

This is as far as we shall take the description of modality here. The actual number of systematic distinctions that are made in this corner of the language runs well into the tens of thousands; among the many variants that are being left out of account are those expressed by the different modal operators within each of the values high, median and low:

high: must ought to need has to is to  
 median: will would shall should  
 low: may might can could

But this is the same limitation that is being imposed throughout. If we want to range over the grammar from the clause complex to the word group within a single volume, we cannot expect to give more than a thumbnail sketch, such that no one portion can be explored very far in delicacy.

But we need to return to the categories of orientation, in order to complete the account of metaphor in modality. The general difference in meaning between the subjective and the objective orientation can be seen from the effect of the tag. Compare the following two clauses:

he couldn't have meant that, could he?  
 surely he didn't mean that, did he?

In the first, the speaker wants the listener to confirm his estimate of the probabilities: 'I think it unlikely; do you share my opinion?'. In the second, he wants the listener to provide the answer: 'I think it unlikely, but is it in fact the case?'. It is possible to switch from a subjectively modalized clause to a non-modalized tag, as in this exchange in a store selling children's books:

What do you reckon would be good for a five-year-old kid?  
 — She'll like fairy tales, does she?

Here the salesperson's reply means 'I think it likely she likes fairy tales; is that the case?' — whereas *she'll like fairy tales, will she?* would have meant 'do you agree that it is likely?'. The speaker is assuming, in other words, that the customer knows the preferences of the child; there would be no point in simply exchanging opinions on the subject.

The explicitly subjective and explicitly objective forms of modality are all strictly speaking metaphorical, since all of them represent the modality as being the substantive proposition. Modality represents the speaker's angle, either on the validity of the assertion or on the rights and wrongs of the proposal; in its congruent form, it is an adjunct to a proposition rather than a proposition in its own right. Speakers being what we are, however, we like to give prominence to our own point of view; and the most effective way of doing that is to dress it up as if it was this that constituted the assertion ('explicit' *I think . . .*) — with the further possibility of making it appear as if it was not our point of view at all ('explicit objective' *it's likely that . . .*). The examples at the beginning of this section show some of the highly elaborated forms that such an enterprise can take.

The importance of modal features in the grammar of interpersonal exchanges lies in an apparent paradox on which the entire system rests — the fact that we only say we are certain when we are not. If unconsciously I consider it certain that Mary

has left, I say, simply, *Mary's certainly left*. If I add a high value probability, of whatever orientation, such as *Mary's certainly left, I'm certain Mary's left, Mary must have left*, this means that I am admitting an element of doubt — which I may then try to conceal by objectifying the expression of certainty. Hence whereas the subjective metaphors, which state clearly 'this is how I see it', take on all values (*I'm sure, I think, I don't believe, I doubt, etc.*), most of the objectifying metaphors express a 'high' value probability or obligation — that is, they are different ways of claiming objective certainty or necessity for something that is in fact a matter of opinion. Most of the 'games people play' in the daily round of interpersonal skirmishing involve metaphors of this objectifying kind. Figure 10-17 gives a further example, containing both an interpersonal metaphor and one of an ideational kind.

#### 10.4.3 Metaphors of mood

The other main type of interpersonal metaphor is that associated with mood. Mood expresses the speech function; and as we saw in Chapter 4 the underlying pattern of organization here is the exchange system — giving or demanding information or goods-&-services, which determines the four basic speech functions of statement, question, offer and command.

Obviously this is just the bare bones of the system. There is a vast range of rhetorical modes in every language; in English we can recognize offering, promising, threatening, vowing, undertaking, ordering, requesting, entreating, urging, persuading, commanding, instructing, encouraging, recommending, advising, prohibiting, dissuading, discouraging, warning, bribing, intimidating, blackmailing, shaming, cajoling, nagging, hinting, praising, reproving, blaming, flattering, parrying, hedging, complaining, insulting, boasting, claiming, stating, predicting, hoping, fearing, preaching, arguing, contradicting, submitting, insisting, asserting, denying, accusing, teasing, implying, disclosing, acknowledging, assenting, querying, disputing, accepting, doubting, responding, disclaiming, consenting, refusing, proclaiming, assuring and reassuring — to name only a few. These are not simply a list; they are systematically interrelated, and each one represents a particular complex of semantic features, each feature being one out of a contrasting set exactly as are those involved in modality. So, for example, 'threat' is 'give' (as opposed to 'demand'), 'goods-&-services' (as opposed to 'information'), 'oriented to addressee' (as opposed to 'oriented to speaker' or 'neutral') and 'undesirable' (as opposed to 'desirable'), e.g. *I'll shoot the pianist!*, reported as *he threatened to shoot the pianist*. If we substitute 'desirable', keeping the rest constant, we get 'promise'; if we substitute 'oriented to speaker' then instead of 'desirable/undesirable' we get 'sacred' ('vow') versus 'profane' ('undertaking'); and so on. Taken by itself, however, the clause *I'll shoot the pianist!* could represent any one of these (*the threatened/promised/vowed/undertook to shoot the pianist*); these speech functions all contain the feature combination give + goods-&-services, i.e. 'offer', and the wording of the clause specifies no more than that.

In other words, all these rhetorical categories can be recognized by speakers of the language, and have names which are used to represent them, both as 'things' (noun a *threat* 'act of threatening') and as processes (verb to *threaten*). The verbs express verbal (symbolic) processes and most of them, therefore, can project some