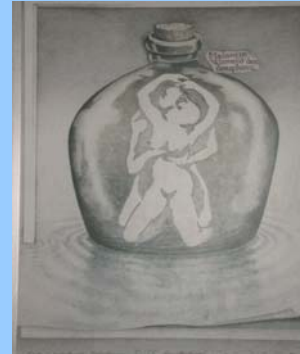


Types of Modality

Modality is Everywhere



Jakobson's Theory/Palmer 1974

- **3 Categories of modals:**
 - epistemic vs. non-epistemic
 - non-epistemic = subject-oriented and discourse-oriented
- **Subject-oriented:** *Bill can run a mile in four minutes.* (Talk about the subject)
- **Discourse-oriented:**
 - *You may come in.* (= I permit you to come in) = addresser
 - *May I come in?* (= Do you permit me to come in?) = addressee

Types of Modality

- 1. Epistemic
- 2. Deontic
- 3. Dynamic

1. Epistemic

- From the Greek *episteme* = knowledge
- When a modal verb is used to express the speaker's opinion about a statement
- Example: *It might be true*
- = Expressing attitude about whether it is true or not, accepting that there is a possibility, but not being certain

1. Epistemic

- Impossible: He will not be there
- Improbable: He will probably not be there
- Possible: He will possibly be there
- Probable: He will probably be there
- Certain: He will be there

2. Deontic

- Greek for "duty"
- When a modal verb is used to affect a situation, by giving permission, etc
- Example: *You can go when you've finished.*
- = giving permission to control the situation

2. Deontic

- Forbidden: You must not go out
- Permissible: You may go out
- Recommended: You should go out
- Obligatory: You must go out

3. Dynamic

- *Dynamic modality* does not express the speaker's opinion, nor does the speaker affect the situation:
- Example: *He can speak perfect French.*
- = describing a factual situation

3. Dynamic

- Ability: I can swim
- Volition: I will go to see Tim

Exercises

1. He must be back before dark
2. The test should not take longer than 20 minutes
3. Students may use the gym
4. Tim has to have the right solution; he is the expert

Exercises

5. The bank will give you a new credit card
6. I can ride a bicycle
7. Bill may work for the BBC
8. The road might be blocked

Sources

- <http://www.usingenglish.com/glossary/dynamic-modality.html>
- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Modal_logic