

Systemic Functional Linguistics as a Useful Tool for Analyzing Text (Part 2)

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Abstract

This present paper is part of a series of introductory papers of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL). ‘Systemic Functional Linguistics as a Useful Tool for Analyzing Text Part 1,’ is published in ‘The journal of Aichi Gakuin University Humanities & Sciences’ Vol. 71, No.1 & 2. This paper discusses SFL as a useful tool for analyzing text from the perspective of interpersonal metafunction, including mood selection, the Mood, the Residue and modality. This paper concludes that although exploring interpersonal meaning seems describing ‘what is taken for granted’, understanding meaning of exchange is useful not only researchers of language but also those who use language as professions. As the space is limited, its discussion will be continued to Part 3, where the clause will be explored from the perspective of textual metafunction, how the text is organized as a message.

Keywords

Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), interpersonal metafunction, Mood, Residue, modality

6. Interpersonal Metafunction

In the previous section, the grammar of the clause is explored from the perspective of experiential metafunction, how the speakers/ writers express the

world. Experientially, components of the clause are analyzed as follows: verbal groups realize the process, nominal groups realize participants and adverbial groups and prepositional phrases realize circumstances. There are, as discussed in section 3 in the previous paper, different views of the clause.

Whenever we use language, we interact with each other: We may exchange information or goods and services; our utterances may be positive, negative or between them. This section will give a brief review of how we use language to interact with each other from the perspective of SFL.

6.1 Semantics of Exchanging

When we interact with each other, we choose **giving** or **demanding**. What is exchanged may be **information** or **goods-&-services** (see for example, Halliday, 2014: 135). Thus, there are four basic speech roles: giving information, demanding information, giving goods-&services and demanding goods-&-services. For example:

Daniel is writing a paper. [giving information]

What is Daniel doing now? [demanding information]

I'll show you how to do that. [giving goods-&-services]

Pass me the salt, please. [demanding goods-&-services]

Halliday and his followers use the term, **speech functions** to label these roles: **statement** (giving information), **question** (demanding information), **offer** (giving goods-&-services) and **command** (demanding goods-&-services), respectively (see for example, Halliday, 2014: 135; Thompson, 2014:47; Eggins, 2004: 144–145). These semantic categories are related to the lexicogrammatical structures: the clause structure that is typically used for exchanging information is **indicative**; in indicative, **declarative** is used for

expressing a statement (within declarative, there are **exclamative** and non-exclamative) and **interrogative** is used for asking questions (interrogative includes yes/no and WH-); and command is typically expressed by **imperative**. Thus, from the perspective of lexicogrammar of exchange, the sample clauses are interpreted as:

Daniel is writing a paper. [indicative: declarative]

What is Daniel doing now? [indicative: interrogative: WH-]

I'll show you how to do that. [indicative: declarative]

Pass me the salt, please. [imperative]

These choices of clause type are called **mood** (Figure 6-1 shows the system of mood).

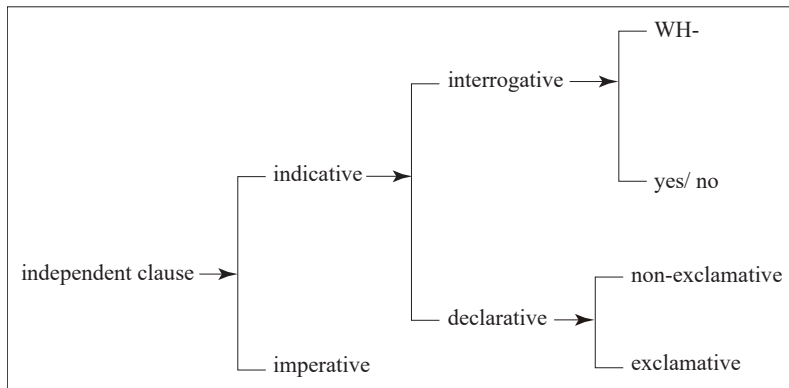


Figure 6-1: A less delicated system of mood in English (1)

Figure 6-2 shows the typical relationships between speech functions and choices of mood.

semantics	statement	question	offer	command
lexicogrammar	declarative	interrogative	declarative	imperative

Figure 6-2: Typical relationships between speech function and choices of mood

Of course, there are other options to realize speech functions. For example, we can say *Could you pass me the salt, please?* when we demand salt: command (demanding goods-&-services) can be realized by interrogative instead of imperative. This ‘shift’ occurring between semantics and lexicogrammar is referred to as **interpersonal metaphor** (part of **grammatical metaphor**). Since it requires further discussion, I leave the question of grammatical metaphor aside for now. I will discuss it later in a different section.

6.2 Mood

In order to understand the lexicogrammatical structures of mood, we need to focus on i) the **Subject**, a nominal group that is responsible for the proposition, ii) the **Finite**, a part of verbal group that defines **primary tense** (*be, have* and *do*), **modality** (e.g., *can, may* and *must*) and **polarity** (positive or negative) in the clause. For example, Figure 6-3 shows examples of Subject and Finite

Daniel	is	writing a paper.	
Subject	Finite		

What	is	Daniel	doing now?
	Finite	Subject	

I'll	show you how to do that.
Subject (I) + Finite (will)	

	Pass me the salt please.
No Subject, No Finite	

Figure 6-3: Examples of Subject and Finite analysis

analysis.

In the simple present and the simple past tense, such as *talks* and *talked*, the Finite fuses with the lexical verb. However, ‘tag test’, adding a gag to the clause in question, shows that the Finite exists. For example, in *Daniel talked with Sally*, the Finite fuses with the lexical verb, *talk*. When ‘tag test’ is applied, the Finite, *did* (past) appears. Figure 6-4 shows the result of the ‘tag test’.

Daniel	talked		with Sally	didn’t	he?
Subject	Finite (past)			Finite	Subject

Figure 6-4: An example of ‘tag test’

In what is called the cleft sentence, both anticipatory *it* and an embedded clause are the Subject. This interpretation is related to textual metafunction, the flow of the message. For example, in *It was Erika who won the contest*, both *It* and *who won the contest* are the Subject. The speaker wants to make *who won the contest* New Information, what the speaker assumes that the listener does not know or does not expect (see e.g., Halliday and Hasan, 1976: 27; Halliday, 2002: 270; and Butt et al, 2012: 180) and the Subject, what is responsible for the proposition. By using anticipatory *it*, the speaker successfully makes *who won the contest* New Information and the Subject. Figure 6-5 shows the analysis (Since Given and New Information is not necessarily apply to a particular grammatical unit, I do not divide Given part and New part in the figure).

Text	It	was	Erika	who won the contest.
Interpersonal	Subject	Finite		Subject
Textual	Given			New

Figure 6-5: An example of interpersonal and textual analysis

The components of the Finite, such as *did*, *was* and *will* are called **verbal operators** (consisting of temporal operators and modal operators). In addition

to verbal operators, when polarity is negative, the elements representing negative polarity (typically, *not* or *n't*) is inserted in the Finite. Since positive polarity is unmarked choice, no element representing positive polarity is required. Figure 6-6 shows examples of clauses with negative polarity ('-' next to Finite represents negative).

Daniel	isn't		writing a paper.
Subject	Finite -		
I	won't		show you how to do that.
Subject	Finite -		
Don't		pass me the salt please.	
Finite - (No Subject)			

Figure 6-6: Examples of clauses with negative polarity

The following list shows the Finite verbal operators.

Temporal operators:			
	Past	Present	Future
positive	did, was, had, used to	does, is, have	will, shall, would, should
negative	didn't, wasn't, hadn't, didn't + used to	doesn't, isn't, hasn't	won't, shan't, wouldn't, shouldn't
Modal operators:			
	Low	Median	High
positive	can, may, could, might, (dare)	will, would, should, is/was to	must, ought to, need, has/ had to
negative	needn't, doesn't/didn't + need to, have to	won't, wouldn't, shouldn't, (isn't/ wasn't to)	mustn't, oughtn't, can't, couldn't, (mayn't, mightn't, hasn't/hadn't to)

Figure 6-7: List of the finite verbal operators (adopted from Halliday, 2014: 145)

The Subject, the Finite and polarity combine to form the main component of the clause, the **Mood** (capital letter 'M' is used to distinguish the clause

component from ‘mood’, which is clause types such as declarative, interrogative and imperative). The structure of the Mood is applied to the choice of mood as follows:

- (1) The *presence* of the Mood element, consisting of Subject, plus Finite, realizes the feature ‘indicative’.
- (2) With the indicative, what is significant is the *order* of Subject and Finite:
 - (a) The order Subject before Finite realizes ‘declarative’;
 - (b) The order Finite before Subject realizes ‘yes-no interrogative’;
 - (c) In a ‘WH- interrogative’ the order is: (i) Subject before Finite if the WH- element is the Subject; (ii) Finite before Subject otherwise.

(adopted from Halliday, 2014: 143)

[bold and italics are copied as they are]

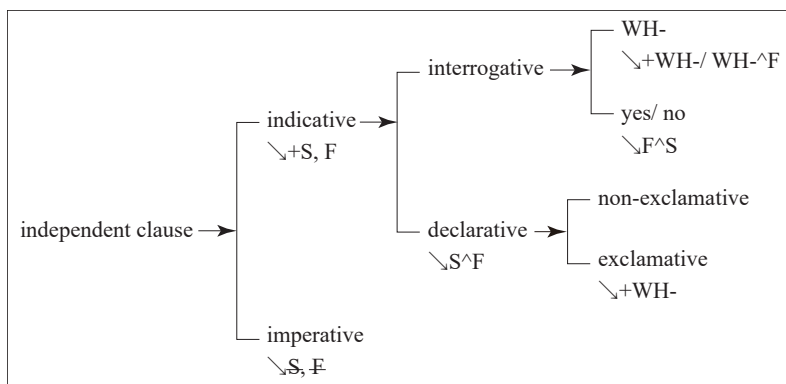


Figure 6-8: A less delicated system of mood in English (2)

Now, Mood structures applying to mood types and are identified, the system of mood type supplemented with realization statements can be drawn (Figure

6-8).

6.3 Residue

The remainder part of the clause is called the **Residue**, which consists of three types of component: the **Predicator**, the **Complements** and the **Adjuncts**.

The Predicator is the part of the verbal group that is not Finite (*be* and *have* in simple present and simple past are exceptions: they have no Predicator). It has four functions (Halliday, 2014: 151–152; Thompson, 2014: 63)

- i) It expresses the process that the Subject participates (doing & happening, sensing, relating, saying and existing).
- ii) It specifies secondary tense. For example, *have finished* in *Daniel will have finished the paper by tomorrow* represents the task was finished before the appointed time although the primary tense is the future.
- iii) It specifies aspects and phases without changing Ideational meaning (e.g. *start, try, manage*). For example, compare *Daniel is writing the paper* and *Daniel started writing the paper*.
- iv) It specifies the voice. For example, in *The paper is being written by Daniel*, (be) *being written* shows that the voice of the clause is passive.

According to Thompson (2014: 64), “Complement is an element in the Residue, typically realized by a nominal group, which could have been chosen as Subject, but was not.” For example, *a paper* in *Daniel is writing a paper*: and *you* and *how to do that* in *I’ll show you how to do that*. The only Complement that cannot be the Subject is the Attributive in the relational clause, since as discussed in 5.5.2 in Part 1, relational attributive processes are not ‘reversible.’ For example, although *a banker* in *David is a banker*: is realized by a nominal group, it does not have the potential to be the Subject.

An Adjunct is an element that cannot be chosen as the Subject, which is typically realized by an adverbial group or a prepositional phrase (Halliday, 2014: 154–155). Adjuncts are grouped into three: **circumstantial Adjuncts**, **modal Adjuncts** and **conjunctive Adjuncts**.

Circumstantial Adjuncts serve, from the perspective of ideational metafunction, circumstances. For example, *in the university library* (place) in *Daniel is writing a paper in the university library*. and *later* (time) in *I'll show you how to do that later*. Unlike other circumstances, only agent circumstances can be the Subject. For example, *by Daniel* in *This paper is written by Daniel*. has the potential to be the Subject. Circumstantial Adjuncts are analyzed as part of the Residue. Figure 6-9 shows an example.

Daniel	is	writing	a paper	in the library
Subject	Finite	Predicator	Complement	Adjunct: circumstantial
Mood		Residue		

Figure 6-9: An example of interpersonal analysis (1)

Modal Adjuncts express interpersonal meaning in two ways: either as part of the Mood (if they directly affect Mood) or appearing outside of the Mood (if their effect covers the clause). Modal Adjuncts include: 1) Mood Adjuncts, 2) Polarity Adjuncts, 3) Comment Adjuncts and 4) Vocative Adjuncts.

1) Mood Adjuncts

Mood Adjuncts functions in the Mood and directly affect the Mood by adding temporality (e.g., *soon*, *already*, *once*), modality (e.g., *sometimes*, *maybe*, *willingly*) and intensity (*completely*, *absolutely*, *only*). Thus, mood Adjuncts are included in the Mood, even though they appear outside of the Mood structure. Halliday (2014: 187–189) gives detailed description of mood Adjuncts. Figure 6-10 and 6-11 show examples.

Daniel	probably	has	finished	his paper.
Subject	Adjunct: modal: mood	Finite	Predicator	Complement
Mood			Residue	

Figure 6-10: An example of interpersonal analysis (2)

Has	Daniel	finished	his paper	yet?
Finite	Subject	Predicator	Complement	Adjunct: modal: mood
Mood	Residue		Mood	

Figure 6-11: An example of interpersonal analysis (3)

2) Polarity Adjuncts

Yes/ no serves as Adjuncts when answering to the questions, even though ellipsis happens. Figure 6-12 and 6-13 shows examples.

[Answering to *Is Daniel writing a paper?*]

Yes,	he	is.
Adjunct: modal: polarity	Subject	Finite
Mood		

Figure 6-12: An example of interpersonal analysis (4)

[Answering to *Is Daniel writing a paper?*]

Yes.
Adjunct: modal: polarity
Mood

Figure 6-13: An example of interpersonal analysis (5)

When the speaker does not answer questions, *yes/ no* does not have interpersonal functions. For example, when the speaker continues to speak, s/he does not choose polarity. In such case, *yes/ no* has only textual meaning, which will be discussed later in section 7. Figure 6-14 shows an example.

[The same speaker continues after *Finally, I finished the paper.*]

Yes,	I	did	it!
	Subject	Finite	Complement
	Mood		Residue

Figure 6-14: An example of interpersonal analysis (6)

3) Comment Adjuncts

Comment Adjuncts provide some comments on the clause as a whole such as *fortunately* (desirability), *to be honest* (admission) and *strictly speaking* (validity). Since their effect covers the clause, comment Adjuncts are not included in the Mood or the Residue. Figure 6-15 shows an example.

Honestly,	Daniel	haven't	finished	his paper.
Adjunct: comment	Subject	Finite -	Predicator	Complement
	Mood		Residue	

Figure 6-15: An example of interpersonal analysis (7)

4) Vocative Adjuncts

“In using a Vocative, the speaker is enacting the participation of the addressee or addressees in the exchange” (Halliday, 2014: 159). Vocatives do not have experiential meaning but they have interpersonal meaning. However, since they do not affect interpersonal structure, they are not part of the Mood or the Residue. Figure 6-16 shows an example.

Daniel,	have	you	finished	the paper?
Adjunct: vocative	Finite	Subject	Predicator	Complement
	Mood		Residue	

Figure 6-16: An example of interpersonal analysis (8)

Conjunctive Adjuncts such as *however* and *therefore* typically occur at

the beginning of the clause and typically serve as the Theme, the departure of a message. Since conjunctive Adjuncts are not interpersonal, they are not included in the Mood or the Residue (Halliday, 2014: 157–158). Figure 6-17 shows an example. The function of the Theme will be discussed later in section 7.

However,	Daniel	didn't	finished	his paper.
Adjunct: conjunctive	Subject	Finite -	Predicator	Complement
	Mood		Residue	

Figure 6-17: An example of interpersonal analysis (9)

6.4 WH- elements

Other than the elements discussed above, WH- elements should be considered since when WH- interrogatives and exclamatives are chosen, WH- elements correspond to the Subject, the Complement or Adjuncts.

1) WH- interrogatives

When WH- elements overlap with the Subject, they are part of the Mood. On the other hand, when WH- elements overlap with the Complements or Adjuncts, they are part of the Residue. Figure 6-18, 6-19 and 6-20 show examples.

Who	wrote		this paper?
Subject/ WH-	Finite (past)	Predicator (write)	Complement
Mood		Residue	

Figure 6-18: An example of WH- interrogative analysis (WH-: Subject)

What	did	you	write	on your paper?
Complement/ WH-	Finite	Subject	Predicator	Adjunct: circumstantial
Residue	Mood		Residue	

Figure 6-19: An example of WH- interrogative analysis (WH-: Complement)

Where	is	Daniel	writing	his paper?
Adjunct: circumstantial/ WH-	Finite	Subject	Predicator	Complement
Residue	Mood		Residue	

Figure 6-20: An example of WH- interrogative analysis (WH-: Adjunct)

2) Exclamatives

Exclamatives are another mood where WH- elements are used. The WH- elements, *how* and *what* are typically used in exclamatives and overlap with the Compliment or the Adjuncts. Figure 6-21 and 6-22 shows examples.

What a wonderful paper	you	wrote!		
Complement/ WH-	Subject	Finite (past)	Predicator (write)	
Residue	Mood		Residue	

Figure 6-21: An example of exclamative analysis (WH-: Complement)

How enthusiastically	Daniel	wrote		his paper!
Adjunct: circumstantial/ WH-	Subject	Finite (past)	Predicator (write)	Complement
Residue	Mood			Residue

Figure 6-22: An example of exclamative analysis (WH-: Adjunct)

So far, I have discussed the elements to organize the clause as exchanging, i.e., Mood, Residue and WH- elements. Looking at the Finite, the polarity has been always either positive or negative. In the next section, I will explore the area between ‘yes’ and ‘no’, i.e., modality.

6.5 Modality

As we saw, the Finite is related to polarity, the choice of ‘yes’ or ‘no’. However, there are different choices in the ‘gray’ zone between ‘yes’ and ‘no’. For example, *may*, *often* and *willingly*. This intermediate zone is called **modality**. When we exchange information (i.e., in proposition), the meaning

between ‘A is B’ and ‘A is not B’ is expressed by ‘how likely’ (**probability**) and ‘how often’ (**usuality**). The degree of probability and usuality is called **modalization**. On the other hand, when we exchange goods-&-services (i.e., in proposal), the meaning between ‘do’ and ‘do not’ is expressed by ‘how much one is obliged to do’ (**obligation**) and ‘how much one wants to do’ (**inclination** or **willingness**). The degree of obligation and inclination is called **modulation** (Eggins, 2004: 172–176, 179–183; Halliday, 2014: 177; Thompson, 2014: 70–71). Figure 6-23 shows the system of modality.

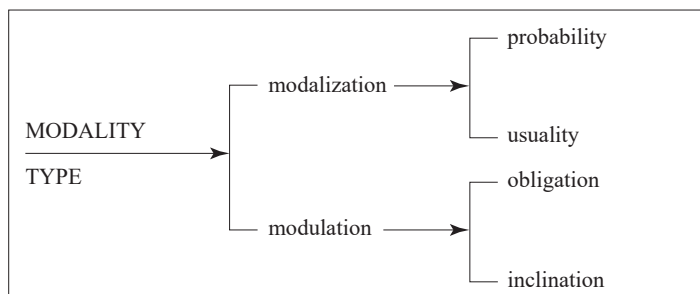


Figure 6-23: A less delicate system of modality

6.5.1 Expressing Modalization

There are various ways to express modalization: i) by using a modal operator, ii) by using a modal Adjunct and iii) by combining a modal operator and a modal Adjunct. For example:

- i) Daniel may be writing a paper. / Daniel will write papers.
- ii) Perhaps Daniel is writing a paper. / Daniel always writes papers.
- iii) Perhaps Daniel may be writing a paper. / Daniel will always write papers.

In these examples, different degrees of probability and usuality can be

recognized. Thus, a problem here is how many gradations are appropriate. Although sensitive ‘scale’ can be made to grade modalization, too many gradations do not seem reasonable when analyzing texts. Thus, following Halliday (2002) and Halliday (2014), this paper adopts three degrees: low, median, and high. For example:

Low: Possibly Daniel is writing a paper. / Daniel sometimes writes papers.

Median: Perhaps Daniel is writing a paper. / Daniel usually writes papers.

High: Certainly, Daniel is writing a paper. / Daniel always writes papers.

Different SFL researchers use different labels to cover the ‘gradations.’ For example, Halliday (2014) uses the term ‘value’ and Thompson (2014) uses the term ‘commitment.’ Presumably, Eggins (2004: 13) does not use a term to cover ‘low, median, high’ but she describes this matter as follows:

Both modal operators and Mood adjuncts can be classified according to the degree of certainty, or usuality they express: high (*must, certainly, always*), median (*may, probably, usually*) or low (*might, possibly, sometimes*).

[italics are copied as they are]

Since ‘degree’ in Eggin’s (2004) description is neutral and straightforward, this paper adopts the term ‘degree.’ Figure 6.24 shows the system of degree.

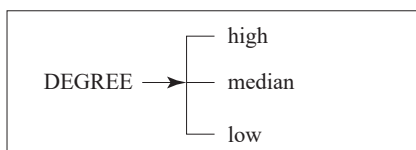


Figure 6.24: System of degree

6.5.2 Expressing Modulation

Obligation and inclination can also be expressed by various ways: i) by using a modal operator, ii) by using a modal Adjunct, iii) by combining a modal adjunct and a moral Adjunct and iv) by expanding the Predicator. For example:

- i) You have to show me how to do that. / I'll show you how to do that.
- ii) Definitely show me how to do that. / I willingly show you how to do that.
- iii) You definitely have to show me how to do that. / I'll willingly show you how to do that.
- iv) You're supposed to show me how to do that. / I'm pleased to show you how to do that.

As with modalization, different degrees of obligation and inclination can be recognized. Following the discussion of the degree of modalization, I will adopt the degrees of low, median and high. For example:

Low: You are allowed to show me how to do that. / I'm willing to show you how to do that.

Median: You ought to show me how to do that. / I'm anxious to show you how to do that.

High: You must show me how to do that. / I'm determined to show you how to do that.

6.5.3 Orientations of modality

There are many other ways to express modality. For example, *Daniel may be writing a paper*: can be expressed as follows:

- i) Possibly Daniel is writing a paper.
- ii) I think Daniel is writing a paper.
- iii) It's possible that Daniel is writing a paper.

Whereas ii) seems an objective expression, iii) seems a subjective expression. Looking at the clauses from a different angle, i) and ii) explicitly express low certainty, original clause and iii) implicitly express the speaker's degree of confidence. The combination of objective/ subjective and explicit/ implicit can be drawn as the system in Figure 6-25.

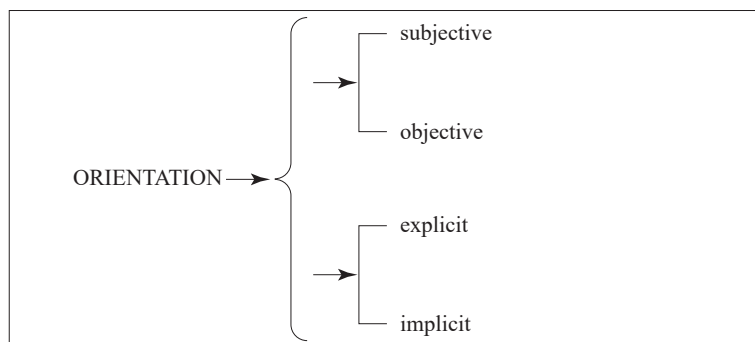


Figure 6-25: A less delicate system of orientation of modality

The variants of objective/ subjective and explicit/ implicit are related to context of situation: field (what social interaction is taking place), tenor (who is participating in the interaction) and mode (whether or not language is constitutive/ whether the text is spoken or written) and genre (the goal oriented, staged structure of text). In addition, in order to explore the variants, we need to understand grammatical metaphor, especially interpersonal metaphor (Martin, 1992; Halliday, 2014). Since context of situation, genre and grammatical metaphor are too complicated and broad to be treated here, I will stop discussion these issues here.

In this section (6.5), modality has been discussed and three systems have been introduced. The systems of modality type, degree and orientation are simultaneous systems to form the system network of modality. The system network of modality can be drawn as Figure 6-26.

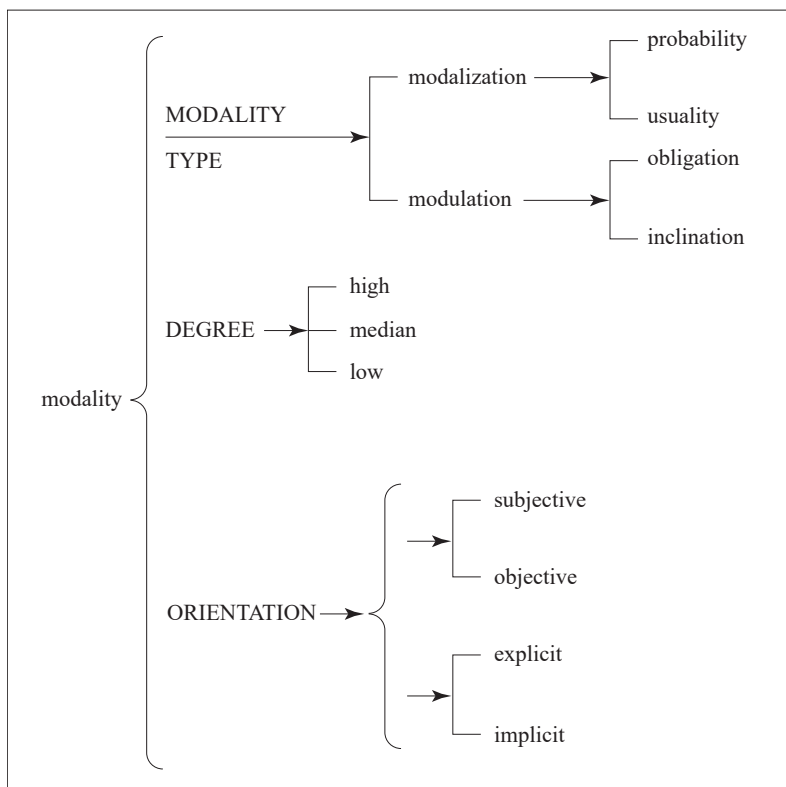


Figure 6-26: System network of modality

6.6 Summary

In section 6, I have introduced and discussed grammar of the clause from the viewpoint of interpersonal metafunction. The discussion includes semantics of exchanging, mood selection (indicative, interrogative, imperative etc.), the

Mood (the Subject and the Finite), Residues and modality (modalization and modulation).

Since describing meanings of exchange is describing what is taken for granted, understanding ‘exchanging’ may not be exciting. However, there are broad implications for analyzing text. For example, by looking at text in context from interpersonal metafunction, researchers can find the invisible relationship between speakers or a writer/ reader: their solidarity, distance between them, the power balance between them, etc. By using results of interpersonal analysis, researchers may also help those who use language as their professions, such as teachers, lawyers and therapists improve their language skills.

Of course, understanding the interpersonal aspect of the clause is not sufficient, since, as discussed in section 3 in the previous paper, grammar of the clause includes three metafunctions. In the next section in the next paper, I will discuss the clause from the perspective of textual metafunction, how the clause is organized as a message. Since the space is limited, I will stop discussing here. This paper will be continued to Part 3.

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