

Modality

Propositional modality

Epistemic modality is concerned with the speaker's attitude towards whether the proposition is true. There are three types which are common in languages:

- (speculative) an expression of uncertainty, e.g. En. *may*: *Where is John? I'm not sure, **he may be in his office** now*
- (deductive) an indication of inference from evidence, e.g. En. *must*: *Yes, the lights are on, so **John must be in his office** now*
- (assumptive) an indication of inference from experience, e.g. En. *will*: *It's nine o'clock — **John will be in his office** now*

There is then two-way distinction between:

- strength of the conclusion (epistemic possibility vs necessity)
- source of the inference (evidence vs experience)

In many languages one of these contrasts is either the only one present in the system or the more important one.

Some languages have ways to indicate that the judgement is either weaker or stronger. English, for instance, uses the past tense forms of the modals. These express a lower degree of commitment.

- *may* becomes *might*
- *must* becomes *should* (or less commonly *ought to*)
- *will* becomes *would* (or *could*)

Propositional modality in Quenya

Quenya possesses epistemic possibility-necessity contrast with further differentiation in strength. There is no evidence for inference contrast, and it's assumed that either deductive and/or assumptive would be translated as unmarked future.

Speculative

Tolkien provided several contradicting paradigms for uncertain statements:

- EVS1 (PE22/98): strong *ai*

- QVS (PE22/122-3): strong *ai*, weak *au*
- EVS2 (PE22/139, 1951): strong *ai*
 - **ai** *tuluvanye* “I **may** come”
- LVS7 (PE22/154, 21-1969): strong *cé*, weak *quí* (see on *Unreality*)
 - *lá caritas alasaila* **cé** *nauva* “not doing this **may** prove unwise”
 - *carë mára* **quí** *tyarë naxa* “doing good ?may cause evil”

Note that modal particle should directly precede the verb (PE22/97). Otherwise it is interpreted as a conjunction *if*:

- *cé mo formenna tentanes Amanna* “if northwards, it pointed towards Aman”

cé 'may' in PE22/154 (21-1969), PE22/158 (22-1969); 'if' in AS (08-1969)

(Also see on *Optative*)

Deductive & Assumptive

No examples of deductive exists. No clear example of assumptive exists, but we can make an educated guess.

“ It may be added that even languages that have future tenses that are not formally modal, but belong within the inflectional system, often use these tenses for similar purposes. They are used in an assumptive sense, like English *will*, in, e.g., French and Italian (cf French *ça sera le facteur* 'that'll be the postman')

Event modality

Event modality refers to events which have not taken place yet. The distinction is drawn between conditioning factors, which are:

- external to the subject (he is permitted or ordered to act);
- internal to the subject (he is able and/or willing to act);

Deontic

Similarly to epistemic modality, deontic modality distinguishes between:

- deontic *possibility* (*permissive*), e.g. En. *can* (less often *may*): You **can** go now
- deontic *necessity* (*obligative*), e.g. En. *must*: You **must** go now

Additionally we can consider *commissive*, where speaker *commits* themselves to do something. In English it is signalled by the modal verb *shall*. "You **shall** not pass!" — where Gandalf commits himself to ensuring that the balrog will not pass the bridge — is a canonic example of commissive.

Just as with epistemic modals, the force of the judgements can be weakened:

- *can* becomes *could* (*may* becomes *might*)
- *must* becomes *should*

Deontic modality in Quenya

Tolkien did not explicitly talk about permission and obligation in Quenya, but we have a few words which might fit the slot.

- permissive:
 - *nai* < NAY "have opportunity, chance or **permission**; be **allowed** by circumstance or way of the world";
 - This mostly used where the opportunity or permission is certain or very probable
 - Overlaps with optative *nai*
 - *ecë*: *ecë nin?* 'please, may I?';
 - *lerta*: *lertan quetë* 'I can (am free to) speak' (there being no obstacle, of promise, secrecy, duty)
 - Can be interpreted as *abilitive of circumstance*
- obligative:
 - **moa* < N. *bui* 'I must'
 - *inya karie·te* 'I have to make it';
 - (neg) *vá caris i* 'he is not to do it';
- commissive:
 - (pos) future: *vanda sina **termaruva** Elenna·nóreo alcar enyalien* "This oath shall stand in memory of the glory of the Land of the Star"
 - Such use of future can be seen in e.g. French: *Vous l'aurez demain*
 - (neg) *vá* + future: *vá matuvatye mastanya* "you shan't eat my bread"

Dynamic

Dynamic modality expresses the ability and willingness (in English done with *can* and *will* respectively). In many languages there is no formal distinction between permission and ability. In English, however, the distinction is in that *may* is not used to indicate ability.

Dynamic modality in Quenya

Abilitive is expressed in Quenya with **lexical** verbs:

- physical ability:

- *polë*: *polin quetë* 'I can (able to) speak' (PE17/181)
- (inherent physically or mentally): *curu* (PE22/151)
- learned ability: *istan quetë* 'I can (know how to) speak' (PE17/155, cf. French *savoir: il sait nager* 'he can swim')
- circumstantial ability/possibility:
 - *lertan quetë* 'I can (am free to) speak' (there being no obstacle, of promise, secrecy, duty) (PE17/160)
 - *evë* (PE22/151: "of mere possibility according to likelihood, natural probability, etc.")
 - *ecë*: *ecuva nin carë sa nōa* "I 'may' do that tomorrow, I have a chance of doing that tomorrow"
 - *may* in gloss seems to disqualify this verb (but it is in quotes?)

Volitive is only attested in negative constructions:

- (neg) *vá*: *itas vá tuluvanye* 'in that case I won't come'

Imperative

Most languages have a specific form that can be identified as Imperative. In languages such as English, where the modal systems are marked by modal verbs, the imperative is quite independent of them. But notionally, imperative is closely associated with deontic modals.

Unlike in English, in Quenya *Imperative* is a part of its modality system, expressed by an optional particle *á*.

- imperative proper: *á tule* 'come' (PE22/140);
- jussive: *á he tuluvár* 'let them come' (PE22/106);
- hortative: (PE14/59 had hortative the same as imperative and jussive)
- prohibitive: *avá carë* 'don't do it' (WJ/371): (cf Latin *nolo: Noite facere* 'Don't do it'; and Welsh *peidio: peidiwich â gadael iddo fynd* 'Don't let him go')

[To Do] Add description of gradation

Optative

The subjunctive is frequently used for wishes and fears:

- *Dio vi benedica* 'May God bless you'

The more correct term applicable to Quenya would be *desiderative* and *timitive*. We have examples of two constructions:

- *nai* initially: *nai elye hiruva*
- *na* before the verb: *aranielya na tuluva*

The distinction then can be reminiscent of *cé* being used as an epistemic particle before the verb, or conjunction *if* initially.

Note that the use of *nai* as a desirative marker was already present in Early Qenya (PE14/59), where *nai* was also the weak marker of epistemic possibility. In this sense the Early Qenya was very similar to the subjunctive use in European languages in this context.

Purposive

Clauses that express purpose are marked with a conjunction plus the subjunctive in Latin and Classical Greek, and similarly in Spanish and Italian:

- *ti scrivo affinché tu capisca la situazione*

We have one purposive sentence in Quenya:

- *mennai Orome tanna lende i erenekoitanie* “until Orome came hither that he might awake them” (VT27/7)

which potentially can use (defunct) subjunctive.

Unreality

In a large number of languages a clear distinction can be made between real and unreal conditions. In some languages this is marked with the tense alone, in others by a combination of tense and mood. Similarly to the discussion on epistemic and deontic modality, the 'modal-past' weakens the supposition, stating the condition less likely to occur.

Conditions that *predict*, in terms of cause and effect, the occurrence of one event on condition of another, always require a modal verb in apodosis (both real and unreal):

- If John comes, Bill can leave (real)
- If John came, Bill would leave (unlikely)
- If John had come, Bill might have left (unreal, past)

Non-predictive conditionals such as *If John came, Mary left*, which merely indicate that if the protasis is true, so is the apodosis, without necessarily implying that there is a cause and effect, have no restrictions on the tense and modality of such sentences.

In Quenya

PE22/120 system is a verbatim carry-over from [Latin system](#):

- *qe e-kestan, ni·tuluva* “if he asks me, I shall come” : *if* AOR, FT (predictive real)
- *qe e-kestuvan, ni·tuluva* “if (on some future occasion) he asks me, then (on that occasion) I shall come” : *if* FT, FT (predictive real, specific)

- *aiqe e·kestuvan, (en) ni·tuluva* “if he asked me, I should come” : MOD-if FT, (en) FT (predictive unlikely)
- *qe e·kárie i kirya aldaryas, ni·kauva kiryasta menelyas* “if he finishes the boat by Monday, I shall be able to sail on Wednesday” : if PF, FT (predictive real, future reference)
- *qe e·káriéva i kirya, ni·kauva kiryasta menelyas* “if he has finished the boat by Monday, I shall be able to sail on Wednesday” : if FT-PF, FT (predictive real, specific, future reference)
- *qe (ai) e·tule, (san) inye tule yú* “if he comes, I come too” : if (MOD) AOR, (san) AOR (non-predictive, present)
- *qe (ai) e·tulle, (san) inye tulle yú* “if he came, I came too” : if (MOD) PT, (san) PT (non-predictive, past)
- *íqa ette tule, (san) inye tule* “when he comes, I come” : when AOR, (san) AOR (non-predictive, present)
- *qe/illume e·kestanen/kestanelyanen, ni·tulle; if/when PT/IMP, PT* (non-predictive, past)
- *ai(qe) e·kestanen, en(ai) ni·túlie; MOD-if (if) PT, en (MOD) PT* (predictive unreal, ?past)
- *ai(qe) e·kestanen ela, en ni·túlie; MOD-if (if) PT NEG, en PT* (predictive unreal, ?past)
- *auve e·kestanen, au ni·túlie; MOD-UR-if PT, MOD-UR PT* (predictive unreal, past)
- *aiqe ni·káraza (nila) san ette kára(za) yú; MOD-if PR (NEG), san PR* (predictive unreal, present)
- *auve e·kestanen (ela)! MOD-UR-if PT (NEG)* (wish unreal)

Compare Latin schema:

Condition	Example	PROTASIS	APODOSIS
SIMPLE CONDITION	<i>If he says this, he makes a mistake</i>	Present Indicative	Present Indicative
PRESENT GENERAL CONDITION	<i>Every time he says this, he makes a mistake</i>	Present Indicative	Present Indicative
PAST PARTICULAR CONDITION	<i>If he (has) said this, he (has) made a mistake</i>	Imperfect Indicative, Present Perfect Indicative	Imperfect Indicative, Present Perfect Indicative
PAST GENERAL CONDITION	<i>Whenever he said this, he made a mistake</i>	Imperfect Indicative, Present Perfect Indicative	Imperfect Indicative
FUTURE-MOST-VIVID CONDITION	<i>If I shall have said this, I shall have made a mistake</i>	Future Perfect Indicative	Future Perfect Indicative
FUTURE CONDITION (FUTURE-MORE-VIVID)	<i>If he says (will say) this, he will make a mistake</i>	Future Indicative	Future Indicative
FUTURE-LESS-VIVID CONDITION ("ideal")	<i>If he were to (should) say this, he would make a mistake</i>	Present Subjunctive	Present Subjunctive
PRESENT CONTRARY-TO-FACT CONDITION		Imperfect Subjunctive	Imperfect Subjunctive
PAST CONTRARY-TO-FACT CONDITION	<i>If he had said this, he would have made a mistake</i>	Past Perfect Subjunctive	Past Perfect Subjunctive

with Quenya:

Condition	Example	PROTASIS	APODOSIS
SIMPLE CONDITION	<i>If he says this, he makes a mistake</i>	<i>qe (ai) + Aorist</i>	<i>san + Aorist</i>
PRESENT GENERAL CONDITION	<i>Every time he says this, he makes a mistake</i>	<i>íqa + Aorist</i>	<i>san + Aorist</i>
PAST PARTICULAR CONDITION	<i>If he (has) said this, he (has) made a mistake</i>	<i>qe + Past</i>	<i>?san + Past</i>
PAST GENERAL CONDITION	<i>Whenever he said this, he made a mistake</i>	<i>illume + Imperfect, Past</i>	<i>?san + Past</i>
FUTURE-MOST-VIVID CONDITION	<i>If I shall have said this, I shall have made a mistake</i>	<i>qe + Future Perfect</i>	<i>Future</i>
FUTURE CONDITION (FUTURE-MORE-VIVID)	<i>If he says (will say) this, he will make a mistake</i>	<i>qe + Perfect</i>	<i>Future</i>
FUTURE-LESS-VIVID CONDITION	<i>If he were to (should) say this, he would make a mistake</i>	<i>aiqe + Future</i>	<i>en + Future</i>
PRESENT CONTRARY-TO-FACT CONDITION		<i>aiqe + Present</i>	<i>san + Present</i>
PAST CONTRARY-TO-FACT CONDITION	<i>If he had said this, he would have made a mistake</i>	<i>ai(qe) + Past (NEG); auve + Past</i>	<i>en(ai) + Past; au + Past</i>

The difference between *aiqe + Past*, *enai + Past* vs *auve + Past*, *au + Past* might be as in:

- *potevo farlo se mi aiutavano*
- *avrei potuto farlo se fossi stato più vecchio*

with the 1st, there is an implication that I had the ability and merely needed help to fulfill it, but with the second it is clear that I did not have the ability, but would have had it if (impossibly) I had been older.

PE22/138 had differences (*que > quí > íte* in pencil):

- *íte kestallen, tuluvanye*; if AOR, FT (predictive real)
- *íte kestuvallen, tuluvanye*; if FT, FT (predictive improbable)
- *aite kestuvallen, tuluvanye*; MOD-if FT, FT (predictive improbable)
- *(ai)te kestanellen, (ai) tullenye*; (MOD)-if PT, (MOD) PT (predictive unreal past; discarded)
- *quílas túleste, san inye túle*; if-NEG PT, *san* PT (predictive unreal past)
- *au tuluvanye*; MOD-UR FT (wish unreal future; discarded)
- *au túlielde (las)*; MOD-UR PFT (NEG) (wish unreal past)

PE22/158 was discarded:

- *quí(ta) la tultes, náne márie*; *if*-MOD-UR ?NEG PT, PT (predictive unreal past)

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