HOW TO INTRODUCE MODAL EXPRESSIONS INTO ACTION CLAUSES?

In the conceptions employing syntactic and semantic patterns (schemes) with semantic roles (participants, participant roles) as a descriptive device, modal verbs, adverbs and particles are introduced as constituents of special paradigmatic variants of the verb (Predicate). Such an approach gives a full account of the formal potential of syntax, it is not, however, satisfactory from the point of view of semantics, i.e., if the relations between the meanings of the sentences and the semantic system as a whole are taken into consideration. That is why, in the present remark, another solution is suggested; it refers, in particular, to action clauses.

In them, the roles commonly applied are: ACTOR, GOAL, RESULT, BENEFICIARY, etc.; the presented conception makes use, in addition to them, of the role of STIMULATOR. It should be ascribed to somebody (or something) who (which) "stimulates", "rouses", "encourages", "instigates" ... the ACTOR to act. (The subjects of the just mentioned verbs if used in a clause may be characterized in such a way, too.) In order to obtain a more adequate explanation of various clause types, it is advisable

(1) to analyze the given clause as if preceded by a performative sentence like

THE SPEAKER TELLS THE RECEIVER; so, e.g., the clause *The pupils must read* is discussed as if backgrounded by *THE SPEAKER TELLS THE RECEIVER*: STIMULATOR rouses (...) the pupils to read;

(2) to consider referential relations between participants of the clause verb and elements of the performative antecedent (in the following examples, referential identity/diversity are expressed by means of the identity/diversity of figures).

For introducing modal verbs, only the combinations of some of the mentioned items are relevant; in the following examples they are represented (together with Czech examples displaying variety of means and some Russian equivalents.

SPEAKER₁ RECEIVER² STIMULATOR³ ACTOR⁴

Záci musí číst; jsou nuceni číst; mají číst.

Ученики должны читать. Ученикам (необходимо) читать etc.

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The usage of some other modal expressions may be explained by means of negation. An explicit denial of the existence of STIMULATOR is entailed in 

Záci nemusí číst, nejsou nuceni číst; Ученики не должны читать; a NEGATIVE STIMULATOR (i.e. preventing ACTOR from acting) is identified in Záci nesmějí číst; Ученикам запрещено ... (nemají is ambiguous in that respect), non-existence of the latter may be met with Záci smějí, mohou číst; Ученикам позволяют читать.

As for stative verbs, they are compatible with modal verbs, too, but the semantic structures of respective clauses is more complicated (e.g., Jeník smí vidět ten film, "Johnny is allowed to see that film", implies an action which makes "seeing" possible) or modal expressions convey other meanings, especially the speaker's estimation of the degree of probability (Mohl rozumět, co jsme si povídali; Musel rozumět ... "I take for granted — for possible, probable etc. that he has understood ...")

Notice that the sketched conception results in the following theoretical generalization:

1. the meaning of modality cannot be limited to the level of sentential patterns (schemes) but it apparently pertains to the level of utterance, i.e. that one operating with SPEAKER-RECEIVER relation;
2. it is advantageous to accumulate semantic roles on one participant (which requires, consequently, to distinguish participants, i.e. entities obligatorily involved into verbal action, and semantic roles, i.e. functional properties ascribed to them).