CHAPTER 2

MODALITY IN ENGLISH

With the advent of the transformational grammarians, the dividing line between syntax and semantics has been found to be fuzzy and questionable (see Chomsky, 1965). However, for practical purposes arbitrary limits have to be set up in linguistic analysis. With a broad classification of the kinds and a sub-classification of the degrees of modality, this chapter deals with the different meanings of models in English. The various uses of the English models are established on the basis of illustrative data drawn from Palmer (1979b) and Ehrman (1956).

The kinds of modality that underly natural languages are epistemic, deontic and dynamic (cf. 1.5.1). 'Possibility' and 'necessity' are the two basic degrees of the modality system (cf. 1.5.2). Dynamic modality merits discussion under three sections: possibility, necessity and the degree associated with WILL.

2.1 Epistemic modality

Epistemic modality is the simplest and the clearest. It has the greatest degree of internal regularity and completeness. It is quite distinct from the other kinds. It expresses

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1Chapters 2 and 3 are based, for the most part, on Palmer (1979b).
the speaker's attitude to the truth of the proposition in the light of his personal knowledge of facts. It is the modality of propositions rather than actions, states, events, etc. For example, the proposition is stated separately in the subordinate that-clause in (1).

(1) ...and it may be that the family will disappear as the basis of civilization.

Epistemic possibility is denoted by MAY, and necessity, by MUST. These are the two basic degrees; further degrees of epistemic modality can be expressed by WILL or tentative forms like might, would and should.

2.1.1 Possibility

MAY indicates epistemic possibility and its accurate paraphrase is 'It is possible that...'. It is related to different kinds of propositions as follows:

Present or future states:

(2) They look foolish, and they may actually be wise. (present)

(3) You may not like the idea of it, but let me explain. (future)

Action in progress (present/future):

(4). Who may not have a very strong claim or who may be facing bitterness among their members. (present)
(5) So we may be seeing some changes in British industry from these students. (futur) Hab.

(6) He may go to London everyday when he gets his new job. Sing.

(7) I may go up at the end of August.

(8) On Thursday evening we may go out of town together.

(MUST is not used in a similar way.)

Con.

(9) Whatever John may say... ('John may say that...')

(10) However difficult it may be... ('It may be difficult..')

We consider here possible propositions. Quirk et al (1972: 97) use the label 'factual possibility' to refer to epistemic possibility.

2.1.2 Necessity

The modal MUST and the semi-modals BE BOUND TO and HAVE (GOT) TO are the three forms that express epistemic necessity in English. Halliday’s (1970b: 329) use of the term 'certainty' is not quite acceptable as it seems to express alethic rather than epistemic modality. Alethic modality is not relevant to language. The label 'logical necessity' used by Leech (1969: 203) and Quirk et al (1972: 102) is not appropriate either, as there are different kinds of logical necessity -
epistemic, deontic, dynamic, etc.

(i) Epistemic MUST usually occurs in the present. It seldom occurs with future time reference, because, if it does, it would be interpreted in terms of dynamic modality. The paraphrase 'It is necessary that...' is not really accurate. A better paraphrase would be 'The only possible conclusion is that...'. In the words of Karttunen (1972: 13), the role of epistemic MUST is "to indicate that the complement proposition is inferred but not yet known to be true independently". The appropriateness of the paraphrase 'The only possible conclusion is that...' is clearly illustrated in many examples.

(11) It must surely be a just a beautiful relic from the past.

(12) All the X-rays showed absolute negative. There was nothing wrong, so it must just be tension, I suppose.

(ii) BE BOUND TO has an epistemic sense in most of its occurrences.

(13) It's bound to come out though, I think... It's received such rave notices that somebody's bound to put it on.

(14) He is bound to suffer for this indiscretion.

It is significant that the main verb in most of the occurrences of BE BOUND TO is a verb of action relating to future time; but in some cases be is the main verb referring to the present time.
(15) The odds are bound to be with them in these tight situations. (present time)

By contrast, epistemic MUST refers only to the present state very commonly with the verb be.

BE BOUND TO and MUST are not identical in meaning. BE BOUND TO is the more certain and can almost be paraphrased as 'It is certain that...'. Moreover, it has little or no sense of 'conclusion'.

(16) John's bound to be in his office. ('more certain')
(17) John must be in his office. ('conclusion')

(16) is more likely to occur in a context where it has been questioned whether John is in his office, and the speaker wishes to assert as positively as he can that this, in fact, is the only possibility. (17), in contrast, occurs in a context where the speaker is drawing the most obvious conclusion in the light of some observable facts; say, for instance, the lights are on in John's office.

BE BOUND TO can be modified by almost whereas MUST cannot.

(18) What's almost bound to happen is, I shall leave Marlborough at about half past one.

BE BOUND TO with future time reference approaches sometimes the meaning 'It is inevitable that...' (which may not be wholly epistemic but partly dynamic).
(19) If the Government deals with the situation realistically the cost is bound to be great.

This is because the concept of inevitability is more appropriate to the future and that of conclusivity to the present.

(iii) The form HAVE (GOT) TO also expresses epistemic necessity.

(20) Something has got to give in this second half I think.

It is more commonly used in American English than in the British.

(21) You've got to be joking. (American English)

The more likely British form for (21) would be:

(22) You must be joking.

In British English there is an interesting contrast between HAVE TO and MUST as in:

(23) You must be mad to do that.

(24) You have to be mad to do that.

(23) is clearly epistemic - the conclusion from your action is that you are mad. (24) is dynamic - it states that being mad is a necessary condition for acting in that way.

Larkin (1969: 392) feels that the speaker of a MUST-sentence identifies himself with the proposition, whereas the speaker of a HAVE TO-sentence does not.
2.1.3 Epistemic WILL

A third degree of epistemic modality is expressed by epistemic WILL which refers to what it is reasonable to expect. It can be roughly paraphrased by 'A reasonable inference is that...'.

(25) Tell him Professor Cressage is involved—he will know Professor Cressage. (present time)

Palmer (1979b: 47) rejects his earlier suggestion (1974: 135) that will indicates probability. He feels now that will expresses a confident statement. Like must, it cannot normally be followed by a suggestion that the proposition may not be true.

(26) ?The French will be on holiday today, but I could be wrong about that.

WILL and MUST are both, then, more confident than is suggested by 'probable'. The essential difference between them is that while will indicates a confident statement, must suggests a confident conclusion from the evidence available. Compare:

(27) John will be in his office. ('confident statement')

(28) John must be in his office. ('conclusion')

The following sequence illustrates the difference between will and must.

(29) John will be in his office now. Yes, the lights are on, so he must be there.
Confident statement \(\rightarrow\) (observation) \(\rightarrow\) conclusion.

We can't think of any strict rules for the occurrence of will and must. What makes one or the other more appropriate is the semantic difference.

2.1.4 Tentative forms

**Might** and **would** are the tentative forms of the epistemic modals MAY and WILL. We also consider here what seems to be epistemic SHOULD. **Could** is a more difficult form and its discussion is left to a later section (cf. 3.5.1). Though **might**, **would** and SHOULD are past tense forms morphologically, they rarely mark past time. They are often tentative or unreal. Sometimes they may mark unreal conditionality.

**Might** indicates a little less certainty about the possibility.

(30) You think someone might be watching us.

Clearly **might** is the tentative or unreal form of MAY, but in epistemic modality it seems to have no clear implication of conditionality. **Would** is clearly the tentative form of WILL. A rough paraphrase might be 'I should think that...' or 'It would be reasonable to conclude that...'. Here tentativeness is a kind of conditional.

(31) Oh, well, how long would that be? - Two years.
(32) - all over the city, at this hour, housewives would be fussing over stoves.

Epistemic SHOULD does not express necessity; it expresses rather extreme likelihood or a reasonable assumption or conclusion.

(33) Well both of them should be on the Modern Board.
(34) You should be meeting those later on this afternoon.

But epistemic SHOULD implicitly allows for the speaker to be mistaken. This is clearly seen in the following example (provided it is interpreted in the epistemic sense; a dynamic interpretation is equally possible).

(35) Mitoff comes in, takes a stunning left hand to the chin or what should be a stunning left hand.

The commentator allows for the fact that it might not be what he thinks it is, a stunning left hand.

2.1.5 Subjectivity of epistemic modals

As seen earlier (1.4.2), epistemic modals are usually 'subjective'; i.e., the epistemic judgement is that of the speaker. The clearest evidence of the subjective ('performative') nature of epistemic modality is the fact that the relevant modals occur only in the present tense. This is because the judgement and the act of speaking are simultaneous and so can
only be present. There are, of course, some exceptions (3.4.1, 5.4.1).

2.2 Deontic modality

Deontic modality which is concerned with obligation, permission, prohibition, etc., is not as clear-cut as epistemic modality. However, on the basis of some uses, deontic modality can be recognised as a specific kind. Here again we have the two degrees of possibility and necessity. MAY and CAN denote deontic possibility, and MUST, deontic necessity. A third degree of deontic modality is denoted by SHALL.

2.2.1 Deontic and Performative

The kind of modality that is called deontic is basically performative. Palmer's (1974) term 'discourse oriented', although clumsy, is more accurate and illuminating than the term deontic. By uttering a modal a speaker may actually give permission (MAY, CAN), and make a promise or threat (SHALL), or lay an obligation (MUST). This 'discourse oriented' or 'performative' sense seems clear enough with regard to possibility and necessity:

(a) MAY, if not epistemic, is usually clearly performative; it gives permission. Unlike CAN it is not also used normally for dynamic possibility.
(b) HAVE (GOT) TO specifically denies any involvement by the speaker, and is therefore never performative; MUST, on the other hand, may or may not suggest his involvement. It is not always possible to distinguish between deontic and dynamic MUST. But the distinction deontic modality is justified by one use of MUST—its contrast with HAVE (GOT) TO.

Another argument in favour of deontic modality is that it accounts for one use of SHALL, which is clearly discourse oriented.

The criterion of being performative can be taken as a starting-point for defining the deontic modals. In the assertive forms and in the negative forms (where it is the event and not the modality that is negated), a deontic modal will be performative; it will give permission, lay an obligation, or make a promise. Moreover, there will normally be no past tense forms. Performatives, by their nature, cannot be in the past; the act takes place at the moment of speaking.

The definition can, however, be extended to include some uses that are not strictly performative but are related to performative uses:

(i) The modals are used in interrogation to ask permission, etc., (3.3.2). For this reason Palmer (1974) preferred the terms 'discourse orientation' and 'subject orientation'.
(ii) SHOULD and OUGHT TO can be included here. With these the speaker takes responsibility for the judgement without actually involving himself in an illocutionary act.

(iii) The modals are used for rules and regulations. These uses could be seen as reports of illocutionary acts by people in authority, but they are also often not clearly distinct from dynamic modality.

2.2.2 Possibility

Deontic possibility is essentially concerned with giving permission. But there is one curious 'extended' use of CAN, i.e., 'command'. The permission use of MAY and CAN is seen clearly in the following:

(36) If you want to recall the doctor, you may do so.

(37) Can I pinch a ciggie? - Course you can.

MAY is far more formal than CAN. The situation of (36) is that of a trial. Ehrman (1966: 12) observes that most of the occurrences of CAN ('permission') were in dialogue.

(38) Even though this is my rock you can use it sometimes.

Examples of MAY are usually from a very formal environment:

(39) I should be obliged if you could make other arrangements for your daughters. You may stay as long as you wish, of course....
Curiously, CAN is often used to convey a command, often of a brusque or somewhat impolite kind.

(40) Oh, you can leave me out, thank you very much.

Ehrman (1966: 13) has some good examples:

(41) 'I don't know what you're up to, but when Brenner - 'You can forget about Brenner, too', Curt said.
(42) You can tell Kayabashi-san that the back road is in very good condition and will be quite safe.

MAY also is used in such expressions as:

(43) You may take it from me.
(44) You may rest assured.

This is clearly deontic MAY, since CAN may also be used here especially in colloquial speech. In this use of CAN, a sarcastic permission may be interpreted as a command. This use of MAY and CAN is different from that of MUST. MUST has some implication of authority, either the speaker's own or that of some other source. On the other hand, CAN and MAY merely make very confident suggestions. In the case of CAN there is a tinge of sarcasm.

2.2.3 Necessity

Not all the occurrences of MUST are clearly deontic. Many seem to be neutral or indeterminate (2.4.1). Here we are
simply concerned with those occurrences in which the speaker clearly takes responsibility for the imposing of the necessity. The context makes this clear in:

(45) I've been telling Peter, as I've been telling several people, you know, 'you must get into permanent jobs', and I've been urging Peter to go back to school teaching or something, where he's very, very good.

Also, a speaker may report what is dauntically required by someone else as in:

(46) The University is saying 'These people must be expelled if they disrupt lectures'.

There are other examples of dauntic MUST where the context is not helpful.

(47) You must keep everything to yourself, be discreet.

This is clearly a very firm piece of advice, almost an order. Must is used in a rather weaker sense with a limited set of verbs all related to the act of conversation: I must say/admit/be honest/ask you/ reiterate/confess / concede / mention. You must remember / admit / realize / understand, etc. With these, there is still an element of discourse orientation. The speaker imposes the obligation on himself and by so doing actually performs the act (I must admit - I do admit); or else he asks the hearer to behave in a similar fashion.
(48) I must say, I've never known that.
(49) You must understand, I haven't been in this state too long....

2.2.4 Deontic SHALL

With SHALL the speaker gives an undertaking, or he guarantees that the event will take place. SHALL does not merely lay an obligation, but actually guarantees that the action will occur. In this sense SHALL is stronger than MUST.

(50) You shall have it tomorrow.
(51) He shall be there by six.

SHALL is the regular formulaic form in regulations.

(52) The 1947 act shall have effect as if this section were included in Part III thereof.

While discussing the uses of SHALL, Jespersen (1931: 270) distinguishes between commands, promises and threats. But today SHALL does not seem to imply a command except possibly in regulations. Promise or threat depends not on SHALL but on the guaranteed action - whether it is pleasant or not.

Deontic modals do not normally occur with I and We as their subject. In the case of CAN and MAY, it would be strange to grant oneself permission to act; MUST occurs with I/We only in the sense of weak necessity. With SHALL the position is complicated as it is used regularly with I/We seemingly to
denote futurity. But it is very difficult to distinguish between the 'futurity' and 'undertaking' uses of SHALL.

2.3 Dynamic possibility

Dynamic possibility can be neutral (circumstantial) or subject oriented. CAN and BE ABLE TO are the two forms that denote dynamic possibility. 'Ability' is essentially subject oriented possibility. CAN and BE ABLE TO do not seem to differ markedly at all; but we can think of various factors involved in their relative likelihood of occurrence.

2.3.1 CAN

An attempt is made to distinguish between neutral and subject oriented uses of CAN; an 'extended', 'implicative' use and a special use with 'private' verbs are also found.

(i) Neutral

CAN in a sense of neutral possibility simply indicates that an event is possible.

(53) Signs are the only things you can observe. ('Signs alone are observable.')

(54) Who knows? It can go either way. ('future alternative possibility')

Where the sentence is in the passive or the subject is the impersonal \textit{you}, the neutral sense is even clearer.
(55) You can get quite lost in that, I think, you see.

(56) You can actually use diagnostic skills.

The appropriate paraphrase in all these examples is 'It is possible for...', and not '...has the ability to...'. In comparative and superlative forms, CAN is associated with adjectives and adverbs, or can be modified by how, etc.

(57) ...buying the most substantial property you can buy.

(58) I mean, you can travel from Belgium to France with much less palaver than you can travel from the North to the South of Ireland.

(59) It is really a matter of how quickly can we get the surveyor to move.

These sentences denote the degree or extent of dynamic possibility. The following examples of 'circumstantial possibility' indicate clearly the circumstances in which an event is possible:

(60) You can only get the job if you don't want it.

(61) The only way you can learn it is to think logically.

Palmer (1979b: 72) questions Ehrman's (1986: 12) negative definition of CAN that 'there is no obstruction to the action of the lexical verb' (nihil obstatat). He suggests that the positive definition of 'possibility' is more useful.

(62) 'You can get something' Nadine would snap. 'You can get a job working in a grocery store if nothing else'.
In this sense CAN is often modified by always to suggest that the possibility is omnitemporal, not just present.

(63) You can always say it's just not your style.
(64) Well, if you get the sack, you can always come and work for me.

(ii) Ability

Ehrman (1966: 13) and Palmer (1974: 115) say that CAN may refer to the ability of the subject, or subject oriented possibility.

(65) Martin and Stendler present evidence that infants and young children can and do solve many problems at a relatively simple perceptual level....
(66) I feel that ... my destiny's very much in my control and that I can make or break my life and myself.

Subject orientation should not be defined strictly in terms of ability which is [+ animate]. It is possible with inanimates also which have the necessary qualities or power to make something possible. A good example from Ehrman (1966: 13) is:

(67) Religion can summate, epitomize, relate, and conserve all highest ideals and values.

As she says, can here implies positive qualities of religion. However, it is not always possible to distinguish between neutral and subject oriented possibility.
(iii) Implication

CAN suggests often by implication that action will or should be taken. There are four different types of this use. Firstly, it is regularly used with I or with exclusive we ('I and he', 'I and they', etc.,) to make an offer by the speaker/-s.

(68) I can tell you the reference, if that's any help, of the letter.

(69) Yes, we can send you a map, if you wish.

Secondly, it may also be used with the third-person pronouns where the speaker speaks on behalf of someone else; but he doesn't make it explicit whether the initiative comes from him or not.

(70) I'll send Lewis down tonight to see what he can pick up in the pubs of Fort St Mary and then he can call to see you.

Thirdly, it occurs with a second-person pronoun to suggest that action be taken by the person addressed.

(71) You can certainly give me a ring back this afternoon - there might be something.

Fourthly, if we is used inclusively ('you and I', 'you and we'), it combines offer and suggestion.

(72) Do come early and we can have a drink.
(iv) Private verbs

'Private verbs' is a coinage of Martin Joos which Hill (1956: 207) thinks is apt: "That is no one but the speaker himself is a competent witness to such action as seeing or understanding". In the case of public verbs, the hearer can verify what is occurring.

Normally CAN does not seem to denote ability when occurring with verbs of sensation which are also private verbs.

(73) I can see the moon. = I see the moon.
(74) I can hear the music. = I hear the music.

CAN has only an empty use in (73) and (74) as it does not add anything to the meaning of the main verb. But sometimes CAN denotes 'ability' and 'possibility' even when occurring with private verbs.

(75) He has marvellous eyes; he can see the tiniest detail. (ability)
(75) From the top you can see the whole of the city. (possibility)

In the same way (77) and (78) are also distinguishable:

(77) I couldn't see the moon. ('ability/possibility')
(78) I didn't see the moon. (factual statement)

There are a few verbs (mostly private verbs) such as UNDERSTAND,
REMEMBER, THINK, AFFORD, STAND, BEAR, FACE, BE BOTHERED, etc., with which CAN frequently occur implying ability or possibility.

(79) How much competition can I stand from now on?

(80) What you can remember in two weeks is the thing that matters.

2.3.2 BE ABLE TO

Possibility is expressed by BE ABLE TO also but with some semantic differences. BE ABLE TO can indicate ability which is subject oriented.

(81) Yet at the same time, when it comes to personal things, to family things, you're able to be very detached.

The subject orientation of BE ABLE TO is not just confined to ability [+ animate]. It can denote as well the nature, power, or qualities of inanimates. In (82) it relates to the nature of the rooms.

(82) In the past, we've had small seminars in our rooms and these were obviously not able to contain them.

BE ABLE TO can be used in the neutral sense to denote circumstantial possibility. In (83) the circumstances under which the event is possible are stated.

(83) I feel that the way we operate is one where people who are well read and experienced in modern literature are also able to direct themselves into modern drama.
The following are the conditions under which BE ABLE TO is preferred to CAN:

CAN has no non-finite forms. Only BE ABLE TO can be used after other verbs or a catenative: (e.g.) might be able to, has got to be able to, must be able to, etc.

BE ABLE TO can be safely used to denote the normal 'neutral' and 'ability' uses. It does not have any of the special uses of CAN - 'implication' or occurrence with 'private verbs'.

BE ABLE TO occurs more frequently in the formal written texts than the spoken ones, whereas CAN tends to be used more in spoken texts.

BE ABLE TO is often used in the present tense to indicate 'actuality' (cf. 1.5.5); i.e., the speaker not only can perform the action but also does it.

(64) By bulk buying in specific items, Tasty's are able to cut prices on packages by as much as 30 per cent or so.

In (64) BE ABLE TO means 'can and does'; CAN can be used here but it will mean 'can and will do'; i.e., while BE ABLE TO implies 'present actuality', CAN seems to imply 'future actuality'.

2.4 Dynamic necessity

Deontic necessity originates in some source - an individual, an institution, a system of rules of ethics or law, etc. Dynamic necessity, on the other hand, has no such source; it arises only from circumstances or the subject's own disposition. Therefore we have neutral (circumstantial) necessity and subject oriented necessity. **MUST, HAVE (GOT) TO, SHOULD, and OUGHT TO are the forms that express dynamic necessity.**

2.4.1 MUST

**MUST** expresses both the sub-kinds of dynamic necessity, neutral (circumstantial) and subject oriented.

In (85) there is no indication of the speaker's involvement.

(85) Now I lunched the day before yesterday with one of the leaders of the Labour party whose name must obviously be kept quiet - I can't repeat it.

**MUST** conveys the meaning of subject oriented necessity in the following; the paraphrase is 'It is necessary for me/us to...'. But generally speaking, we do not lay obligations upon ourselves.

(86) I have no doubt that I must do what I can to protect the wife.

(87) Yes, I must ask for that Monday off.

The meaning is more clear in an interrogative:
(88) Why must I put up with such enraging conditions? Why must the deaf person?

2.4.2 HAVE (GOT) TO

HAVE TO and HAVE GLOT TO are two forms that express neutral (circumstantial) but never subject oriented necessity. HAVE TO is more formal, has non-finite forms and its past tense implies usually actuality. Whereas HAVE GLOT TO is more colloquial in style (appearing only in spoken texts), has no non-finite forms (*will have got to, *to have got to, *having got to), much rarer in the past tense, and does not usually imply actuality in its past form.

(89) Oh, well, he's got to go into hospital, you know.

(90) You have to file a flight plan before you start, give an estimated time of arrival....

The meaning of HAVE (GOT) TO ('external compulsion') is clearly shown by a paraphrase in (91).

(91) They're obliged to pass in various ways; they've got to pass our section of it.

2.4.3. HAVE (GOT) TO and MUST

There are three points to be noted when we contrast MUST with HAVE (GOT) TO.

(i) In some contexts these verbs are interchangeable without any change in meaning, especially with neutral necessity.
(92) I must have an immigrant's visa. Otherwise they're likely to kick me out you see.

(93) I've really got to know when completion date is likely. Otherwise I might find myself on the streets.

Otherwise in (92) and (93) suggests that the necessity will arise if the action of the first sentence of either is not carried out; there is no subject involvement here. Similarly (94) and (95) refer to general instructions about boats and there is no personal involvement of the speaker.

(94) When this happens you will see the boat's speed fall off and you must pay off just a little.

(95) It's on the end of that safety line. All you've got to do is haul in.

(92)-(95) strongly suggest that speaker involvement is not always indicated by MUST; it would not be used where it is clear that there is external necessity. Three kinds of necessity can be distinguished: deontic (subject oriented), neutral and external. MUST may be either deontic or neutral and HAVE (GOT) TO, either neutral or external. HAVE (GOT) TO is never deontic, MUST never external.

(ii) In the present tense HAVE TO and HAVE GOT TO imply actuality, while MUST does not. That is why MUST cannot be used in (96).

(96) It's a slow walk down. He's got to fight his way thror' the crowds.
Here a boxer actually fights his way through. If MUST had been used in (96) it could only refer to future necessity of fighting his way through; HAVE (GOT) TO indicates that he is actually doing so.

(iii) Since MUST and HAVE GOT TO do not have non-finite forms, only HAVE TO can be used where a non-finite form is required.

(97) It's too late to put him into an isolation hospital. I would have had to do that a few days ago. (after a modal)

(98) Mr. Lumsden is going to have to take two mortgages out. (after a similar form)

2.4.4 SHOULD and OUGHT TO

SHOULD and OUGHT TO are synonymous in the 'necessity' sense (Ehrman, 1966: 64; Leech, 1969: 220); they seem to be largely interchangeable, even with tag questions.

(99) He ought to come tomorrow, oughtn't/shouldn't he?

SHOULD is more common in occurrence than OUGHT TO. The distinction between MUST, on the one hand, and SHOULD/OUGHT TO, on the other, can be brought out as follows. First we can see whether the modal has any implication of actuality of the event. MUST does not allow for non-event whereas SHOULD and OUGHT TO do.

(100) *He must come, but he won't.
(101) He should/ought to come, but he won't.

Perhaps, Woisetschläger (1976: 110) means the same when he says that MUST conveys something 'stronger' than that conveyed by SHOULD.

Often there is an implication of non-actuality with SHOULD and OUGHT TO (i.e., the event does not or did not take place).

(102) He should be the first person to come to my rescue, as my wife expects....

(103) I think people ought to be better informed about what marriage entails.

OUGHT TO and SHOULD can be neutral in their implication of actuality (especially when there is reference to future events).

(104) So perhaps I ought to ask you some further questions.

(105) This should be done before the pollen is ripe.

The forms should have and ought to have nearly always imply that the event did not take place:

(106) ...and I should have started on the first of October.

(107) We ought to have done so much this year....

Had to is in striking contrast with these forms as it generally implies that the event did take place.
Anderson (1971: 79) considers ought/should and should have/ought to have as the present and past unreal forms of the necessity modal. His proposal seems to explain that the non-actuality implication of SHOULD and OUGHT TO is due to the characteristic of unreality. With SHOULD and OUGHT TO the 'necessity' must be weaker: it must be potential or tentative. What is important is that the event is unreal. Leech (1969: 220) says that with MUST the speaker commits himself to the necessity of the event, but with OUGHT TO he does not, as he is not sure of it.

We cannot say that should/ought, should have/ought to have are the unreal forms of any particular necessity model, although semantically they must be related to MUST.

2.5 Other uses of WILL and SHALL

The meanings of epistemic WILL and deontic SHALL were discussed previously (2.1.3, 2.2.4). This section will deal with dynamic subject oriented WILL which has a parallel with CAN, and the so-called use of WILL and SHALL to refer to the future. BE GOING TO ('future') and IS TO will be discussed briefly.

2.5.1 Subject oriented WILL

Jespersen's (1931: 239) three-way distinction 'volition, power and habit' can be treated as a sub-
classification of dynamic subject oriented WILL.

(i) Volition

The positive form will does not express volition as clearly as the negative form won't expresses non-volition.

(108) I am seeing if Methuen will stump up any money to cover the man's time.

(109) I don't think the bibliography should suffer because we can't find a publisher who will do the whole thing. won't and wouldn't express non-volition which is almost equivalent to refusal.

(110) But she loves him and she won't leave him; so she sells herself.

(111) I said I am not competent to do it and I wouldn't have my name on the title page to do it.

In (112) will could be paraphrased as 'are prepared to'

(112) Would he not agree that recent congressional hearings have shown the length to which some American aircraft manufacturers will go to promote and defend the rights of their companies.

When I is the subject, will can express an agreement by the speaker to act, which is almost an undertaking.

(113) I'll have it lined up for you, dear.

(114) I believe in returning favours. I'll do anything for somebody I like.
WILL is also used in requests; asking if someone is willing is taken as a request for action:

(115) Dick, will you stand by the anchor?
(116) If you stay at home this evening, will you make sure the water's hot?

An indirect request (with a third-person subject) is:

(117) Perhaps, he will let me know.

Without there is agreement - both a request and an offer.

(118) Anyway the best of luck with it all and we'll be in touch.

Volitional will always has the implication of future actuality (Often CAN has such an implication cf. 2.3.2). BE WILLING TO, on the other hand, has no such implication.

(119) *John will come, but he won't/is not going to.
(120) John is willing to come, but he won't/is not going to.

(ii) Power

'Power' indicates the characteristic behaviour of inanimate objects. We have already seen a similar use of CAN to express 'inanimate ability' (2.3.1 (ii)).

(121) You know that certain drugs will improve the condition.
Palmer includes here what he earlier (1974: 112) referred to as the inferential use of WILL as in:

(122) Oil will float on water.
(123) Pigs will eat anything.

(122) refers to 'power' or inanimate ability of oil to float on water. (123) can also be said to express 'power'.

(iii) Habit

WILL may refer to 'habitual' or 'typical' activity.

(124) So one kid will say to another, one kid will make a suggestion to another, he'll say the moon's further away from the earth than the sun.

(125) She'll sit there for hours doing nothing.

This can be regarded as a third type of subject oriented WILL, since the typical activity is typical of the subject of the sentence. When WILL is stressed, it is clearly subject oriented as it denotes persistent and even perverse activity:

(126) You 'will keep on saying that the hunting of foxes is the merciful way of doing it.

2.5.2 Future WILL and SHALL?

Traditional grammarians of English treat WILL and SHALL as future tense markers. But on formal and notional grounds they are best regarded as modals. IE GOING TO is the
form that is normally used to refer to the future.

(i) The forms WILL and SHALL

In traditional English grammar shall is said to occur with the first-person forms I and we, and will with second and third-person subjects. Similar statements are made for conditional would and should. This stand is now given up as will occurs regularly with I and we even when it seems to indicate futurity.

(127) He wants to tell Professor Ford that we will meet him at Lime Street Station, Liverpool, at ten fifty-three tomorrow, Friday.

(128) I won’t be back tonight.

However, SHALL is always deontic and does not indicate futurity with second and third-person subjects. With I and we it indicates a promise rather than simple futurity and so deontic again.

(129) No, I shall be back tomorrow.

In the case of unreal conditionals, would is extremely common with I.

(ii) Conditionality

The so-called future WILL/SHALL implies often an element of conditionality. WILL is regularly used in the apodosis (main clause) of a real condition referring to the
future. In the protasis (the if-clause) a non-modal present tense form is used.

(130) If he feels like doing it, that'll save me the trouble.

However, any of the modals can be used in the apodosis; all may have future time reference:

(131) If John comes, I'll may/can/must/ought to/should leave.

Moreover, it is not necessary that the events referred to in the protasis are future. They may be present or past.

(132) Look, if she didn't grudge you the weekend she won't grudge you an alibi.

Condition may be expressed by coordination with and or some other conjunctions and negative condition, by or else.

(133) You put it under your pillow, and a fairy will come and give you —

(134) I don't want to stay there for ever, obviously, or else it'll be terribly bad for me.

The following idiomatic expressions seem to derive from the conditional use of WILL.

(135) Yes, that will be fine.

(136) ...but I think this will do, you know.

The paraphrase seems to be, 'it will be fine, it will
do, if it is left like that'. Jespersen (1931: 239) treats the idiomatic *That'll do* as 'closely related' to the 'power' use.

(iii) Futurity Vs potentiality

The so-called future WILL refers to a general envisaged, planned, intended, hoped for, etc., state of affairs. It does not usually make a statement that a specific event or events will in fact take place. It is in this sense that it indicates modality rather than future time.

(137) Is it ever envisaged that the college will hive itself off from the University? (event envisaged)

(138) May I hope that those interested parties will not only be us here in parliament... (future hoped for)

(139) We pray that God will look upon the hearty desires of his humble servants. (future prayed for)

(140) The fan fare will now sound. (commentary)

(141) ... and the president with head averted and profile turned to me said 'Mrs Dodgson will walk on my right'. (instruction)

(142) Private Jones will report at 08.00 hrs. (army order)

(143) Most areas will have rain or thundery showers; but it will be mainly dry in Southern Scotland.... (weather forecast)

WILL may occur in the if-clause (protasis), if it is not used to refer to the future.

(144) If only people will vote in sufficient numbers to put the Liberals back! (volition)
(145) I know that if medicines will save him, he’ll be safe. (power)

(146) If you will play it this way. (persistent activity)

Rudin (1977) proposes that the basic meaning of WILL is potential rather than future. By potential Rudin means all the non-future uses of WILL like volition, power and capacity. She says WILL can be used only when a given sentence is potentially true, not when it states a present or constant truth.

(147) Cows *will be/are mammals.

Potentiality of WILL is unspecified as to time. Therefore WILL-sentences can be interpreted either as future or as non-future depending on the context. Also the presence of WILL in a sentence means that it is potential but not inevitable. Quoting Einnick (1971 & 1972) she says, WILL is dependent on the fulfilment of some hypothetical condition, whereas BE GOING TO has no such dependence, and hence WILL is avoidable but BE GOING TO is inevitable.

(148) The rock’ll fall, if you push it lightly.

(149) *The rock is going to fall, if you push it lightly.

But in the following, the avoidability meaning of WILL does not operate:

(150) Boys will be boys. (idiomatic use)

(151) He will wear that awful tie. (insistence)
(152) Ah, the door bell rings! That'll be Margaret now.
(conclusion)

However, Rudin concludes that "WILL is not a future tense marker:
it merely indicates a timeless, avoidable potentiality" (p.16).

2.5.3 BE GOING TO

BE GOING TO merits a discussion here as it is in contrast with WILL and SHALL. It is the form most commonly used to refer to futurity in the spoken language.

(i) Current orientation

BE GOING TO in its present tense forms suggests that there are features of the present time that will determine future events. It is thus essentially a marker of 'futura in the present'. This is what Mc Intosh (1966: 105) calls 'Present Orientation' and what Palmer (1979b: 121) would prefer to call 'Current Orientation'. Although the event will take place in the future, there is current relevance - a cause or an initiation in the present.

(153) Free kick given Scullion's way; its going to be taken by Trevor Hockey. (current activity leading to future event)

(154) When are you going to see your parents? (present intention questioned)

Sometimes BE GOING TO seems to refer to the immediate future, but with no present activity.
(155) All right, I know, I'm just going to send his contract out today just to keep him happier, you know.

Often there is a sense of inevitability - the sequence of events is already in progress.

(156) Will my Honourable Friend accept that many people in the House think that Concorde is going to be a gigantic financial disaster?

Past forms of BE GOING TO denote futuro in the past.

(157) I was going to say that it looked a bit like a pheasant in flight.

Here we have 'past orientation' which can be subsumed under 'current orientation'.

Often BE GOING TO occurs in the if-clause of a conditional sentence.

(158) Yes, we'll have to go out, if you're really going to do it, darling.

(11) Contrasts with WILL and SHALL

WILL may suggest implied condition, while BE GOING TO may suggest inevitability; i.e., futurity is in no way conditional.

(159) The paint'll be dry in an hour. (if you leave it)

(160) The paint's going to be dry in an hour.
BE GOING TO suggests that there is no volition, whereas WILL does. (161) is not a request as BE GOING TO occurs in it. If WILL is used instead, then it will be a request.

(161) So, are you going to leave a message or shall I say something?

WILL and SHALL, in contrast with BE GOING TO, may be used where little or no present activity is involved.

(162) She'll be in soon.

(163) I'll think of his name in a moment — it's there in print.

WILL and SHALL are more common than BE GOING TO with BE ABLE TO and HAVE TO. In essence, the future is extra-reel with BE GOING TO than with WILL/SHALL.

2.6 Other marginal forms

NEED, DARE, HAD BETTER, BE WILLING TO, IS TO and WOULD RATHER are marginal forms which have some modal characteristics. They are briefly discussed here, though they are not very important in the modality system.

2.6.1 DARE and NEED

DARE and NEED can occur both as modals and non-modals. As modals, they occur only with negation and interrogation, the first two of the NICE properties. They do not occur as
modals where the contexts do not require these properties. While the e- and b-sentences of (164) and (165) are acceptable, the c-sentences are not.

(164)(a) Dare he go, now in our presence?
(b) He daren't go now in our presence.
(c) *He dare go now in our presence.

(165)(a) Need she say more?
(b) She needn't say more.
(c) *She need say more.

The meaning of DARE is roughly 'have the courage to' which denotes dynamic possibility. NEED often serves to supply the forms for negating and questioning necessity modality.

2.6.2 HAD BETTER

HAD BETTER has the formal features of a modal: no third-person -s, no to, no non-finite forms, and no cooccurrence with other modals. Semantically it seems to be deontic in a loose sense. The speaker advises the hearer firmly of his best course of action and he implies unpleasant consequences if it is not taken.

(166) You'd better ask him when he comes in.

2.6.3 BE WILLING TO

This form is chosen deliberately to express much more clearly the notion of willingness, rather than simply the
'volition' of WILL.

(167) Yes, I am willing to consider any measure which would improve the country's economy.

BE WILLING TO can occur in its past form with implication of actuality. It also occurs in its conditional form.

2.6.4 IS TO

As already seen, IS TO has some formal properties of the modals (3.1.1). Especially, it has no non-finite forms. It occurs in the past form to denote future in the past.

(168) Worse was to follow.

Present tense forms are more commonly used to denote future events that are planned, to report a command, etc.

(169) The old group is still going strong but there's to be a new girl from Norwich.

(170) You are to come tomorrow. (command reported).

2.6.5 WOULD RATHER

Formally this is simply a form of WILL plus rather; semantically it expresses a preference which is clearly subject oriented, and is always present referring to a preference for present or future action.

(171) I'd rather do the second half of the autumn term if that's all.
2.7 Conventional implication

Sometimes a particular use of a modal does not imply the literal meaning; i.e., the speaker does not say what he means; instead, he conveys a different meaning which has become well established as a convention in the given society. This is what Palmer (1979b: 165-72) calls 'conventional implication'. Speech act theorists would analyse this phenomenon in terms of indirect illocutionary acts (See Searle, 1975).

(i) Interrogation conveying 'request':

In interrogation with the second-person pronoun, both dynamic CAN and WILL do not question the ability or willingness of the addressee to carry out the action, but imply a request that he does so.

(172) Here, June, can you give me a hand with this harness?
(173) Will you pass that on to him?

It would be perverse on the part of the addressee, if he simply replies 'yes' without carrying out the action, maintaining that his ability or willingness was just questioned.

To give another example, deontic MAY and CAN with a first-person subject in interrogation do not ask for the permission of the addressee, but imply a request that he carries out the action.
May/can I have your pen for a minute?

That the word *please* is usually appended to such questions proves the fact that they are well established as a request by convention.

(ii) Assertion conveying 'command':

In assertion deontic *can* may be used more as a command than simply to give permission.

You can forget the whole episode.

Another good example from Larkin (1969: 389) is:

Your husband can speak, Mrs. Westbrook.

If (175) gives Mr. Westbrook an indirect permission to speak, or if it is the report of a doctor on the outcome of an operation, then the sentence means what it says. But here it is a command issued to Mrs. Westbrook: 'Be quiet and let your husband talk for himself'. Further it insinuates that Mr. Westbrook speak for himself.

(iii) Volition implying agreement:

Commonly with first-person subjects and less commonly with third-person subjects, the *WILL* of volition not merely expresses willingness, but also implies an offer or agreement to act.
(177) I will contact your press secretary on reaching Milan.

2.8 Summary

This chapter dealt with the different kinds of modality in English. Under epistemic modality, the two basic degrees possibility and necessity, a third degree represented by WILL, tentative forms might and would, epistemic SHOULD, and the subjectivity of epistemic modes were studied (2.1). The performative nature of deontic modality, the two basic degrees, and the degree represented by SHALL were analysed under deontic modality (2.2). Dynamic possibility as expressed by CAN was examined under the sections neutral possibility, ability, implication, and private verbs; the form BE ABLE TO was also examined (2.3). Dynamic necessity as expressed by the forms MUST, HAVE TO, HAVE GOT TO, SHOULD, and OUGHT TO was studied (2.4). Other uses of WILL and SHALL such as volition, power, habit, and the so-called futurity, and the form BE GOING TO were considered (2.5). Marginal forms such as DARE, NEED, HAD BETTER, BE WILLING TO, IS TO, and WOULD RATHER were briefly examined (2.6). Finally the concept of conventional implication was discussed (2.7).