

# MODALS AND ADVERBS IN ENGLISH WITH REFERENCE TO ROMANIAN

by

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Investigation into the incidence and nature of modal-adverb collocations in English has received little attention from a number of linguists whose research continues mainly to focus on the analysis and description of the modal verb system. This article surveys modal-adverb expressions in English and argues that a number of these have become grammaticalized and relatively integrated into the formal system. Additional support for this argument is adduced from a contrastive examination of Romanian modal expressions.

## *1. Introduction*

Linguistic treatments of modality in English have traditionally focused on the description and analysis of the modal auxiliaries (or 'modals') and tended to sidestep investigation of other carriers of modality, usually deploying these heuristically to elucidate the meanings of the modals. Certainly, the modals in English readily lend themselves to formal treatment and, being the most grammaticalized exponents of modal meanings, are clearly central to the modal system. Lyons (1977) suggests that 'the more fully something is grammaticalized rather than lexicalized and integrated with syntax in terms of government and agreement, the more central it is in the system'. Consequently, other expressions of modality have not attracted much attention in their own right, even though it is widely recognised that modal contrasts are also realised, for example, by adjectives, adverbs, nouns, as well as by lexical verbs, and an assortment of modal idioms. Rarely, however, is there reference in the literature to how modal expressions combine to produce a cumulative modality<sup>1</sup>. Indeed, corpus analysis<sup>2</sup> would support the view that modal elements frequently co-occur and interact, there seldom being one carrier of modality in the clause or utterance operating as an isolate: '...modality... does not relate semantically to the verb alone or primarily, but to the whole sentence' (Palmer 1986:2).

The picture of modality which has emerged is thus partial and seems wanting in descriptive scope. The semantic category of

modality cannot be adequately accounted for by focusing on the modals alone, nor by discussing them in isolation from other modal elements which may be functioning synergetically within the same environment<sup>3</sup>.

In this paper, we examine the grammar and semantics of the modals in combination with their adverb satellites. To help demonstrate that modal-adverb expressions in English are relatively basic to that language's system of modality, reference is made to the contrasting Romanian model. The study of co-occurrence restrictions and regularities has always been an essential aspect of grammatical investigation. It is significant that the strongest impetus to Generative Grammar originated from Zellig Harris' seminal paper 'Co-occurrence and transformation in linguistic structure'. More recently, important advances have been made in the field of lexicology based upon the study of co-occurrence and collocation<sup>4</sup>. While co-occurrence is the focus of the present enquiry, appropriate use is made of another feature of language – 'transmobility' – as justification for drawing the distinction between sentence adverb and VP-adverb upheld in current X-Bar Syntax (Chomsky, 1981; Radford, 1988).

## 2. Background Literature

Detailed analysis of modal auxiliary/adverb co-occurrence in English has never before been undertaken. Of course, a vast number of linguistic and philosophical accounts of modality have been written, but these have focused primarily either on the syntactic and semantic behaviour of the modal auxiliaries, or treated the concept and phenomenon of modality in terms of modal logic.

However, the status of modal-adverb combinations is to some extent recognised in the literature, if somewhat perfunctorily. Palmer, for instance, pays little more than lip service to the issue with the observation: 'In general, epistemic modals cannot be modified by adverbs, or at least the true modals cannot' (1979:57). Hermerén (1978), Halliday (1970) and Lyons (1977) make brief reference to permissible modal collocations and distinguish in their separate ways between what Halliday (1977 : 807) terms 'modally harmonic' and 'modally non-harmonic' combinations. More recent scholarship in the field (Palmer 1986, 1990); Davidsen-Nielsen (1990) has

continued to focus on the modal verbs; Palmer remains dismissive of the topic, whereas Davidsen-Nielsen's study is a contrastive evaluation of how the modal verb systems operate in Danish and English. Collins (1991), and Matthews (1991), however, represent a break with tradition and, in making reference at all to the behaviour of modal verbs and their adverb satellites, recognize that a descriptive need exists. Matthews (1991:62f) observes that, along with other modal carriers, modal adverbs 'may be taken to represent, at least in part, the 'natural' conceptualization of modality in English' and they form part of 'a basic network of modality concepts for English'.

Major linguistic studies of adverbial expression in English, such as Jacobson (1964), Greenbaum (1969), Nilsen (1972), Virtanen (1992) and other research, notably by Schreiber (1971, 1972), Corum (1975), Bellert (1977), Allerton and Cruttendon (1974, 1978) are all chiefly concerned with formal description, analysis and classification; they do not generally investigate adverbial behaviour beyond the syntactic and semantic implications that their transmobility has for clause structure. Whilst the notional category 'adverbs of mood' or 'modal adverbs' is variously referred to in these accounts, there has been only cursory treatment of their co-occurrence with modal verb heads.

Quirk et al (1985:475f) in their treatment of the grammar and semantics of English adverbials account for some modal-adverb combinations, especially those which occur in restricted environments. Their allusions again support the view that the domain has to be satisfactorily accounted for.

## 3. Modal Verb Forms

There are well known and undisputed criteria which clearly identify the modals as a subset of the auxiliary verbs in English<sup>5</sup>. It is common to distinguish the so-called central modals CAN, COULD, MAY, MIGHT, SHALL, SHOULD, WILL, WOULD, and MUST from the marginal modals DARE, NEED, USED TO, HAVE (GOT) TO, OUGHT TO. The latter are noticeably less common and combinations with these forms correspondingly rare and, for the most part, unremarkable. In this paper, we focus on co-occurrence with the central forms.

#### 4. *The Central Concepts: Mood and Modality*

Confusion may arise out of the use of the terms MOOD and MODALITY for they are occasionally used interchangeably to refer to either a grammatical or a semantic category. Palmer (1986:1) for instance claims: '...it is possible to recognize a grammatical category, that of modality, which is similar to aspect, tense, number, gender, etc.'. Yet, in a previous work the same author (1979:4) observes: 'Modality...is a semantic term...'. This is unhelpful. The term 'mood' (as in 'indicative' or 'subjunctive') refers to the inflectional system of the verb and is formally a morphosyntactic category like tense and aspect. Jespersen (1924:313) asserts:

...it is very important that we speak of mood only if the attitude of mind [of the speaker] is shown in the form of the verb: mood is thus a syntactic, not a notional category.

Similarly, Lyons (1977:848) argues: 'mood is a grammatical category that is found in some, but not all languages'. Semantically, mood covers a wide range of meanings and especially attitudes on the part of the speaker towards the factual content of his utterance such as doubt, certainty, vagueness, possibility, etc. In the main, English does not express modal contrasts inflectionally, unlike Romanian, which in addition to modal verbs, widely deploys the subjunctive. It is hardly relevant to talk of an inflected system of mood to express modal concepts in English. For this reason, Huddleston (1984:164) proposes 'an analytical mood system' when auxiliaries, rather than inflection, are the exponents of the grammatical mood system. He argues that there is no inflectional system of mood in modern English (notwithstanding such subjunctive uses as 'I were' vs. 'I was') and that the mood contrasts between factual assertion and various kinds of non-factuality and /or non-assertion are primarily, but not exclusively, differentiated by means of the modal auxiliaries<sup>6</sup>. However, this 'analytic mood system' is just one of many systems which act as exponents of the semantic category of 'modality'.

Modality refers to the various modal meanings expressed by not only the modals but other non-verbal, lexical carriers of modal meanings. However, because linguists focus on the modal verb system, modality is commonly defined in terms of the meanings they express; in broad terms these refer to actions or events, rather than statements

of fact, which may or may not eventuate at some time in the future. Indeed, the study of the modals is often regarded as synonymous with the study of modality itself 'for the meanings expressed by the modal verbs in English represent, to a large degree, those that are to be included in a typological account of modality', (Palmer 1990:2).

Modality is one of the most complex areas in language; the semantics of the modals is especially contentious; there is no single approach in description or analysis which has met with widespread support. However, linguists generally recognize two broad categories of meaning: ROOT (or non-epistemic) and EPISTEMIC<sup>7</sup>. When used non-epistemically, modals indicate such notions as 'permission', 'obligation', and 'volition' – these are all meanings which involve the human capacity to exercise control over events and generally correlate with what logicians' (and some linguists) term the DEONTIC mode. Used epistemically, the modals convey such notions as 'possibility', 'necessity', and 'prediction' – meanings which signify the speaker's relative state of knowledge about a situation and which involve the speaker's judgements about what is or what is not likely to happen, events lying outside human control. These meanings correlate with the logician's EPISTEMIC mode<sup>8</sup>. The two systems reflect a fundamental distinction in the way the language is used: either to initiate action (deontic) or to inform (epistemic). They endorse Malinowski's view of language as, on the one hand, language as a 'mode of action' and language as a 'countersign of thought'<sup>9</sup>.

Accordingly, modal-adverb combinations may be used with either of these basic meanings:

- (1) I think that ACTUALLY MAY be his name (epistemic);
- (2) COULD I JUST interrupt at this juncture? (deontic).

Epistemic modal-adverb combinations or expressions are of particular interest: collocations are more regular and patterns easier to discern because epistemic modality 'is the kind of modality that is most clearly distinct from the others and has the greatest degree of internal regularity and completeness' (Palmer 1990:50). Modal-adverb expressions are unambiguously subjective: the speaker subjectively qualifies his degree of commitment to what he is saying by modalizing his utterance and interpolating an appropriate adverb:

- (3) The insurance company MIGHT JUST POSSIBLY check that the name on the policy was the name of the registered owner.

In deontic expressions, where there can be varying degrees of speaker involvement (such as in making requests) or none at all where an external authority is involved (such as in a general prohibition), the presence of an adverbial collocate seems acceptable only where the speaker can be identified; where the speaker is not necessarily the source of authority, the collocation is questionable:

- (4) CAN you JUST wait for a moment, please, whilst I get the file?  
 (5) ?Students MUST OBVIOUSLY<sup>10</sup> not arrive late for class.  
 (6) ?Lecturers WILL KINDLY refrain from missing classes!

Epistemic modal-adverb combinations, like other epistemic expressions, relate to the speaker's knowledge, or rather lack of knowledge, with regard to the truth or factuality of a PROPOSITION. In the linguistic context a proposition may be defined as part of the meaning of a sentence. More precisely, the meaning of a sentence may be represented as a set of propositions, each of which has a truth-value: it may be true or false. In:

- (7) Sever MUST OBVIOUSLY have left;

the proposition 'he has left' has been 'modalised' by the auxiliary-adverb combination, connoting epistemic 'necessity'. The speaker is committed to the truth of the proposition 'Sever has left'; he implies that, on the basis of his 'knowledge', he cannot accept that there is any possibility of the proposition not being true. It would be contradictory in the epistemic context to say: 'Sever must obviously have left, but it's just possible he didn't'. The status of the speaker's 'knowledge' may be 'strong', as in (7) or weak:

- (8) Helen MIGHT PERHAPS be suitable;

where the speaker is committed to neither the truth nor the falsity of the proposition 'Helen is suitable'. In Romanian, as in English, the relative strength of the speaker's assessment can be conveyed by an

appropriate modal-adverb combination:

- (9) POSIBIL, S-AR PUTEA sa reusească;

*POSSIBLY she MIGHT succeed.*

- (10) E IMPOSIBIL că ei să sosească astăzi;

*They CAN'T POSSIBLY arrive today!*

In English, there is a natural association between the epistemic modals and those adverbs which also express varying degrees of possibility or likelihood. It is feasible to construct a paradigm of speaker assessments which conveys the relative strength or weakness of the speaker's epistemic 'knowledge'. These modal-adverb expressions represent established sequences and are intrinsic to the system of modality in English<sup>11, 12</sup>:

might conceivably, might possibly, might perhaps  
 may possibly, may perhaps  
 might well  
 may well  
 will probably  
 will certainly, will undoubtedly  
 must surely, must certainly  
 mightn't (rare) necessarily  
 may not necessarily  
 probably wouldn't  
 probably won't  
 couldn't possibly, couldn't conceivably  
 can't possibly

These combinations provide further evidence – if evidence were needed – of the unrandom nature of language and endorse the very principle of idiom that 'a language user has available to him or her a large number of semi-preconstructed phrases that constitute single choices...' (Sinclair 1991:110). The status of these combinations is more or less established and hence predictable; this suggests that the modal verb system in English is undergoing a process of gradual but continued refinement where at least some adverb 'acolytes' are

becoming increasingly integrated.

5. *The Adverb Satellites and their Modal Verb Heads in Conspectus*

The semantic, syntactic, and grammatical properties of those adverbials which most regularly co-occur with the modals correspond to a large extent with their realization as single-word, closed-class items, namely adverbs. They constitute a fairly limited set of items and share, with their modal verb heads, the expression of modality, or the closely associated notion of degree. In the literature, they are variously referred to as 'modal adverbs', 'adverbs of mood' or 'modal adjuncts'.<sup>13</sup> We adopt the term 'modal adverbs'.

Syntactically, modal adverbs can operate within the clause (VP-adverb), where they have as their focus the co-occurring modal, or sententially (S-adverb), where their scope extends over the clause as a whole. It is crucial to distinguish between the two types of adverb, for semantic differences correlate with differences in syntactic behaviour. In:

(11) POSSIBLY, she CAN'T be reached at home,

the adverb, sentential in scope by virtue of its peripherality to the adjacent clause, functions extensively, whereas in:

(12) She CAN'T POSSIBLY be reached at home,

where the adverb is clearly subordinate to the VP, its focus is restricted to the co-occurring negated modal. Syntactically, POSSIBLY S-adverb is not part of the clause of the sentence to which it is appended; this is evidenced by the use of commas in writing and a pause in speech. By contrast, POSSIBLY VP-adverb is relatively integrated in the structure of the clause.

Semantically, the S-adverb expresses the speaker's comment on the content of the complete utterance and can be seen to modify the sentence as a whole, rendering it a more tentative declaration of the speaker's assessment than its omission would have otherwise allowed. The VP-adverb serves to reinforce or intensify the negated modal, where its scope of modification lies. The sentence adverb is more marked for lexical meaning than its VP counterpart which, by

definition, is more integrated in clause structure and thus more syntactically central. This would suggest that modal + VP-adverb co-occurrence is the more central of the two. Neither type of adverb is structurally obligatory yet both impinge on the nature of the modality expressed.

In terms of the adverbial classification proposed by Quirk et al (1985:475ff), and which we adopt in this paper, S-adverbs, such as the 'possibly' in (1), or VP-adverbs, such as the 'possibly' in (2) are referred to as DISJUNCTS and SUBJUNCTS respectively, in recognition of their characteristic syntactic behaviour.<sup>14</sup> The notional category of modal adverbs can thus be seen to span both formal categories according to the position of the adverb in relation to clause structure.

There is additional syntactic variation within the two broad categories of adverb in that certain adverbs favour certain positions. CERTAINLY, DEFINITELY and SURELY can be associated with either pre- or post- auxiliary position, although in pre-auxiliary position they convey higher emphasis:

(13) She SURELY MUST have realized the consequences of a refusal!

(14) She MUST SURELY have realized the consequences of a refusal!

This position, it should be noted, is favoured by adverb collocates which do not themselves express modality but serve to reinforce that expressed in the verb:

(15) They SIMPLY MUST have ignored the rules;

(16) You REALLY SHOULD see a doctor.

CONCEIVABLY, POSSIBLY, INEVITABLY and NECESSARILY are mostly confined to post-auxiliary position:

(17) She MIGHT JUST CONCEIVABLY have something pertinent to tell them;

(18) Corruption WILL INEVITABLY erode political legitimacy.

Where the modal is negated, CONCEIVABLY, POSSIBLY and NECESSARILY typically occur in post-auxiliary position:

- (19) He COULDN'T POSSIBLY have imagined that he had any chance of catching up with the thieves;
- (20) It MAY NOT NECESSARILY end in conflict. We must wait.

Of course, where the adverb functions as a disjunct, it can enjoy much greater syntactic freedom, although transmobility will often have implications for meaning:

- (21) SURELY, they MUST have known what would happen?
- (22) They MUST SURELY have known what would happen (?)
- (23) They MUST have known what would happen, SURELY?
- (24) They SURELY MUST have known what would happen.

The adverb certainly catches the modal's inferential nature in all of these examples but in the latter case its function is not to make an appeal to a potential addressee but simply to affirm the speaker's conviction.

It is possible to distinguish four semantic processes which may be associated with modal/adverb co-occurrence: *thematization* (involving co-occurrence with disjuncts) and *emphasis, intensification, and focus* (involving co-occurrence with subjuncts).

Peripheral to clause structure and sentential in scope, disjuncts overtly identify the speaker as source of authority and enable him to comment on the content of the adjoining clause; they can thus be seen to play a 'thematic' role. The most relevant category of disjuncts includes those items concerned with the speaker's statement of conviction (such as CERTAINLY, DEFINITELY, UNDOUBTEDLY, etc.) or articulation of doubt (such as MAYBE, PERHAPS, POSSIBLY, etc.). These Quirk et al (1985) refer to as CONTENT (or ATTITUDINAL) DISJUNCTS. Representative examples of this type of co-occurrence are:

- (25) NO DOUBT similar schemes WILL in due course be submitted by other schools of the University.
- (26) The drugs they give COULD APPARENTLY have a detrimental effect on the powers of concentration.
- (27) PRESUMABLY, you SHOULD have given the police your address at the time of the accident.

On account of their superordinate status, disjuncts enjoy considerable freedom of movement in relation to other clause elements and are regularly to be found at medial or end positions. In the latter case, the adverb seems to be tagged on almost as an afterthought:

- (28) It MUST be a very peculiar coinage, ACTUALLY.

Despite their relative peripherality, disjuncts are subject to selectional or collocational restrictions at the extremes of the modal spectrum. Compare:

- (29) POSSIBLY, she MIGHT succeed;
- (28) \*POSSIBLY, she MUST succeed.<sup>15, 16</sup>
- (29) DEFINITELY, she MUST succeed;
- (30) \*DEFINITELY, she MIGHT succeed.<sup>17</sup>

In order to produce a grammatically acceptable utterance, the modal and its adverb collocate must be 'modally harmonic' (Lyons 1977:807). It is significant, that even though the adverb lies outside the clause, it remains subject to selectional restrictions on account of the semantic hegemony exercised by the modal.

A much smaller category of disjuncts which enable the speaker to comment on the form or style of what is being said (hence the appellation STYLE DISJUNCTS) (Quirk et al 1985) also enter into co-occurrence with the modals and include such items as: HONESTLY, SERIOUSLY, SIMPLY, FRANKLY, etc. Semantically, they share no overlap of meaning with the modals and no specific collocational restrictions apply. However, such items as

HONESTLY and SIMPLY, when they immediately precede the modal, serve as EMPHASIZERS (a major subclass of subjunct):

- (31) I HONESTLY CAN'T understand why you failed to tell me.  
 (32) One SIMPLY MUST reward loyal service.

Because of their proximity to the modal, and their relative integration within clause structure, the adverbs become delexicalised and there ensues a reduction in their distinctive contribution to meaning (Sinclair 1991:113). The process of delexicalisation generally applies to modal/adverb co-occurrence but is particularly noticeable where in other contexts the adverbial is more loaded for lexical meaning:

- (33) HONESTLY, I was devastated when she left.

The adverbs which most frequently combine with the modals belong to the subjunct class of adverbials. Attached to the VP, they are relatively integrated in clause structure and exhibit considerably less semantic and grammatical independence than disjuncts. In combination with modal verb heads and to a much greater extent than with any other class of adverbial, subjuncts endorse the linguistic principle that forms related in meaning tend to be adjacent or proximate (Matthews 1980:243ff). Two central subcategories of subjunct are relevant here, namely EMPHASIZERS and INTENSIFIERS (Quirk et al 1985: op. cit.).

Emphasizers signal the strength of the speaker's conviction and invariably reinforce the modality expressed by the modal verb head:

- (34) As a colleague I SIMPLY CAN'T speak to highly of him.  
 (35) You REALLY SHOULD start mourning your brother.  
 (36) I HONESTLY COULDN'T remember when it was.  
 (37) It MAY WELL be that there were mistakes.

Common emphasizee collocates include such items as: CERTAINLY, DEFINITELY, OBVIOUSLY, REALLY, OF

COURSE, etc. The modals co-occur with emphasizees more frequently than with any other adverbial type; emphasis is thus the most common semantic process to be associated with modal/adverb co-occurrence.

Related to emphasis, intensification is a scalar phenomenon, involving the dual process of amplification and diminution: intensifiers either scale upwards from an assumed norm:

- (38) It COULDN'T POSSIBLY happen again;  
 (39) They ALTOGETHER MUST have forgotten.

Or downwards:

- (40) She MAY JUST have popped out for a few minutes;  
 (41) I COULD HARDLY keep a straight face;  
 (42) They WILL PROBABLY ALMOST DEFINITELY be here next week.

Unlike diminution, amplification of the modal is nearly always indirect, and occurs as the result of the combination of an intensifier with an emphasizee or content disjunct already present in the clause:

- (43) She VERY EASILY COULD manage.

Instances of multiple co-occurrence are rare and then largely confined to spoken discourse. Very few adverbs are involved: MOST, VERY (amplification) and ONLY, SIMPLY, JUST, HARDLY, ALMOST, QUITE (diminution) are the most common items.

The semantic process of restriction frequently involves the same items which function as emphasizees but now the adverbial draws attention to the modal by actually focusing upon it. Quirk et al 1985: op. cit.) refer to them as FOCUSING SUBJUNCTS. In fact, it could be argued that restriction is a special instance of emphasis. In:

- (44) I REALLY SHOULD be getting along now,

the adverb clearly has as its focus the modal. Restriction is most

evident where modal/adverb combinations occur in correlative constructions:

- (45) You **COULD** - and **INDEED SHOULD** - be more expansive in writing an introductory survey.
- (46) John **BOTH CÀN** and (**ALSO**) **WILL** learn that I'm the one in charge here.

Correlation is frequently achieved in a construction resembling a cleft sentence:

- (47) It's **JUST** that he **MÀY** have gone (I don't know whether he has);
- (48) It's **ONLY** that they **MÛST** understand there are limits.

#### 6. *The Collocational Implications of Modal/Adverb Co-occurrence*

The examination and analysis of corpora (the present study and the bulk of the illustrations derive from the spoken and written components of the Survey of English Usage Corpus) suggest that much of our mental lexicon comprises combinations of two or more words that customarily co-occur within a short space of each other in a text. Modal-adverb collocations may not be fossilized in the sense that such phrases as 'cordially invited' or 'anno Domini' are, but the tendency of the two elements to combine in a patterned rather than haphazard manner is to a large extent predictable. Indeed, some combinations are well-established, even where the two elements do not share a similar semantic component:

- (49) They **MAY WELL** insist on investigating themselves.

'Tendency' is however the key concept: according to context, either modal or adverb can 'predict' the co-occurrence of the other:

- (50) They **CAN'T** (**POSSIBLY**) arrive today.

- (51) One **SIMPLY (MUST)** show one's appreciation for such loyal service.

The strength of collocational attraction, notwithstanding the type illustrated in (28), is that much greater where the adverbial itself is also concerned with the semantic expression of modality or the closely associated notion of degree. In the case of VP-adverbs (namely, subjuncts), and with very few exceptions, the modal will not permit of modification by adverbs fulfilling any other semantic role. Compare:

- (52) **HAPPILY**, he **CAN'T** go;

- (53) \*He **CAN'T HAPPILY** go.

The sort of collocations under discussion here are a matter of tendency; we can predict, for instance, that the adverb satellites combining with **MUST** or **MAY**, will themselves have comparable semantic weighting towards, respectively, assertiveness or non-assertiveness, even if we cannot with confidence predict the exact forms:

- (54) I **REALLY/ABSOLUTELY MUST** insist that you accompany me.

- (55) She **MAY PERHAPS/POSSIBLY** arrive later.

Collocation is, however, more than just a question of frequency; Greenbaum (1988:116) argues:

Collocation is more than a statistical matter: it has a psychological correlate. We know that items are collocated just as we know that one sequence of items is part of our language and another is not. Both constitute knowledge that speakers have of their language...And just as we recognize degrees of acceptability...so we can recognize degrees of collocation (some co-occurrences seem more frequent than others).

In other words, collocation is a question of native speaker competence, a series of assumptions that native speakers can confidently make about their language. Such assumptions are not



available to non-native speakers.<sup>18</sup>

### 8.0. Comparison of Modal-Adverb combinations in English and Romanian

The modal verbs of Romanian are far less easily distinguished from other verbs than are the modal verbs of English whose status as a discrete grammatical system is widely accepted. The Romanian modals are variously described as auxiliary or semi-auxiliary verbs of modality or mood. There are six forms involved and they operate with their modal status according to context: A PUTEA ('to be able to' / 'can'); A TREBUI ('to have to' / 'must'); A VREA 'to wish for' / 'to want'; A FI ('to be' / 'will'); A AVEA ('to have' / 'to own'; A VENI 'to come' / 'to feel like').

- (56) Medicamentele pe care le dau AR PUTEA APARENT să aibă un efect negativ asupra puterii de concentrare;

*The drugs they give COULD APPARENTLY have a detrimental effect on the powers of concentration.*

- (57) DE FAPT, TREBUIE că e o formulare foarte specială;

*It MUST be a very peculiar coinage, ACTUALLY.*

- (58) PUR SI SIMPLU, N-AU VRUT să facă cum am cerut;

*They SIMPLY WOULDN'T do as I asked.*

- (59) Mihai VA FI CU SIGURANȚA la cinema deseară;

*Mihai WILL CERTAINLY be at the cinema this evening.*

- (60) DE FAPT, N-AM a mă plânge de nimic;

*ACTUALLY I HAVE nothing whatsoever to cry over.*

- (61) PROBABIL că VOR veni, aproape sigur, săptămâna viitoare;

*They WILL PROBABLY ALMOST DEFINITELY be here next week.*

In the main, the Romanian 'modals' are not subject to the grammatical restrictions which apply to their English counterparts<sup>19</sup>, nor can they be so readily distinguished from other verbs of auxiliary function or, indeed, full verbs. For instance, the Romanian 'modals' take the 'to-infinitive'; they are marked for tense and they are fully inflected. They do not therefore constitute, at the formal grammatical level, a discrete modal system. In English, the verbs TO BE and TO HAVE are treated as primary verbs (along with TO DO) in recognition of their dual function as auxiliary and main verbs; they are not considered part of the modal system. The Romanian equivalents, A FI and A AVEA respectively, also have a dual function. A FI is common in its future tense form where in English WILL is widely used and also in contexts where a 'necessity' or an 'obligation' is involved:

- (62) Vom mai vedea noi ce ESTE de făcut;

*We shall DEFINITELY see what HAS TO be done/what there is to be done.*

As an auxiliary of mood Romanian A AVEA is said to convey the modal nuances or overtones of 'possibility' or 'necessity'. (46) above could be glossed: 'Nothing possibly exists which would make me cry' or 'there is no need for me to cry (as there is nothing to cry over)'. A TREBUI is close in its uses to epistemic and deontic MUST, sharing a similar distribution contextually. A VREA overlaps with English WILL and WOULD but also with the lexical verb TO WANT. TO WANT however is normally excluded from treatments of the English modal system: 'WANT is not [...]formally one of the modal verbs and although it has some semantic similarity to WILL and BE WILLING TO, it does not act as a suppletive for, or overlap with, either of these verbs', (Palmer 1990:25f).<sup>20</sup> A PUTEA covers those meanings expressed by CAN and the periphrastic expression BE ABLE TO. Like BE ABLE TO, A PUTEA regularly conveys some sense of ability but generally has a wider semantic field than either of

the two English forms. Whereas in English, BE ABLE TO is used as a more formal variant of CAN and is more frequent in written than in spoken texts, A PUTEA freely occurs in either medium, and irrespective of the level of formality involved. A VENI seems only to have modal value when as in (47) it overlaps with A FI. It is immediately apparent that there is no obvious equivalence between the English system of modal auxiliaries and the range of verbs deployed in Romanian. From a formal point of view, the modal verbs cannot be clearly distinguished in Romanian which relies more on lexical means to express modal concepts. Further evidence of this can be adduced from an examination of how modal verbs and adverbs combine in Romanian.

In English there is a relatively well-defined set of modal adverbs, mostly realised by single-word items, which either modify the sentence as a whole or operate primarily on the associated verb in the VP. Romanian tends to rely more on periphrastic expressions functioning as adverbials (especially adjective phrases) and these tend to have sentential rather than VP focus. Indeed, rarely in Romanian is it possible to find VP modification effected by a solitary adverb. There is a marked tendency to resort to periphrastic expressions which, because of their realisation by multi-word elements, are marked off from the verb phrases of the clauses in which they occur. Modal adverbial expressions in Romanian are thus syntactically almost always peripheral to clause structure.<sup>21</sup> This can clearly be seen by the way sentences (1) and (2) above are expressed in Romanian:

(63) *POSSIBLY, she CAN'T be reached at home.*

POSIBIL că nu POATE fi găsită acasă.

(It is possible/probable that she can not be reached at home.)

(64) *She CAN'T POSSIBLY be reached at home.*

NU SE POATE IN NICI UN CAZ să fie găsită acasă

(It is not possible under any circumstances that she can be reached...)

Whilst in English, a syntactic distinction can be drawn between the two adverbs on the grounds of transmobility, no such distinction can be made in Romanian, which in effect glosses on the modal meanings expressed through its reliance on adjectival modal expressions. CAN'T POSSIBLY is a grammaticalized modal-adverb collocation in English; it finds no such equivalence in Romanian. Likewise, the idiomatic combinations of CAN, COULD, MAY, MIGHT with WELL (operating as an emphaser) find no direct equivalence in Romanian where, again, periphrasis is used:

(65) *It MAY WELL be that there were mistakes.*

S-AR PUTEA FOARTE BINE să fi fost și greșeli.

(It could very well be that there were mistakes.)

It has already been noted that in English adverbs otherwise marked for lexical meaning become delexicalised in the environment of a modal verb; HONESTLY is a prime case in point. It belongs to that category of adverb (including REALLY, TRULY, ACTUALLY, INDEED - sentence adverbs used typically to refer to the truth of a predication) where the syntactic shift from sentence modifier to VP-modifier represents the shift from a term that used sententially 'expresses some relationship between what is said and the declarativeness of saying it' to a term which 'has become a virtual intensifier'<sup>22</sup>, retaining little or any remnant of its semantic guise as a sentence adverb (Bolinger 1972:93f). This point was illustrated in examples (11) and (13) above. In Romanian, the delexicalised variant or 'intensifier' relationship is not possible:

(66) *I HONESTLY COULDN'T remember when it was.*

ITI SPUN CINSTIT ca nu mi-am PUTUT aminti când s-a întâmplat.

(It is to/must be said in all honesty that it was not possible for me to remember when it was.)

Similarly, regular cases of emphasis, as in example (30) above, are realized sententially in Romanian:

- (67) *One SIMPLY MUST show one's appreciation for such loyal service.*

EVIDENT, TREBUIE să-ti arăți satisfacția pentru un serviciu.

Certain modal-adverb combinations are considered pleonastic in Romanian. This is often the case where the modality expressed is non-assertive and conveys a relatively weak judgement or assessment on the part of the speaker:

- (68) POATE că sosește mai târziu;

*She MAY (POSSIBLY) arrive later / It is POSSIBLE that she arrives later.*

- (69) AS PUTEA servi încă o bucată de prăjitură, vă rog?

*COULD I (POSSIBLY) have another piece of cake, please?*

However, there are combinations expressing a tentative cumulative modality where adverbial supplementation is not viewed as inappropriate:

- (70) S-AR PUTEA DOAR să fii ieșit pentru câteva minute;

*She MAY JUST have popped out for a few minutes.*

There is, of course, no reason for the expression of modality between two such different languages as English and Romanian to be similar or even particularly close. Romanian, like many other Romance languages, has a subjunctive mood which functions as a generalized marker of modality; it is unlikely that the nuances frequently captured by modal-adverb combinations in English would necessarily be mirrored by parallel constructions in Romanian. We have seen that the close syntactic relation which can exist between a modal verb and its adverb satellite in English is simply not possible in Romanian, where adverb qualification is invariably sentential. This distributional mobility, however, enables the modality of a sentence to be thematized, and the process of *thematization* seems far more common

in Romanian than in English, where the processes of *emphasis*, *intensification* and *focus*, at VP level, are available options. Just as the modal verbs in English were originally main verbs which have gradually become recategorized, so too have their more frequent adverb satellites become more closely integrated in the verb phrase. Modal-adverb expressions in English are more formally integrated in that language's modal system than in the Romanian where the modal verbs have not undergone a comparable degree of grammaticalization. But that language can resort to the subjunctive mood whereas English cannot.<sup>23</sup>

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#### Notes

1. There are some exceptions. Perkins (1983) offers a typology of modal expressions which elevates non-verbal carriers of modal meanings to a status other than that of mere instruments of paraphrase to elucidate the meanings of the modal auxiliaries. Whilst thereby recognizing the diversity of modal expressions available in English, he largely fails to explore the interdependency of modal elements when these combine. In an earlier, not dissimilar account, the Romanian linguist, Bîră (1979), does examine, if somewhat briefly, the interplay between different modal elements operating synergetically within the same environments, observing (op. cit.: 211), for example, that 'quite often *modal adverbs* co-occur with *modal verbs*, thus reinforcing each other or cumulating in meaning'. Likewise, Quirk et al (1985), by making reference at all to the phenomenon of modal/adverb co-occurrence, seem to acknowledge that the need for a more comprehensive treatment of modality exists.
2. Many of the illustrations in this study are based on data drawn from the Survey of English Usage Corpus at the University of London. As we are not presenting a textual study of the Survey, the material has been adapted and simplified to accord with the outline presentation considered appropriate here.
3. A similar synergetic relationship is exemplified by the combination of tense

- and adverbs of time. See Zdrenghea, Mihai, 'Values of Tenses in Collocation with Time Adverbials', PhD Dissertation, University of Cluj, Transylvania, Romania, 1974.
4. See for example Sinclair (1991); Aijmer & Altenberg (eds) (1991).
  5. The modals are not marked for number; have no finite forms, and, other than in non-standard dialects of English, such as Hawick Scots, do not co-occur.
  6. Palmer (1986:43) also argues this case:  
'There is no need to be much concerned with the subjunctive in English. ...This has largely disappeared... , and it can well be argued that it has been replaced by the modal verbs...'
  7. Modal logicians such as von Wright (1951), Rescher (1968) have developed elaborate frameworks for the conceptualization of various types of logical modality. These include, for instance: alethic, epistemic, temporal, boulomaic (or bouletic), evaluative, causal, and likelihood modalities. To some extent, the range of modalities defined reflects different ways of slicing the same cake. Linguists use the terms differently and to cover a wider area of modal meanings within natural language. Hence, whilst a modal logician's epistemic modality is limited to a set of operators for what is known or not known, the linguist's use of epistemic modality, which presupposes knowledge or rather a lack of it, typically refers to situations in which the speaker makes a judgement about the relative possibility or certainty of something being the case. Similarly, for linguists, deontic modality involves not only the logician's concept of what is obligatory or permissible, but also such boulomaic notions as 'volition'.
  8. There is a variety of terminology in use to cover the Root/Epistemic distinction. Quirk et al (1985) refer to INTRINSIC and EXTRINSIC modality, respectively. Other terminologies such as MODULATION and MODALITY are widespread. It is also possible to distinguish a third dimension of modality, DYNAMIC, which is concerned with the ability or volition of the subject rather than the judgements (epistemic) or attitudes (deontic) of the speaker (see Palmer 1990:83f).
  9. See Malinowski, B. 1923. The problem of meaning in primitive languages. Supplement to Ogden, C.K., and Richards, I.A. 1923. The meaning of meaning. London: Kegan Paul.
  10. Even if the adverb precedes the modal 'OBVIOUSLY MUST', and is consequently more emphatic, the combination remains only marginally acceptable.
  11. Halliday (1970:334) establishes a not dissimilar scale of modal verb expressions in terms of what he calls the 'interpersonal' function of modality.
  12. Adverbs frequently precede the modal verb and the effect is usually to give

- additional emphasis. It is worth noting that this still applies in the case of the more established and hence idiomatic combinations such as MAY/MIGHT + WELL: 'He WELL MAY understand the trouble he's caused now!' Post-auxiliary position in relation to the negated modals can be associated with intensification; transposition to pre-auxiliary position produces a different effect: 'He CAN'T POSSIBLY leave now' vs. 'POSSIBLY he CAN'T leave now'. The syntactic variation of adverbs is discussed in section 5.
13. The term 'adjunct', as it is cited in a notional context here, is not to be confused with the restricted usage adopted by Quirk et al (1985) to refer to the major subclass of adverbials which they call 'Adjuncts'.
  14. Quirk et al (1985) distinguish four categories of adverbial: ADJUNCTS, SUBJUNCTS, DISJUNCTS, and CONJUNCTS. Adjuncts most closely resemble other clause elements; they can, for example, be the focus of a sentence, and they can be elicited by question forms. None of the other categories of adverbial can be treated grammatically in the same way. Subjuncts are typically subordinate to a clause element or part of a clause element in contrast to disjuncts which have a superordinate role. Conjuncts operate at an inter-sentential level and function to conjoin independent units. Syntactically, adjuncts are more readily defined than any of the three remaining adverbial classes, where distinctions are made more in accordance with their semantic roles. For this reason, the classification is open to dispute; it has been argued, for instance, that subjuncts would be better treated formally as a subclass of adjunct, given that both are integrated in clause structure, and this was indeed the approach adopted by Quirk et al (1972) in their earlier account. However, the motivation for the reclassification, whilst basically notional, does allow for differences in syntactic status albeit according to semantic function. For a full discussion, see Quirk et al (1972:Ch 8) and (1985:Ch 8).
  15. We follow the convention of prefixing non-standard or deviant utterances with an asterisk: \*.
  16. In this example, it is plausible to imagine a deontic reading whereby the possibility of the obligation can be asserted without the modal-adverb combination impinging on the principle of modal harmony. Thus, given an appropriate context, this sentence could be glossed: 'It is possible that she is obliged/under the obligation to succeed...'
  17. If used concessively, the adverb, and those of similar semantic status, could collocate with MIGHT (or MAY) in such contexts as: 'DEFINITELY, she MIGHT succeed but somehow I don't think she will', where the adverb intensifies the modality (here possibility) expressed by the modal but allows for the opposite to be the case. The possibility of X being true does not

preclude the possibility of Y being true and this is what distinguishes the modal concept of POSSIBILITY from that of PROBABILITY.

18. The pedagogical implications of this observation and a discussion of the results of elicitation experiments conducted on native British speakers of English and non-native Romanian speakers of English form the subject of a forthcoming paper.
19. The modal auxiliaries in English may be further distinguished from other auxiliary verbs in that they have only the bare infinitive form (\*to must); there are no non-finite forms (\*to can, \*canning, \*canned); there is no -s form of the third person singular (\*she wills sing); and the behaviour of the modals in relation to both negation, tense and time relations is highly idiosyncratic. For a full discussion of these issues see Huddleston (1976:333); Quirk et al (1985:136f); Palmer (1990:3f).
20. Perkins (1983:98f) treats TO WANT as a modal lexical verb which refers to a boulemaic or 'bouletic' state. Bouletic modalities are glossed: 'it is hoped/feared/regretted/desired that ...'. TO WANT is perhaps best treated as an instance of what Palmer (1986:12) calls 'volitive' modality.
21. This could be taken as further evidence to support the view that at least some English modal-adverb combinations are more fully grammaticalized than is the case in Romanian. This is not to say that Romanian lacks a grammatical system of modality. As Palmer (1986:7) observes:
 

First, different languages grammaticalize different parts of the overall semantic system ... Secondly, they may organize the semantic field in different ways...Thirdly, they use different grammatical devices...'

Unlike English, Romanian has a subjunctive mood which is widely used, in addition to the six 'auxiliaries of mood'. Romanian can thus be seen to have at least two formal exponents of modality.
22. Bolinger seems to use the term 'intensifier' to refer to the word class (namely, adverb) and 'emphasis' to the semantic effect produced.
23. In his major treatise on the typology of mood and modality, Palmer (1986:1) states that the category of modality 'can be identified, described and compared across a number of different and unrelated languages...'. He allows that there are languages where 'modality is marked elsewhere than on the verb or within a verbal complex' (1986:2).

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