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‘And of course you want to change the title...’

On the modal senses of *want*

Abstract

The paper discusses the possible sources of the meaning of *want* in *And of course you want to change the title....* Semantically a modal but syntactically a main verb, *want* displays diverse and sometimes even contradictory relationships with its subject and subordinate predicate. The meaning in question is analyzed in this paper as the conceptual integration (blend) of a deontic and of a bouletic meaning, with possible contributions, semantic or formal, from other input spaces as well.

Keywords: auxiliary, blend (conceptual integration), bouletic, conceptual and grammatical structure, deontic, force dynamics, intentionality, modal, sense development

1 The background

If the sentence given in the title is meant to be an instruction from your supervisor to change the title of your dissertation, then you may be led to think that this is a rather unusual sense or use of the word *want*, a polite way of expressing advice or obligation, similar to *must* or *should*. This is clearly not the most usual sense of *want*, which would be bouletic in the wide sense: expressing a wish or desire, which you do not necessarily feel in yourself at the moment you hear these words.

In the light of this, we could even be surprised that *want* is not a modal auxiliary: the meanings that we have referred to are often expressed by modal auxiliaries. The German counterpart of *want*, *wollen*, is a modal auxiliary, its Hungarian counterparts *akar* or *szeretne* are also regarded as auxiliaries¹ (cf. Kálmán et al. 1989) on the basis of the property called intrusion (beférkőzés), as illustrated in (1), where the auxiliary *akar* ‘intrudes’ between the verbal prefix *ki-* and the main verb²:

- (1) *A medve ki akar jutni a ketrecből.*
 The bear out wants get_{INF} the cage_{RELATIVE}
 The bear wants to get out of the cage.

¹ In Hungarian modals are not distinguished as a separate category. This is not very surprising in the light of what follows in 2.1.

² The verbal prefix and the verb are normally established as a tightly knit unit, with the prefix often even changing the meaning of the complex, as in *átver* (‘beat across’) = *cheat* sy., with the literal meaning possible but hardly ever used.

In this paper we will set out to examine and compare the modal meanings of *want*. We will try to find their sources, establish conceptual structures and find a link, if there is one to find, between the senses. We will also want to explore whether there are major differences between the ways that modal content can be expressed by modals and in an 'ordinary' main verb.

2 *Want and modality*

Modal auxiliary status can be interpreted in the context of meaning and that of form. As far as meanings are concerned, they are more or less given from traditional logic. The most common modalities recognized in linguistics are deontic and epistemic modalities, which are seen as speaker-oriented (and interesting, since their conceptual structures normally include the speaker as a factor), and the less interesting subject-oriented modalities (dynamic, bouletic, etc.), which lack speaker-involvement. We must observe at this point, as a preliminary, that the most common sense of *want*, expressing intention on the part of the subject, belongs to this second group, whereas *You want to change the title* is clearly speaker-oriented. But before we go into the details of meanings, we should take a look at the formal side.

2.1 *The formal side: modal auxiliary status*

In grammars of English the category of modal auxiliary is defined exclusively on a formal basis. Grammars often refer to modals as defective, since they

- do not take -s in 3rd person singular;
- do not have non-finite forms.

In addition,

- there can only be one modal in a VP, and it must be the first:

(2) **A policeman may must can ride a horse.*

They also share the *NICE* properties, i.e. they do not permit periphrastic *do* in

- Negation
- Interrogation
- Code (as in *Joe can swim and so can I.*), and in
- Emphatic affirmation (*But I CAN swim!*).

This seems to be a well established set of independent criteria, and *want* does not satisfy a single one of them. But the criteria are in fact not independent at all: the *NICE* properties in fact list all contexts in which *do*-support is conceivable so they should be regarded as one. *Do*-support is of course not possible if the item in question does not have a non-finite form and, consequently, cannot be second in a VP (where only the first element can be finite, which would be *do*).

So it appears that the first two properties alone are sufficient to define a modal. But even those may not be independent: looking back to the history of the development of the category modal, we find that all the verbs that are modal auxiliaries today were main verbs in Old English. The majority were originally members of the inflectional class of 'preterite-presents' (cf. Lightfoot 1979: 101). These were past forms with present meanings, so it is not surprising that they do not take -s and do not have non-finite forms. Since the present

meanings expressed non-reality and potentiality rather than actuality³, they were excellent candidates for expressing modal meanings – so much so that all members of the original preterite-present class either

- became modal auxiliaries;
- 'defected' to a regular inflectional class, (e.g. *dugan* 'to be of value' or *witan* 'to know', in the ME period – the latter might have made a fine, if not very regular, modal meaning); or
- dropped out of the language very early (e.g. *unnan* 'to grant', c. 1320).

An interesting example of this complex change is *munan* 'to think', which only survives now in Scots, **but as a modal auxiliary**.⁴

The verb *want* was not a member of this inflectional class, neither was it accommodated to it, as its chief rival, *will* was – as part of the process of becoming a modal auxiliary. This may be one reason why *want* did not develop into one. Another ready explanation could be that since *want* basically expresses a subject-oriented modality, its conceptual structure is relatively simple: we do not expect all the hidden complexities that seem to go into the structure of a speaker-oriented (e.g. deontic) modal.

This argument may sound a bit simplistic and, consequently, misleading. We will demonstrate that the situation is more complex as we look into the sense development of *want* in the following sections.

2.2 Sense development: the semantic side

In this section we will look at the sense development of *want*. We will consider all major senses with some examples as illustrations but only those secondary ones that appear to be of relevance to us, in chronological order, on the basis of its entry in the Oxford English Dictionary.⁵ (The structure of the entry will be preserved but occasional comments will be inserted.)

want (v)

[Etymology: prob. a. ON. *vanta* wk. vb. impers. ('to lack, want') ...]

1. a. intr. To be lacking or missing; not to exist; not to be forthcoming; to be deficient in quantity or degree, c. 1225, *now archaic*.

1830 Gen. P. Thompson *Exerc.* (1842) I. 245 There wants a collection of dying speeches of nefarious governments.

c. To be lacking to complete a certain total or achieve a result, c. 1300, *obsolete*.

It wants of six (o'clock)

Comment: All the senses of **1** appear to be mainly or exclusively in impersonal constructions.

³ Cf. the past subjunctive forms of Modern English.

⁴ All facts concerning this historical development are taken from Lightfoot (1979: 101-103), but not his conclusion, which regards the situation and its consequences as accidental. In Pelyvász (2001) I argue that all the early and later changes in the syntactic development of the (pre)modals point in the direction of the emergence of the grounding predication.

⁵ The examples, where possible, are taken from the Modern English period to facilitate understanding.

2. **a. trans.** Not to have; to be without, to lack; to have too little of; to be destitute of, or deficient in; to fail to have, or get, c. 1200, now *rare*.

1852 R. A. Willmott *Pleas. Lit.* (ed. 2) vi. 37 The Library of Petrarch wanted the *Divine Comedy*, until Boccaccio sent it decorated with gold.

b. To be free from (something undesirable), c. 1630, now *obsolete*.

I am much better indeed; I have wanted the gout these three months

Comment: Subjects begin to appear. This sense is in sharp contrast with today's bouletic meaning.

j. To go or do without. Usually in negative expressions, *esp.* with *cannot*, etc., 1562, *obsolete*.

1818 Scott *Br. Lamm.* xxix, A worthless old play-fellow of mine, whose company I would rather want than have.

Comment: Again, this sense is in sharp contrast with today's bouletic meaning.

3. **intr. a.** To be in want of something implied by the context, or of the necessities of life, c. 1300, *obs*

1684 *Contempl. St. Man* ii. iii. (1699) 147 It was a Position of the Stoicks, that he was not Poor who wanted, but he who was necessitated.

Comment: This sense appears to have the first ingredients of the modern bouletic sense – a necessity, but the 'desire' element is missing yet. In addition, it is mainly used intransitively, which is less characteristic of a bouletic sense.

c. to want for: (chiefly in negative context) to suffer from the want of; to be ill-provided with; in later use also, to be lacking in (some quality). **to want for nothing:** to have no lack of any of the necessities or comforts of life, 1607.

1885 'Ouida' *Rainy June* (1901) 90 He was happy and wanted for nothing.

Comment: The 'desire' element first appears in this sense, mainly in a negative context.

4. **a. trans.** To suffer the want of; to have occasion for, need, require; to stand in need of (something salutary, but often not desired. Hence *colloq.* senses 4 and 5 are often humorously contrasted.) 1470.

1898 'H. S. Merriman' *Roden's Corner* viii. 85 The nurse whose services had not hitherto been wanted, had spent some pleasant weeks at a pension at Scheveningen.

Comment: It is interesting to see how the 'desire' element is excluded in this relatively modern sense. The comment *salutary but often not desired* in the definition suggests that this is not very far from a weak form of obligation.

b. With *vbl. n.* or *inf.* (*esp. pass.*) as object (now chiefly *colloq.*). **it wants doing (it wants to be done):** it needs doing, should be done. **one wants to do it (this way):** one's best, or proper course is to do it; one should do it, etc. 1563.

The idiom (common *colloq.* in North and North-midlands) by which the verb apparently takes two objects, a *n.* or *pron.* and a *vbl. n.* that in sense governs it (as, **I want that doing** is perhaps a blend of *it wants doing*, and *I want it done*).

1865 'L. Carroll' *Alice in Wonderland* vii. (1866) 96 'Your hair wants cutting', said the Hatter.

Comment: This form, which is quite frequent today, is coming close to the sense implied in our title, but is not the same. The subject is the situation to be changed rather than the person who wants or is obliged/advised to make the change. A notionally passive construction which is not expressed in the version with the gerund. We will return to this in some detail in Section 4.

5. a. To desire, wish for. Often with *inf.* as object, 1706.

1902 J. F. Rusling *European Days & Ways* 299 Blücher wanted to hang or shoot Napoleon as an outlaw and monster.

Comment: The modern bouletic sense, it appears as late as 1700.

b. To desire (a person) *to* (do something). Also, *U.S.*, with clause as object, 1845.

1845 S. Judd *Margaret* i. ix, I want you to be a good boy.

Comment: Clearly approaching a deontic sense. But the construction is the 'raising' structure of a main verb rather than the auxiliary-like structure seen in the title.

2.3 Discussion of the data: semantic and syntactic changes

From the data above it transpires that the development of the semantic content of *want* and the changes in its possible or characteristic syntactic distribution are closely connected.

- In its earliest sense *want* is used chiefly in impersonal constructions, with the expletive subjects *it* or *there* to refer to general circumstances.
- In the course of its development subjects begin to appear, but the subject is often inanimate. If human, the subject is a general experiencer rather than the source of a positive relation, emotion or desire – in fact, the relation can even be negative, as in the examples of **2b** or **2j**, which are very far from the modern bouletic sense.
- In these somewhat later senses, in harmony with the nature of the relationship, intransitive uses, simple NP objects, the prepositions *of* and *for* are dominant. The *to*-infinitive, which characteristically implies potentiality, intentionality or even agentivity on the part of the subject, does not appear.
- When the infinitive does appear at a later stage, in sense **4b** (dated 1563), the construction is passive, expressing necessity or sometimes some weak sort of obligation (the beginnings of a deontic sense?) on the part of an obligee/agent that remains unspecified.

It is probably a significant factor that the alternative to the passive infinitive, the gerund remains active in these constructions (*it wants to be done* vs. *it wants doing*). This is a general tendency for the gerund: owing to the factuality, lack of potentiality or of intention associated with it, distinctions of voice or aspect (anteriority) are often taken for granted and left unexpressed. This active syntactic construction standing for a passive semantic relationship could nevertheless serve as a possible template for *Of course you want to change the title* in a similar weakly deontic context.

The remark made by OED for sense **4b** that the colloquial idiom *I want that doing* of the Northern dialects 'is perhaps a blend of *it wants doing*, and *I want it done*' is a strong suggestion that this must be the case. In what follows we will also be arguing for a blend, but will suggest including different sources as well.

- The bouletic sense, the most frequent of the senses today, and the *to*- infinitive together with it, only appear as late as the beginning of the 18th century. In this sense a sentient subject is the source of desire or intention and the target is either an NP object which stands as a reference point for a participant of an implicit relationship (normally of *selecting*, *acquiring*, etc., cf. 3.2), or the *to*- infinitive which elaborates the relationship referred to above.
- The last sense of the OED entry takes us to a sense that remains bouletic in some uses but develops into a marked deontic one if certain semantic conditions are met. Compare the sentences in:

- (3) a *I want the rain to stop now, for a change.*
 b *I want the milk to arrive at my door before 6 a.m.*
 c *I want you to open that bottle without delay.*

(3a) is purely bouletic, expressing a simple wish that cannot be realized through human intervention. This is clearly not so in (3c), with the intended agent appearing in object position. This participant is involved in at least two capacities: as the recipient of the command or request issued by the subject, and as the potential performer of the action imposed on him/her by the subject. This meaning has all the ingredients of a deontic sense. (3b) seems to be a transition between the two: someone is supposed to do something about the situation, but neither this participant nor the action itself is specified (except by wider context, cf. the role of the passive in OED 4b).

The OED entry on *want* ends here, and so do the entries of other dictionaries as well. The relationships between the semantic content and syntactic structure of *And of course you want to change the title* still remain unexplored. We are going to make an attempt at that in the next section.

3 *Want: a cognitive analysis*

Since the content-form relationship that we are concerned with appears to be a kind of a blend between a bouletic and a deontic sense on the conceptual side, and a kind of a blend between a main verb structure and an auxiliary structure on the syntactic side, our first task in this section is to clarify how these terms can be interpreted in a cognitive framework. As in cognitive grammar it is semantic content that motivates form (rather than the other way round), we will begin with the conceptual side.

3.1 *The conceptual side*

In cognitive grammar the conceptual content of modal meanings is traditionally described in terms of force dynamics. Since the first attempts of Sweetser (1990) the tools have been considerably refined, especially in the direction of introducing all the forces relevant in a relationship and associating them with the participants of a situation (cf. e.g. Pelyvás 1996, 2006 and 2011). This kind of conceptual content is best described by means of figures.

3.1.1 The bouletic structures

Two versions of the relatively simple bouletic sense are given in Figures 1 and 2.

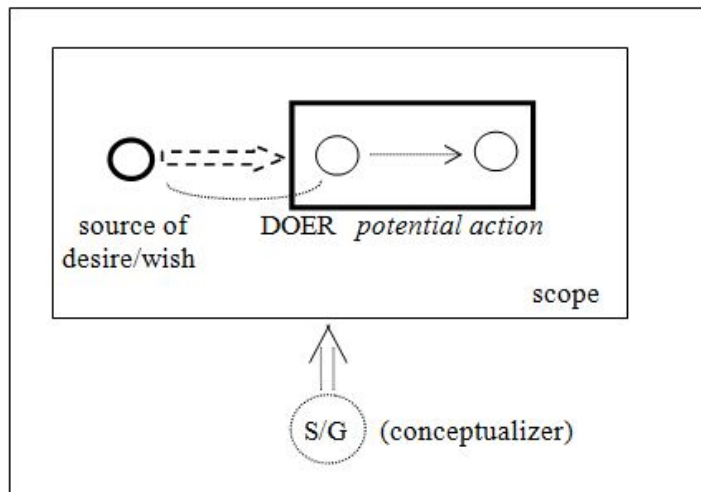


Figure 1: Conceptual structure of *I want to get that book.*

The circles represent participants, the arrows mark forces and the dotted line stands for correspondence. The elements highlighted in bold are in profile. All figures include the speaker/conceptualizer, who has no specific role here. This is a subject-oriented modality.

Figure 1 is the version of the bouletic sense where the target of desire (in profile) is the potential action to be performed by the subject, taken in its entirety. It is important that the source of the desire and the doer of the potential action are identical through correspondence. A departure from this will take us in the direction of deonticity (action imposed by the source of desire on another participant – *I want you to...*).

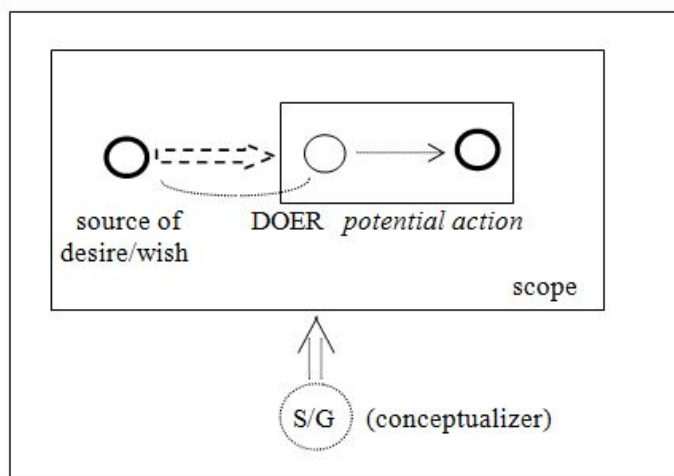


Figure 2: Conceptual structure of *I want that book.*

Figure 2 is modified in what is profiled: the potential action as a whole is represented only by its endpoint, in a metonymic relationship. This conceptual difference is symbolized by the different form. Please note that in this conceptual structure the identity of the source of desire

and of the doer role is essential: there is no grammatical form that could express that you want the implicit action performed by someone else (except perhaps by the prepositions *of* or *from*, as in *I want an apology from you*.)

3.1.2 The basic deontic structure of obligation – must

This conceptual structure is inevitably more complex because new participants and new forces emerge. Deonticity is usually characterized as a weakly subjective speaker-oriented modality because the speaker/conceptualizer also enters the scene – if only indirectly, through correspondence with the imposer of obligation, as Figure 3 suggests. In the epistemic meanings, which are not our direct concern here, its presence becomes essential in the conceptualizer role (cf. e.g. Pelyvás 2006: 146-147).

In addition to this, the doer of the imposed purposeful action appears (through correspondence) in the capacity of the participant that receives the obligation. The question of which of these two roles will actually appear in grammatical form is an important point of syntactic structures related to modal auxiliaries (cf. Pelyvás 2011).

The participant role of the obligee is not entirely passive. One of the innovations of Pelyvás (1996) is that this participant typically exerts a weak counterforce to the force of the obligation, which makes it possible that the action to be performed remains potential. This factor will also play an important role in our further discussion of the conceptual structure of *And of course you want to change the title*, after we have looked at the possible grammatical expressions of the conceptual structures that we have now seen.

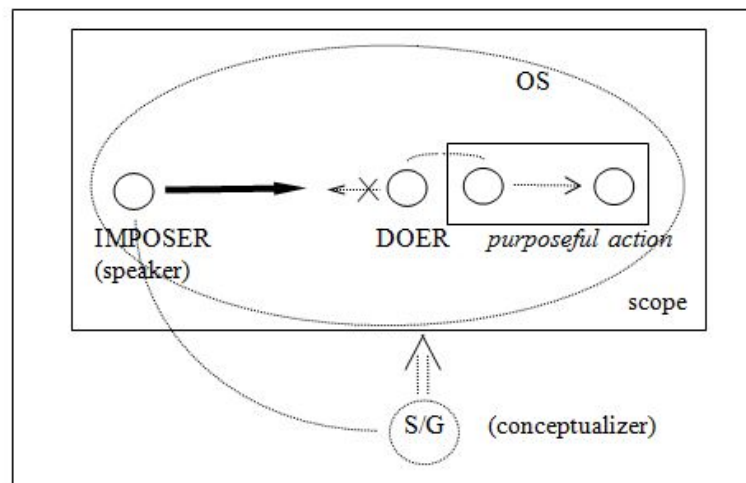


Figure 3: Conceptual structure of deontic must.
 The area marked OS is the immediate scope or objective scene containing the elements that are essential for conceptualization

3.2 The formal side

In Langacker (1999: 23-29) the grammatical structure of the transitive clause (including subject and object selection) is described in terms of energetic interaction (often referred to as the billiard-ball model). This is essentially a model of an action chain consisting of two parts:

in the first part a participant, typically an agent, exerts a force which brings about some kind of a change in the second part, as seen in Figure 4:

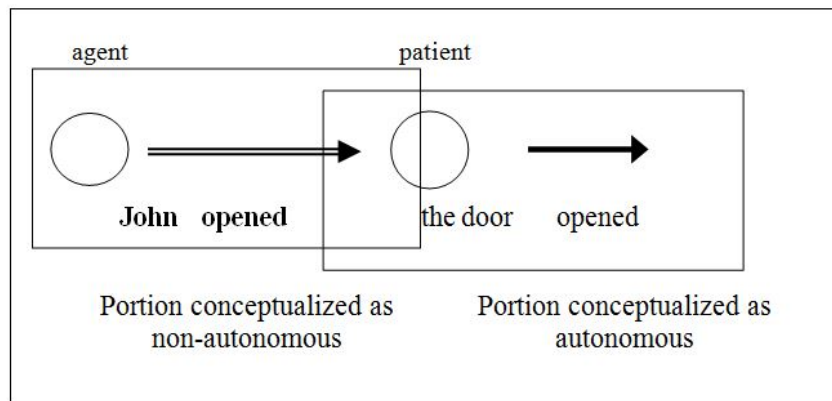


Figure 4: Internal structure of the action chain in John opened the door.

The schema consists of an autonomous portion, in which the event is conceptualized as if it occurred on its own, and a non-autonomous one, which is seen as depending on its result. In the Figure the portions are shown as overlapping: in fact the strength of the connection (or the 'link in the chain') is a matter of construal, in which intentionality or immediacy of effect are known to have an important role. Sometimes unexpected connections are made, to make an intrinsically intransitive verb transitive, as in (4), the classic example:

- (4) *Jane sneezed the napkin off the table.*

But the opposite may also happen. In (5) the young speaker has every reason to weaken the link between the two subevents which would normally be expressed in a simple transitive clause:

- (5) *I kicked the ball, and the window broke.*

This schema can be extended in many ways. The most frequent extension is an adverbial marking goal at the end of the autonomous portion, but Pelyvás (2011) examines the possibilities of extending it to the modal scene as well. The overall conclusion is that the model can be used as a first approximation at best, owing to the passive nature (patient) of the participant in the middle in the original schema. This does not seem to fit the modal scene where that participant is potentially active, both in the sense that it is the potential agent of the enforced action and, more significantly to us in this argument, in the sense that (s)he has free will that can even prevent that action from taking place (cf. 3.1.2). Yet, on closer observation, the passivity of the middle participant in the billiard-ball model is only a matter of degree, especially in main verb constructions that carry modal meanings. What is more, this can be neatly expressed in syntactic structure, cf. the sentences in (6):

- (6) a *You must jump into the icy water.*
 b *The sergeant ordered his men to jump into the water (but they only laughed at him).*
 c *The sergeant ordered his men into the icy water (but they only laughed at him).*
 d *The sergeant marched his men into the icy water.*

The modal force of (6b) is almost identical with that of (6a), (although the situation and its reporting are different things). Both imply the possibility that the men did not obey the command. In fact, (6b) contains most if not all of the semantic information present in the conceptual structure of the modal. This is not the case in (6c) and (d): the men gradually appear to lose their integrity and are very likely to have entered the water (with the clause referring to laughter only meaning that they expressed scorn at the sergeant's attempt to punish or humiliate them in this way). This effect is brought about through a reduction of the explicit content in the autonomous portion of the action chain – a device markedly similar to the differences that we pointed out between *I want to get that book* and *I want that book* in 3.1.1. The effects are also similar.

Looking back at (6a) we may notice another difference between the action chain and the modal scene. With a modal the tendency of reduction appears to be reversed. Here it is the first, non-autonomous part of the action chain that undergoes **obligatory** reduction: the source of obligation (permission, etc.) cannot be made explicit and no reference can be made to the forces in interaction.⁶

3.3 From bouletic to deontic: a sense change in want

If we think of *I want to get that book* as the default (or basic level) case of the bouletic sense and acknowledge that similarly to other main verb constructions with a modal meaning, reduction of the autonomous part of the action chain can reduce the role of the bouletic source in actually performing the act to a minimum, we may notice a possibility of proceeding in the other direction as well. With the development in the early 19th century of the 'raising' construction (sense **5b** of the OED entry), the autonomous part can be given more space (cf. 2.3 and also 3.1.1), as the examples in (7) show (some of these were already introduced in 2.3):

- (7) a *I want the rain to stop now, for a change.*
 b *I want the milk to arrive at my door before 6 a.m.*
 c *I want you to grow another 3 inches before I can take you on the team.*
 d *I want you to lose 15 pounds before I can take you on the team.*
 e *I want you to be a bit more sympathetic next time.*
 f *I want you to be a bit more patient next time.*
 g *I want you to be a bit more careful next time.*
 h *I want you to open that bottle without delay.*
 i *I want you to change the title.*

In these sentences we can observe a gradual change of the meaning from bouletic to deontic, which is explained by the increasing independence and integrity of the potential doer and by the increasing deliberateness of the situation or act to be performed. In terms of the conceptual structures we have discussed in Section 3.1, this amounts to the appearance of the doer as recipient of the obligation, together with the counterforce associated with that role in Figure 3.

⁶ This is a good starting point for metaphorical extension into the epistemic senses, a process in which these factors that are only hidden but essential in the deontic meaning are eliminated altogether (cf. Pelyvás 2006).

4 Conceptual integration (blending)

The change described in the previous section appears to be a well established process, but how do we get from the already deontic (7i) to the form in (8)?

(8) *And of course you want to change the title.*

The most likely answer is that this is achieved by somehow reducing the first (non-autonomous) portion of the action chain, in a way similar to what must happen in any modal auxiliary (cf. 3.2). But, since *want* is formally not a modal, the processes taking part in this might be different. We have already suggested in 2.3 that the process most suitable is conceptual integration (blending), which is capable of accounting for the apparent irregularities or inconsistencies of the change. Coulson and Oakley (2000) define the (then) relatively new term in the following way:

Conceptual blending is a set of cognitive operations that involves combining cognitive models in a network of mental spaces ('partial representations of entities and relations of any given scenario as perceived, imagined, remembered, or otherwise understood by a speaker' (Coulson & Oakley 2000: 176-177).

It involves at least two *input spaces* that contain information from distinct cognitive domains, a *generic space* in which the entities and relationships common or relevant to both spaces are structured and interpreted, and the resulting *blended space* 'that contains selected aspects of structure from each input space integrated into one, and frequently, emergent structure of its own (Coulson & Oakley 2000: 178).

To this description I would like to add that, in contrast to metaphor, the blended space may contain information from the inputs that turns out to be contradictory. As a result, blends will not always be very stable, sometimes they are a source of humour (as in *My karma ran over my dogma* [on a bumper sticker], cf. Coulson & Oakley (2000: 180)), and in most cases they contain something that is unexpected. And of course, similarly to metaphorical extension, blending can be applied in grammatical categories as well.

We can easily find arguments that (8) is a blend:

- The postulated blended space in this sense of *want* will contain elements from all the input spaces.

- From the deontic sense: a sort of **necessity, instruction or advice**.

- From the bouletic sense: (through a reduction of the force-dynamic part of the deontic sense): removal of the counterforce associated with the doer's resistance to perform the act – **the subject is ready to co-operate**.

It is in fact possible to argue that a bouletic sense is prototypically a blend of necessity and cooperation. The Online Dictionary of Language Terminology defines it as '[a] type of modality that expresses what is possible or necessary given someone's desires.'

- We can also find structure emergent in the blended space, and perhaps also from the reduced part of the deontic scene (*of course*): **'I am confident that you agree with me'**.

- We can argue that there is some conflict between this emergent structure and the input spaces: *how can you (of course) tell what the other participant wants?*

As we have observed, conflicts are not excluded in a blend, or in the sense development of the modal auxiliaries. Although it has not been analyzed as a blend, the 'instruction' or 'obligation' sense of *may* displays similar properties. In the cognitive analysis of Pelyvás (1996: 142) the prototypical 'permission' sense of *may* contains at the level of conceptual

structure a force associated with the intention of the doer (the subject of the clause) to perform an act. Plotted against this force is a counterforce that is relatively weak (or intentionally not mobilized), assigned to the speaker/permission giver, who cannot or does not wish to use it to prevent the act in question.⁷ There is a special sense, however, illustrated in (9), where permission becomes instruction or even obligation.

(9) (Headmaster to schoolboy): *You may leave now.*

This is only used when there is a great difference in status between the 'permission giver' and the doer. Since there is no way of accounting for this sense by strengthening or further weakening the force of 'permission', the only explanation is to assume that the status of the 'permission giver' makes it possible for him or her to guess or even determine **even the intentions** of the doer. This explains the element of mortification inherent in this use.

- One essential ingredient of the blend is that all the information entering the blended space from the different input spaces remains active simultaneously. This explains why, while receiving the instruction in the form of (8) to change your title, and apprehending it as an instruction, you may get the uncanny feeling that you had no intention whatsoever to change that rather 'snappy' title.

There are factors contributing to a blending analysis on the formal side as well.

- In the analysis of sense **4b** of OED we referred to the irregularity that the *it wants* construction takes the infinitive in the conceptually accurate passive form (*Your hair wants to be cut*) but the gerund is used in the active (*Your hair wants cutting*). There may be good explanations for the use of the active form of the gerund (cf. 2.3), but the fact remains that it blurs semantic distinctions associated with the subject role that could also contribute to the bouletic side in the interpretation of (8).

- We have seen that *want*, in the course of its sense development, has had a variety of relationships with its subject (provided that it had one). Especially interesting are the examples in sense **2b** (*I have wanted [been free from] the gout these three months*) and **2c** (*A worthless old play-fellow of mine, whose company I would rather want [do without] than have*) of OED, where the active forms convey no trace of intention or desire at all. These forms, now obsolete, can contribute to the modern form of (8), where there is no more than the trace of intentionality: agreement presupposed by the speaker. The modern language user easily 'reads' bouletic overtones into the old forms even though that sense is a relatively late development.

5 Conclusions and further issues

In this paper we have attempted to trace the sense development of the English verb *want*, as related to the somewhat unusual expression *And of course you want to change the title*. Hearing it may give rise to uncanny feelings in the addressee, who may have no wish or intention to make a change. We suggest that this bouletic ingredient in the basically deontic meaning (order or instruction) is the result, in cognitive terminology, of the mental operation **conceptual integration** or **blending**.

⁷ Pelyvás (1996) calls this 'relinquishing authority' and sees it as the source of potentiality in deontic may.

Even though its formal properties do not permit this in a grammar of English, its bouletic and deontic senses would qualify *want* for modal auxiliary status in the conceptual system. We demonstrate that the conceptual structures describing *want* are very similar to those of the bouletic or deontic modals, but since it is a main verb, the grammatical structures that it can occur in are different from those for the modals.

A comparison of these conceptual structures for the modals with Langacker's model of energetic interaction (or billiard-ball model) developed for the general description of the transitive clause reveals two major differences. One is that the object of the transitive clause (the middle participant in Langacker's action chain) is normally conceptualized as playing an entirely passive role (patient), the essence of the modal structure is that it remains active in at least two ways.

Since the interaction (e.g. obligation) is seen as a lot less direct or immediate than in the transitive clause, the doer has to remain an agent of the potential act to be performed, even though it appears at the 'receiving end' of the obligation.

Even this recipient role is not entirely passive since this participant, being sentient, can mobilize forces of resisting the obligation, the main source of the potentiality in the modal situation.

The other difference between the modal conceptual structure and Langacker's energetic interaction model is what can undergo reduction in the grammatical construal of the conceptualization. In the paper I try to show that in the latter it is the second (autonomous) part of the action chain that is typically reduced, working against any possible expression of integrity on the part of the middle constituent. In the modal schema the opposite happens: what is obligatorily reduced is the first part that contains some of the participants and elaborates the interplay forces acting between them.

Want, which has a modal conceptual schema but the syntactic possibilities of a main verb (except perhaps for the 'raising' construction, which relates it to the modals) is transitional in many ways.

In the course of its diachronic development *want* has had a number of different relationships with its subject, some of which would cause serious confusion by being contradictory to the most frequent modern bouletic meaning if they had survived into Modern English.

It permits a reduction in the first part of the schema in a process of conceptual integration in the sense *And of course you want to change the title*, which is so recent that it has not found its way into most dictionaries yet. We propose to analyze it as a blend of the deontic and bouletic meanings, with other senses and formal properties perhaps contributing to its development. We give a number of arguments for this analysis, and the most important of these is perhaps the uncanny feelings concerning the addressee's previous wishes and intentions when he or she hears this sentence.

Want, though peculiar, is not the only main verb that has modal characteristics of this sort. *Expect* and *suppose* are certainly on the list: it is enough to think of the differences between the sentences in (10):

- (10) a *This patient is expected to take his medicine every 5 hours.*
 b *This patient is expected to die within the next week.*

Intentionality at issue again.

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