOST SUBJECTIVE
- 2) he must do it (subjective: implicit)
- 3) he's required to do it (objective: implicit)
- 4) it's required that he do it (objective: explicit) MOST OBJECTIVE

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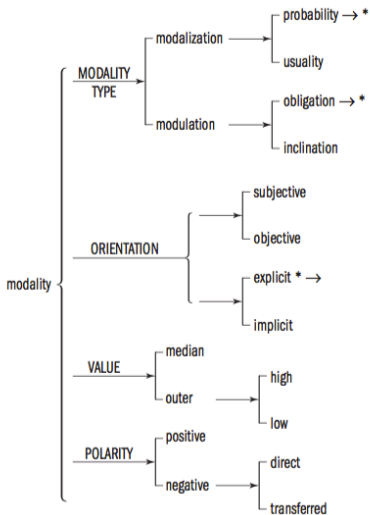


Fig. 4-25 System network of MODALITY

Simultaneous systems, so $4 \times 4 \times 3 \times 3$ combinations; in reality ($* \rightarrow \rightarrow *$) only 12×9 .

MODALITY TYPE and TENSE

Modality

γρ

Goals

MODALITY TYPE and TENSE

MODALIZATION is always tenseless (although combinable with **any** tense of the main verb); so the remote form means “remote in REALITY”.





MODALITY TYPE and TENSE

MODALIZATION is always tenseless (although combinable with **any** tense of the main verb); so the remote form means “remote in REALITY”. But

MODULATION can have **any** tense (combining with – basically – a tenseless main verb).



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MODALIZATION (“indicative” type):



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MODALIZATION (“indicative” type):

he may do it – ‘possibly he does it’



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MODALIZATION (“indicative” type):

he may do it – ‘possibly he does it’

he might do it – ‘very possibly he does it’



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MODALIZATION (“indicative” type):

he may do it – ‘possibly he does it’

he might do it – ‘very possibly he does it’

he may have done it – ‘possibly he did it’



MODALITY TYPE and TENSE

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he may do it – ‘possibly he does it’

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he may have done it – ‘possibly he did it’

he might have done it – ‘very possibly he did it’



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he may have done it – ‘possibly he did it’

he might have done it – ‘very possibly he did it’

(– the remote form (here: *might*) can mean ‘toned down’ (weaker),

OR ‘toned up’(stronger), depending on the tone contour used—)



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MODULATION (“imperative” type):



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MODULATION (“imperative” type):

he may do it – ‘I **allow** him to do it’



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MODULATION (“imperative” type):

he may do it – ‘I **allow** him to do it’

he is allowed to do it – ‘someone **allows** him to do it’



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he may do it – ‘I **allow** him to do it’

he is allowed to do it – ‘someone **allows** him to do it’

he was allowed to do it – ‘someone **allowed** him to do it’



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he may do it – ‘I **allow** him to do it’

he is allowed to do it – ‘someone **allows** him to do it’

he was allowed to do it – ‘someone **allowed** him to do it’

she said he might do it – ‘she said someone **allowed** him to do it’



MODALITY TYPE and TENSE

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he was allowed to do it – ‘someone **allowed** him to do it’

she said he might do it – ‘she said someone **allowed** him to do it’

she thought he might have done it –



MODALITY TYPE and TENSE

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he was allowed to do it – ‘someone **allowed** him to do it’

she said he might do it – ‘she said someone **allowed** him to do it’

she thought he might have done it –

‘even though he didn’t do it, she believed he **was allowed** to do it’?



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he was allowed to do it – ‘someone **allowed** him to do it’

she said he might do it – ‘she said someone **allowed** him to do it’

she thought he might have done it –

‘even though he didn’t do it, she believed he **was allowed** to do it’?

‘she considered it very possible that he did it’?



MODALITY TYPE and TENSE

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she thought he might have done it –

‘even though he didn’t do it, she believed he **was allowed** to do it’?

‘she considered it very possible that he did it’?

(there’s ambiguity here – but often it’s very subtle!!)

Combination of [future] time reference and PROBABILITY

Modality

γρ

Goals

Combination of [future] time reference and PROBABILITY

Normally, probability is tenseless (because you've chosen [modal] not [temporal] in the system FINITENESS TYPE a.k.a. MODAL DEIXIS).



Combination of [future] time reference and PROBABILITY

Normally, probability is tenseless (because you've chosen [modal] not [temporal] in the system FINITENESS TYPE a.k.a. MODAL DEIXIS).

(KNOCK KNOCK!)



Combination of [future] time reference and PROBABILITY

Normally, probability is tenseless (because you've chosen [modal] not [temporal] in the system FINITENESS TYPE a.k.a. MODAL DEIXIS).

(KNOCK KNOCK!)

That must be Professor Steiner = it is certainly him ('present')





Combination of [future] time reference and PROBABILITY

Normally, probability is tenseless (because you've chosen [modal] not [temporal] in the system FINITENESS TYPE a.k.a. MODAL DEIXIS).

(KNOCK KNOCK!)

That must be Professor Steiner = it is certainly him ('present')

(Who presided over the meeting?)



Combination of [future] time reference and PROBABILITY

Normally, probability is tenseless (because you've chosen [modal] not [temporal] in the system FINITENESS TYPE a.k.a. MODAL DEIXIS).

(KNOCK KNOCK!)

That must be Professor Steiner = it is certainly him ('present')
(Who presided over the meeting?)

It must have been Prof. Steiner = it was certainly him ('past')



Combination of [future] time reference and PROBABILITY

Normally, probability is tenseless (because you've chosen [modal] not [temporal] in the system FINITENESS TYPE a.k.a. MODAL DEIXIS).

(KNOCK KNOCK!)

That must be Professor Steiner = it is certainly him ('present')
(Who presided over the meeting?)

It must have been Prof. Steiner = it was certainly him ('past')
(Who will be chairman next year?)

Combination of [future] time reference and PROBABILITY

Normally, probability is tenseless (because you've chosen [modal] not [temporal] in the system FINITENESS TYPE a.k.a. MODAL DEIXIS).

(KNOCK KNOCK!)

That must be Professor Steiner = it is certainly him ('present')

(Who presided over the meeting?)

It must have been Prof. Steiner = it was certainly him ('past')

(Who will be chairman next year?)

It must be going to be Prof. Steiner = it will certainly be him ('future')





Combination of [future] time reference and PROBABILITY

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(KNOCK KNOCK!)

That must be Professor Steiner = it is certainly him ('present')
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It must have been Prof. Steiner = it was certainly him ('past')
(Who will be chairman next year?)

It must be going to be Prof. Steiner = it will certainly be him ('future')

But if instead of [high] VALUE ('certain') ('99%') you have [low] ('possible') ('50%'), then sometimes the modal verb can refer to the future:



Combination of [future] time reference and PROBABILITY

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(KNOCK KNOCK!)

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It must be going to be Prof. Steiner = it will certainly be him ('future')

But if instead of [high] VALUE ('certain') ('99%') you have [low] ('possible') ('50%'), then sometimes the modal verb can refer to the future:

It may rain tomorrow = perhaps it will rain ('future') ('50%')



Combination of [future] time reference and PROBABILITY

Normally, probability is tenseless (because you've chosen [modal] not [temporal] in the system FINITENESS TYPE a.k.a. MODAL DEIXIS).

(KNOCK KNOCK!)

That must be Professor Steiner = it is certainly him ('present')
(Who presided over the meeting?)

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(Who will be chairman next year?)

It must be going to be Prof. Steiner = it will certainly be him ('future')

But if instead of [high] VALUE ('certain') ('99%') you have [low] ('possible') ('50%'), then sometimes the modal verb can refer to the future:

It may rain tomorrow = perhaps it will rain ('future') ('50%')

People disagree about the meaning of "will" in:



Combination of [future] time reference and PROBABILITY

Normally, probability is tenseless (because you've chosen [modal] not [temporal] in the system FINITENESS TYPE a.k.a. MODAL DEIXIS).

(KNOCK KNOCK!)

That must be Professor Steiner = it is certainly him ('present')
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(Who will be chairman next year?)

It must be going to be Prof. Steiner = it will certainly be him ('future')

But if instead of [high] VALUE ('certain') ('99%') you have [low] ('possible') ('50%'), then sometimes the modal verb can refer to the future:

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It will rain tomorrow



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That must be Professor Steiner = it is certainly him ('present')
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It must have been Prof. Steiner = it was certainly him ('past')
(Who will be chairman next year?)

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But if instead of [high] VALUE ('certain') ('99%') you have [low] ('possible') ('50%'), then sometimes the modal verb can refer to the future:

It may rain tomorrow = perhaps it will rain ('future') ('50%')

People disagree about the meaning of "will" in:

It will rain tomorrow

Does it mean ('future') ('100%'), or ('future') ('75%')?



Combination of [future] time reference and PROBABILITY

Normally, probability is tenseless (because you've chosen [modal] not [temporal] in the system FINITENESS TYPE a.k.a. MODAL DEIXIS).

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(Who will be chairman next year?)

It must be going to be Prof. Steiner = it will certainly be him ('future')

But if instead of [high] VALUE ('certain') ('99%') you have [low] ('possible') ('50%'), then sometimes the modal verb can refer to the future:

It may rain tomorrow = perhaps it will rain ('future') ('50%')

People disagree about the meaning of "will" in:

It will rain tomorrow

Does it mean ('future') ('100%'), or ('future') ('75%')?

The sun will rise tomorrow at 6:45 a.m. means ('future') ('100%')



Combination of [future] time reference and PROBABILITY

Normally, probability is tenseless (because you've chosen [modal] not [temporal] in the system FINITENESS TYPE a.k.a. MODAL DEIXIS).

(KNOCK KNOCK!)

That must be Professor Steiner = it is certainly him ('present')
(Who presided over the meeting?)

It must have been Prof. Steiner = it was certainly him ('past')
(Who will be chairman next year?)

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But if instead of [high] VALUE ('certain') ('99%') you have [low] ('possible') ('50%'), then sometimes the modal verb can refer to the future:

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People disagree about the meaning of "will" in:

It will rain tomorrow

Does it mean ('future') ('100%'), or ('future') ('75%')?

The sun will rise tomorrow at 6:45 a.m. means ('future') ('100%')

Don't be fooled by grammarians pretending to be philosophers! The grammar of a natural human language IS its OWN philosophy, and DOES contain the notion '100% certain knowledge of the future'!!



- Your homework for next week is to complete Exercise Sheet 5, which was handed out in class and which contains a page from last summer semester's exam.

In case you missed the class, the exercise sheet is also available here:

<http://www.spence.saar.de/courses/grammar/questions04b/index.pdf>



Acknowledgements, further reading, other sources

Most of the ideas presented here come from M.A.K. Halliday, *An Introduction to Functional Grammar*, 2nd edition 1994 (“IFG2”) or 3rd edition 2004 (“IFG3”).

Further reading: Halliday 2004, chapter 4.5 and chapter 10.3 (or Halliday 1994, chapter 4.5 and chapter 10.4).

See also: Annabelle Lukin’s “prezi” slide on Modality (on Vimeo):

<https://vimeo.com/album/2028694/video/51422776>