INTERPERSONAL MEANING, PERSUASION AND PUBLIC DISCOURSE: PACKING SEMIOTIC PUNCH

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ABSTRACT

This paper considers the discursive deployment of modality in one public text, with a view to outlining the significance of grammatical metaphor as resource for expanding the meaning potential that can be brought to bear on the modal assessment of English propositions and proposals. The implications of this interpretation of interpersonal meaning for critical social literacy in Australian schools is subsequently discussed with reference to two pieces of expository writing from a senior secondary school context.

0. NEGOTIATION

There are many respects in which texts can be construed as social processes of negotiation. Fairclough (1989, 1992a), for example, has drawn attention to the contemporary foregrounding of certain interpersonal resources in public discourse – the ‘synthetic personalisation’ whereby authorities attempt to construct a patently coercive solidarity with subjects they are seeking to control (which might be glossed as an incursion1 of ‘public’ discourse into previously ‘private’ spheres; cf. Habermas 1991). Fairclough’s work raises the complementary issue of to what extent interpersonal resources can be deployed to challenge authority. Can private discourse invade more public spheres; and if so, which interpersonal resources are mobilised, from which subjects, to which agents or agencies of symbolic control (Bernstein 1990:138-139)? In this paper a functional linguistic deconstruction will be offered of one challenge of this kind, and potential implications for teaching critical social literacy in Western secondary schools will be briefly reviewed (Christie et al. 1991, Christie 1993).

1 Fairclough (1993:140) actually refers to these resources as a colonization of the public sphere by the private and an appropriation of private resources by the public sphere. I think, however, that a case can be made for treating the appropriation as an incursion of public discourse into previously private spheres – a weakening of classification (in Bernstein’s terms) designed by powerful public voices to colonize new frontiers.
1. INTERSUBJECTIVE MEANING

The semiotic excursion in question was published by the Sydney Morning Herald (one of Australia’s three leading broadsheet newspapers) on page 1, on Thursday, August 29, 1991. It consists of a letter from a concerned citizen, Ms Vanessa Chang, to the then Premier of New South Wales, Mr Nick Greiner, accompanied by a picture of Ms Chang. Ms Chang’s father, for many years Australia’s most renowned heart specialist, had recently been murdered—apparently as the culmination of an unsuccessful extortion bid by his murderers. In the previous election Greiner’s conservative party had won office, running on a platform which promised to repeal the stringent gun laws introduced by the Labor government prior to the election. In the election, the Labor Party lost a number of key seats in country areas which they had traditionally held, with the gun law issue a key factor in these electorates. The verbal part of this text is presented as text (1) below (with formatting and paragraphing as published by the Herald):

(1) Ms Chang’s letter to Mr Greiner

Dear Mr Greiner.

WHY HAVEN’T GUN LAWS BEEN CHANGED?

THE SHOCKING AND SENSELESS KILLING OF MY OWN FATHER, VICTOR CHANG, FORCES ME TO WRITE THIS LETTER. I CANNOT BELIEVE THAT HIS DEATH AND THE MURDER OF SO MANY OTHERS IN THE LAST TERRIBLE WEEKS HAS NOT PROMPTED AN IMMEDIATE RESPONSE FROM THE GOVERNMENT!

After the needless killing of over a dozen people in the last two months I must emphasise the desperate need to review and reform existing policies on the possession of arms in this state. Policies which, at present, are not stringent enough to prevent the slaughter of innocents.

How many more tragedies will have to occur? How many families will have to live with the anguish of not only the death of their loved one, but the thought that it could have been prevented?

I appeal to you, Mr Greiner, to realise past mistakes and help rectify the existing situation now, before more lives are sacrificed. I know that criminals cannot be stopped but surely we can limit or stop their easy access to lethal weapons!

It would be irresponsible to ignore Australia’s plea to reform antiquated gun law policies!

Sincerely,

VANESSA CHANG

In broad generic terms, the letter is a hortatory exposition (Martin 1985/1989, Martin and Peters 1985). As a first step, its structure can be displayed in stages, labelled according to the function they play in this text and the range of agnate persuasive genres.

(2) The structure of Ms Chang’s letter to Mr Greiner

Salutation (greeting)

Dear Mr Greiner.

Issue (what’s at stake)

Why haven’t gun laws been changed?

Authority (why I matter)

The shocking and senseless killing of my own father, Victor Chang, forces me to write this letter.

Argument (rationale)

I cannot believe that his death and the murder of so many others in the last terrible weeks has not prompted an immediate response from the government!....

How many more tragedies will have to occur?...

Appeal (demand for action)

I appeal to you, Mr Greiner, to realise past mistakes and help rectify the existing situation now, before more lives are sacrificed...

It would be irresponsible to ignore Australia’s plea to reform antiquated gun law policies!

Valediction (leave taking)

Sincerely,

Vanessa Chang

Canonical staging of this kind tells us something about the social function of the text. However, to more fully appreciate its rhetorical force it is important to look closely at its construction of meaning—in particular at what systemic functional linguistics (hereafter SFL) refers to as interpersonal resources (Halliday 1967, 1970, 1978, 1982, 1985, He 1993, Martin 1991, 1992a, b, in press, Poynton 1985/1989, 1990). These resources comprise what in other schools of linguistics would be distributed across the pragmatics of illocutionary force, indirect speech acts, evidentiality and intensity or stance (cf. Biber & Finnegan 1988, 1989, Chafe 1986, Labov 1972, 1984). In SFL they can be usefully divided into those foregrounding intersubjectivity4, typically orchestrating dialogue at the front of the English clause (the systems

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2 The term is from Gleason (1965) and refers to paradigmatic relations among units of description; in terms of contemporary critical theory it is closely related to intertextuality, interpreted as a system of immanent meaning potential.

3 Cf. Fairclough (1993:136) on identity (interpersonal) and relational (interpersonal) functions.
of MOOD and MODALITY; Halliday 1970, 1985), and those foregrounding subjectivity, typically encoding speakers feelings through groups and phrases, especially nominal groups (AFFECT, JUDGEMENT and APPRECIATION; Martin in press, ledema 1994, ledema at al in press, Rothery forthcoming). In this paper it is Chang's deployment of intersubjective resources⁴ that will be the focus of attention.

2. POSITIONING THE LISTENER

In order to explore the rhetoric of Chang's intervention, we need to introduce the fundamental discursive strategy on which she draws - referred to in SFL as grammatical metaphor (Halliday 1985, Halliday & Martin 1993). Text (3) below, from the detective fiction of P.D. James, provides the point of departure for this discussion. In this passage, Commander Dalgliesh is interrogating a local police inspector with respect to his preliminary investigations. The exemplary passage is highlighted in bold face.

(3) Commander Dalgliesh with Inspector Blakelock. (James 1978:153)

Commander Dalgliesh: “You were watching her closely all the time, Inspector? Are you absolutely sure that Miss Foley couldn’t have replaced the keys in the box without your seeing her?”

Inspector Blakelock: “No, sir. That would have been quite impossible.”

The phenomenon in question here has to do with the meaning of Blakelock's No, sir in response to Dalgliesh's query. In this context, what does No, sir mean? And why could Yes, sir have meant the same thing? The critical point here has to do with which part of Dalgliesh's query No, sir is actually negotiating. In context, it means 'No, sir, she couldn't have replaced the keys', not 'No, sir, I'm not absolutely sure...'. In Halliday's (1985) terms, it negotiates the projected (that Miss Foley couldn't have replaced the keys in the box without your seeing her), not the projecting (Are you absolutely sure) part of the clause.

In this respect it contrasts with the alternative Yes, sir, which to function in this context would have to be interpreted as negotiating the projecting (Are you absolutely sure), not the projected clause (that Miss Foley couldn't have replaced the keys in the box without your seeing her).

Why, in such contexts, are both projecting and projected clauses candidates for negotiation? Halliday's way into theorising these phenomena is through the concept of metaphor. Traditionally, metaphor refers to the use of one word or phrase in place of another, where the resulting expression has to be read both literally and figuratively to make sense in context. For example, if the poet writes that his love is like a red red rose, instead of that his love is ardent, then he is invoking a reading which notes literally that his love is similar to a red rose, and which at the same time has to be rendered figuratively along the lines of his love being describable as ardent (or however else the metaphor might be rendered, depending on reading position). Significantly, the meaning of the metaphor lies precisely in the tension between its literal and figurative interpretation - the literal plus (or perhaps better, times) the figurative layer. Note as well that the relationship between the layers is symbolic; there has to be some respect in which the figurative meaning can be derived from the literal meaning of the word or phrase in question.

Extending this traditional notion of 'lexical' metaphor, Halliday (1985) introduces the concept of 'grammatical' metaphor to handle the phenomenon of one grammatical structure standing for another. For example, if we say I'm sure the Inspector was very nervous, we mean, epistemically, that there is a very high probability that the Inspector was very nervous - that the Inspector must have been very nervous, as opposed to would have been (median probability) or might have been (low probability). In other words, the projecting, first person, present tense, clause I'm sure, which attributes a mental state, stands for a high valued modalisation, which might have been more directly encoded as a modal verb (i.e. must); and it can stand for the high valued modalisation because it is similar enough in meaning to it to be so deployed. One grammatical structure (involving PROJECTION) is used to stand for another (MODALISATION). Thus the more likely tag for this example is wasn't he, not didn't I, even though the main grammatical Subject is I, not the Inspector (cf. the non-metaphorical Dalgliesh is sure she's guilty, isn't he?, not isn't she?).

Thus, in general terms, it is the phenomenon of grammatical metaphor which gives the Inspector a choice of responding to the literal meaning or the figurative (i.e. transferred or metaphorical) meaning in text 3. Responding literally involves reading are you absolutely sure as a non-metaphorical relational attributive process describing the Inspector's mental state (and agnate to were you sure, will you be sure, make sure, is he sure, etc.).

Responding metaphorically, on the other hand, involves reading are you absolutely sure as a metaphorical relational attributive process standing for a high valued modalisation of certainty (and agnate to is it absolutely certain.

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⁴ It is not being suggested here that 'subjective' resources have no affect on the listener, but merely that they are not being offered up directly for negotiation - i.e. not at risk as Subject, Finite or Mood Adjunct (as Halliday's 1985/1994 composite Mood function).

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that she couldn't have, is it impossible that she could have, might Miss Foley have been able to, was Miss Foley possibly able to, etc.):  

In fact the Inspector plays it safe; he responds first to the metaphorical reading (with No, sir) and then covers his tracks by negotiating both the metaphorical modinalisation of certainty (Are you absolutely sure?) and the literal modulation (i.e. deontic modality) of ability (couldn't?):  

In order to negotiate both modalities, Blakelock has to use a metaphorical modality himself (quite impossible), since modality can be expressed just once through a modal verb in a standard English clause. The degrees of certainty and ability chosen by the Inspector are worthy of note. For certainty, he selects a median value (probable, not possible or certain) realised through the modal verb would (as opposed to might or must)?; for ability, he nominalises, and is thus able to select a high value, realised in his British English through the intensifier quite (as opposed to almost or next to) submodifying the adjective impossible. Blakelock positions himself in other words as 'fairly sure' that Miss Foley 'absolutely couldn't' have replaced the key, in a context where Dalgleish was asking about 'absolute certainty'. This subtle renegotiation of the context is outlined in Figure 1.

![Figure 1: Blakelock's second move - responding to Dalgleish's projecting MODALISATION with would and to his projected MODULATION with quite impossible](image)

As might be expected, the flexibility engendered in discourse by interpersonal grammatical metaphors creates opportunities for verbal play. Facetious responses to metaphors of MOOD are well known (e.g. Is your name Dalgleish or Daglish? — Yes.); and metaphors of modality provide similar opportunities for speakers to unexpectedly reconstrue the context as a text unfolds. Consider Dalgleish's most famous ancestor, in the opening passage of *The Valley of Fear* (exemplary negotiation in bold face):

(4) Sherlock Holmes with Dr Watson. (Doyle 1981a:769)

"I'm inclined to think..." said I.

"I should do so," Sherlock Holmes remarked impatiently.

I believe that I am one of the most long-suffering of mortals; but I'll admit that I was annoyed at the sardonic interruption. "Really, Holmes," said I severely, "you are a little trying at times."

In this example Watson introduces a projecting clause ('I'm inclined to think') standing for a median valued modalisation (it would probably be that...). But before we even learn what he is about to modalise, Holmes jumps in and reconstrues Watson's modalisation as literally a first person (I), present tense ('m), modulated (inclined), mental process of cognition (think) by telling him to do just that for a change — to think! This process of renegotiation is itself deeply symbolic of the relationship between Watson and Holmes (i.e. very collegial, but with Homes in complete control) is outlined in Figure 2.

![Figure 2: Holmes' facetious reconstrual of Watson's aborted conjecture in text (4)](image)
3. INTERSUBJECTIVE RESOURCES FOR ASSESSMENT (MODALITY)

Having established grammatical metaphors of modality as an important negotiating resource in conversation, we will review Halliday's (1970/1976, 1985) account of this system of interpersonal meanings in some detail. In light of the ineffability of the meanings involved (Halliday 1984a), and Halliday's incorporation of metaphorical realisations, his framework will be presented in some detail. The basic non-metaphorical grammatical resources in question involve modal verbs (including needs to, dares to, is to, has to, has got to, had better), modal adverbs (including probably, presumably, predictably, possibly) and related periphrastic expansions of the verbal group via the verb be and a following adjective or passive verb (be willing to, be prepared to, be able to, be anxious to). A survey of the more familiar of these resources is provided below (for grammatical details see Halliday 1970/1976, 1985).

Setting aside ability (modal can, could in the sense of 'able'), Halliday interprets the system as offering resources for negotiating degrees of polarity – the semantic space between positive (is, do) and negative (isn't, don't). His 1985:334-341 account of the semantics of the MODALITY system is presented in broad outlines in Figure 3, including the major dimensions of VALUE (how we grade our assessment), ORIENTATION and MANIFESTATION (how we assign responsibility for our assessment and how explicit we are about doing so) and TYPE (how we assess propositions with respect to probability or usuality and proposals with respect to obligation and inclination). Sample realisations for each system have been included; modulations of ability have been integrated alongside inclination under the superordinate feature [readiness] – following Matthiessen (in press).

Something of the richness of the system is exemplified below, with respect to short passages from texts taken from the late 19th, early 20th and late 20th centuries. In light of Bernstein's (e.g. 1990) work on coding orientation, one cannot help wondering about the genesis of the system and the role played in its genesis by Bernstein's old and then his new middle class.

\[\text{FIGURE 3}
\]
Overview of modality systems

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8 The UT superscripts linking ability type with low value provisionally block the possibility of grading ability: a more precise description would allow for grading through the nominal meaning potential of objective realisations (e.g. quite able, great ability).
Examples from the second half of 19th Century (Doyle 1981b:942)

I have no doubt the connection between my boots and a Turkish bath...
and yet I should be obliged to you if you would indicate it.
...which I should illustrate if I were to ask you who shared your cab...
I don't admit that a fresh illustration is an explanation,
you would probably have had no splashes,
and if you had they would certainly have been symmetrical.
Therefore it is clear that you sat at the side.
Therefore it is equally clear that you had a companion.
That is very evident.
Absurdly commonplace, is it not?

Examples from the first half of 20th Century (from J Priestley An Inspector Calls, quoted from Martin 1992a; see also Halliday 1982)

I think we've just about come to the end of this wretched business --
I don't think so.
It wasn't necessary.
And I thought it better not to.
I think you'd better look at it.
I don't see any particular reason why I should.
Probably not.

Examples from the second half of 20th Century (from Educating Rita, opening scene in film; for analysis see Cranny-Francis and Martin 1994)

It's that stupid bleeding handle on the door -- you want to get it fixed.
Ah, yes, yes, I I I meant to.
Well, that's no good, is it -- always meaning to?
You want to get on with it,
the poor sod on the other side won't be able to get in
you won't be able to get out.
Well, that would at least constitute some sort of start. wouldn't it?
But you may call be Frank.
I suppose it is.

3.1 Orientation and manifestation – what are we arguing about?

Halliday uses the terms orientation and manifestation to refer to the way in which speakers formulate 'indicative' and 'imperative' speech acts as negotiable propositions and proposals. At issue here is the rhetoric whereby modality and the source of the modal assessment (i.e. the speaker) is structured into or around the Subject and Finite MOOD functions (e.g. She must...), with attendant repercussions for tags (mustn't she?) and elliptical responses (Oh, must she?)

3.1.1 Explicit subjective

Under the heading explicit subjective, Halliday places the grammatical metaphors typically involving first person, present tense, mental processes (or their relational clause cognates which attribute a mental state – e.g. I have a suspicion that...).

(8) I reckon Greiner is corrupt, isn't he?
    - He is.

These metaphors explicitly construct the speaker as the source of the assessment, and to some extent, as we have seen in the Holmes to Watson repartee, place the speaker's authority to assess at risk. (cf. the marked response Oh do you? to the opening move in (8)).

3.1.2 Implicit subjective

Under the heading implicit subjective, Halliday places non-metaphorical realisations through one or another modal verb. Modal verbs implicitly construct the speaker as the source of the assessment, and place the speaker's assessment, although not her authority to assess, directly at risk (cf. the modality adjusting responses such as he would be, he must be).

(9) Greiner might be corrupt, mightn't he?
    - He might be.

3.1.3 Implicit objective

Implicit objective assessments are realised through modal adverbs (for modalisation – probability and usuality) or periphrastic verbal groups (for modulation – inclination and obligation).

(10) Perhaps Greiner is corrupt, isn't he?
    - He is.
They have the effect of disassociating the speaker from the assessment, which has been removed from the verbal part of the Mood function. Thus in (10), the first move invites negotiation of polarity (is he or isn't he), nudging aside negotiation of the modality (perhaps).

3.1.4 Explicit objective

Like explicit subjective assessments, explicit objective assessments make use of grammatical metaphors. Instead of expanding the clause through projection, explicit objective metaphors make use of nominalisation to disassociate the speaker from the assessment, which is reconstructed as an aspect of ideational, rather than interpersonal reality. The assessment itself is only very indirectly at risk, and its source is not open to challenge. Thus in (11), the response negotiates the polarity of the proposed possibility (it is or it isn't), not its modality (cf. it might be possible that, it would be possible that, it must be possible that – the semantics of the last of which, with its contradictory high and low assessments of probability, is in need of considerable contextualisation). In order to get at the nominalised modality and negotiate, it is necessary to abandon the proposition to hand and replace it with an alternative one (It's more than possible that; it's a dead certainty that...).

(11) It's possible that Greiner is corrupt, isn't it?
    - It is.

3.2 Value – how strongly do we feel?

The system of value focuses attention on the strength of a modal assessment. Setting aside ability, which is not gradable in verbal form, modalities of probability, usuality, inclination and obligation can all be scaled according to whether their value is low, median or high. Implicit objective realisations of modality are deployed in Table 1 to display the respective scales.

Halliday (1985) makes the point that, interpreted in this light, modality can be seen to open up a semantic space between is and isn't for propositions and do and don't or will and won't for proposals – in other words, it establishes the potential for degrees of polarity in both the indicative and imperative realms of negotiation.

### Table 1: Low, Median and High Valued Realisations for Modality Types

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPE</th>
<th>Low Value</th>
<th>Median Value</th>
<th>High Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Probability</td>
<td>possibly</td>
<td>probably</td>
<td>certainly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usuality</td>
<td>sometimes</td>
<td>usually</td>
<td>always</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inclination</td>
<td>be willing to</td>
<td>be keen to</td>
<td>be determined to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obligation</td>
<td>be allowed to</td>
<td>be supposed to</td>
<td>be required to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability</td>
<td>(be able to)</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.3 Type – what are we negotiating?

The system of type distinguishes between the system of modalisation, which opens up degrees of polarity for propositions (i.e. statements and questions) and modulation, which opens up degrees of polarity for proposals (i.e. offers and commands). Halliday (1970/1976) reviews the grammatical differences between the two systems. Here we will focus briefly on the semantics of the negotiation involved.

Modalisation (epistemic modality in formal semantics) is concerned with assessing states of knowledge. The two key systems are probability (how sure?) and usuality (how often?). Their implicit objective form of realisation involves modal adverbs, which may be used to reinforce the value of an accompanying modal verb as in Table 2.

### Table 2: Low, Median and High Valued Realisations for Modalisation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Probability</th>
<th>Usuality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>must certainly</td>
<td>must always</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median</td>
<td>would probably</td>
<td>would usually</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>might possibly</td>
<td>might sometimes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As noted above, modalisation enables the negotiation of propositions, defined by Halliday (1984b, 1985) as discourse moves which give (statements) or demand (questions) information. An exemplary proposition is negotiated via probability in (12).

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9 Nominalised objective forms of ability do open up the possibility of grading, via nominal group resources, for example a low ability..., a median ability..., a high ability to conduct electricity.
You must be Greiner.

– Yes, I am.

Modulation (deontic modality in formal semantics) is concerned with assessing commitment to action. The two key systems are inclination (how willing?) and obligation (how obliged?). Their implicit objective form of realisation involves a periphrastic form of the verbal group — the verb be plus an adjective or passive participle as outlined in Table 3. The be plus adjective forms realise inclination, with the adjective allowing submodification (e.g. I’m very determined, rather keen, quite willing); the be plus passive participle forms realise obligation, which is not open to grading of this kind\(^\text{10}\) (*I’m very required to*).

**TABLE 3: LOW, MEDIAN AND HIGH VALUED REALISATIONS FOR MODULATION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>value</th>
<th>inclination</th>
<th>obligation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>high</td>
<td>must, be determined to</td>
<td>must, be required to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>median</td>
<td>will, be keen to</td>
<td>will, be supposed to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>low</td>
<td>may, be willing to</td>
<td>may, be allowed to</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As noted above, modulation enables the negotiation of proposals, defined by Halliday (1984b, 1985) as discourse moves which give (offers) or demand (commands) goods and services. An exemplary proposal is negotiated via obligation in (13). Note that to bring modulation into play, an indirect speech act must be deployed (in this case, a declarative clause standing for an imperative one), since grammatically the system of modulation is only available in the indicative. In Halliday’s (1985) terms then, negotiating commands through the system of modulation depends on grammatical metaphor — in this case, interpersonal metaphors of mood.

You must act now.

– All right, I will.

3.4 Modality metaphors

As just noted, deploying modulation to negotiate the semantic space between *do* and *don’t* in commands (or *will* and *won’t* in offers) depends on

10 Comparable grading is available for explicit objective forms: there is a strong requirement that... he’s under some obligation to... it’s with our explicit permission that...
from negotiation. Adjectives such as willing, keen, ardent, permissible, requisite, compulsory and so on are commonly used to construe modulations objectively as qualities; nouns such as intention, desire, determination, need, obligation, regulation, compulsion and so on are commonly used to construe modulations objectively as things (this is the grammatical source of the various fields of bureaucratic administration – public, private, military, paramilitary, etc.; see Iedema in press).

4. POSITIONING THE READER

As exemplified in section 2 above, modality is a fundamental resource in dialogue – as part of the ongoing construal and reconstrual of meaning in repartee. Its role in dialogic interplay is examined in detail in Halliday (1982) and Martin (1992a). In monologue, modality functions as an equally fundamental resource for positioning a reader/listener – as part of the dialectic whereby a speaker/writer rhetorically manoeuvres to naturalise a specific reading position (Halliday 1992a, Martin 1992a, b). As far as modality is concerned, this process of positioning seldom involves a single voice (cf. however the discussion of texts (20) and (21) in section 5 below), and this is one aspect of Bakhtin’s (e.g. 1981, 1986) insistence on the inherent dialogism of any text.

Chang’s hortatory exposition is no exception to this principle, and its deployment of modality would appear to entwine Greiner in a rather uncomfortable semiotic web. An analysis of the modality in Chang’s text is presented below, with her grammatical metaphors of obligation, probability and ability unpacked.11

(16) Modality in Chang’s exposition

Issue
Why haven’t gun laws been changed?
{unmodalised}

Authority
The shocking and senseless killing of my own father, Victor Chang, forces12 me to write this letter.

{unmodalised}

Argument

An overview of the process through which Chang positions and repositions Greiner is outlined in Figure 4. Her negotiation of obligation and ability is presented as one stream in this dialectic, on the left of the diagram; her negotiation of probability is presented to the right. Subjective and objective

11 Chang’s modulated declaratives could be further unpacked as mood metaphors, since they function semantically as commands; this step has not been pursued here. For discussion of the semantic overlap between agency and modulation see Halliday (1985:264-266).

12 Note that Chang means that she is writing the letter because of her father’s death, not that she has to write the letter; so forces is not taken as metaphorical obligation here.