CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUDING REMARKS

1. The comparative analysis of English and Hindi moods and modals that we have presented in the preceding pages has a number of interesting features that we would like to highlight here. Although we started with the aim of tracing 'concept equivalences' between them getting cues from a number of linguists mentioned in the first chapter, we have also explored along with that a few formal features of the modals which reveal some underlying structural relationships between English and Hindi. This has engaged us in developing arguments whose basic purpose is to test the validity of certain hypotheses regarding the nature and classification of the modals, made with particular reference to the English data.

As regards concept equivalence between the moods and modals of English and those of Hindi, coverage of the semantic categories related to them/a near-impossible goal. One can always think of still more categories and features depending on one's objectives. As Bolinger (1965) has successfully argued, the meanings of linguistic items cannot be atomized perfectly. We would keep this basic limitation of semantic analysis in mind and put forward only a modest claim, namely, that we have tried to bring out most of the conceptual distinctions related to different types of modality and speech
act for which moods and modals in English and Hindi are used. We have set up a sort of transfer-comparison in which the chief point of reference is the meaning of the English categories against which the potential of the corresponding categories in Hindi has been examined.

One broad conclusion of the above study is that English has not only a larger system of moods and modals than Hindi, but also that the functional range of any individual member is generally wider than that of the corresponding one in Hindi. To take 'may/can' in English and the corresponding 'sak' in Hindi as a case in point, English can clearly distinguish factual from theoretical possibility by means of 'may' and 'can', but it is difficult to do so in Hindi by means of just 'sak'. For that we have to seek the help of other linguistic categories. Similarly, in the case of permission, again a distinction between formal and informal permission can be observed by means of 'may/can' in English, while 'sak' in Hindi mostly marks formal permission. For informal permission other categories have to be used, such as the imperfective aspect in 'mē mē yah kursiā: le luī?' (Can I take this chair?). Besides these central areas the use of 'may' extends to benedictions and maledictions, and of 'can' to offensive remarks like 'You can go to hell!'. Not only this, there are many formulaic sorts of phrases like 'I may submit...', 'We may consider...', 'It may be noted...' etc., where
'may' is used. The corresponding utterances in Hindi, if there are any, cannot use 'sak' to cover the meaning. If we now look at the past forms of 'may/can' on the one hand, and of 'sak' on the other, we find striking incompatibilities. While the past tense with 'may/can' introduces meanings like tentativeness, remoteness, unreality etc., besides past-time reference, the past tense with 'sak' primarily refers to past time, and only secondarily to unreality. Besides, the use of the past form of 'can' for polite requests cannot be matched at all by the past form of 'sak'. We notice numerous incompatibilities of this kind when we look at other members of the English and Hindi systems of modals. A comparison of 'will/shall' and 'would/should' on the one hand, and 'ga:' (which cannot take the past tense) on the other, and similarly, of 'must/should/ought to/had better' on the one hand, and the corresponding 'ca:hiye' in Hindi, on the other, reveals unmistakably that the functional range of the modal system of English is much wider than that of Hindi. Apart from it we also find sometimes that the same English modal could occur in alternative utterances for the same speech function. Take 'would' for instance. In order to make a polite request for shutting the door one could use any of the following set of utterances:

(1) **Would** you mind shutting the door?

(2) **I wonder** if you'd mind shutting the door.
(3) Would you be kind enough to shut the door?

(4) I should be grateful if you would shut the door.

(5) I wonder if you would kindly shut the door.

(6) Would you kindly shut the door?

Similarly, for making invitations one could select from the following set where the modals, 'would' and 'may' have been used:

(1) Would you come to dinner tonight?

(2) Would you like to come to dinner tonight?

(3) How would you like to come and have your dinner with us tonight?

(4) May I have the pleasure of your company at dinner tonight?

(5) May I invite you to dinner tonight?

If we try to produce literal translations of the above utterances in Hindi, we may be able to match 'would' with 'ga' and 'may' with 'sak', but this is bound to create a sort of functional disparity. The Hindi modals 'ga' and 'sak' do not occur naturally in so many alternative ways of making requests and giving invitations. Hindi may have its own alternative ways for performing the same speech functions, but it seems the modals are not its major resource for doing that. This reinforces our previous conclusion that the functional range of the English modals is much wider than that of the
Hindi modals. In the seventh chapter we have discussed the use of both English and Hindi modals in relation to a large variety of modalities and speech functions. That puts forward far more facts that bear out this conclusion. In fact the modals in English are a major resource for interpersonal function. Added to them, we have a subjunctive mood that has its own unique functions which are matched in Hindi by non-modal categories like aspect. Hindi, as we have shown, has no mood.

All that we have said so far only means that whatever functional incompatibility there is between English and Hindi is only in respect of the systems of moods and modals. There may not be any real communicative incompatibility, as whatever the moods and modals fail to do in any language, other categories try to do to fill up the gaps; for instance, most of the functions of the subjunctive mood in English are performed by the perfective aspect with the person-number marker in Hindi. The same is true, to a large extent, of the gaps left by the Hindi modals. If there are still some gaps left, as, for instance the speakers of Hindi may not employ the same kind of six ways of making a polite request, and five ways of extending an invitation to dinner, the gaps may be ascribed to socio-cultural differences between the speakers of English and Hindi. Such differences reflect in the peculiar idioms of different
languages, which generally \( \rightarrow \) beyond the reach of any translation-equivalence. Such differences may be of great interest to anthropological linguists and also sociolinguists. Our study has brought to light some differences of this kind, as far as the modals are concerned.

2. Another interesting conclusion that our study has reinforced is that mood is not a universal grammatical category. While English has a slender system of mood, Hindi has none. We have tried to show how the various moods like the imperative, the infinitive etc., distinguished in English, and 'a:gya:rtha', 'sandeha:rtha', 'sanketa:rtha' etc., in Hindi have no distinct formal basis. The only mood that can claim a distinct formal basis is the English subjunctive. It may have a number of archaic, literary and formal uses, but it cannot be altogether dismissed from colloquial usage, as the past subjunctive, in 'If I were ...' is commonly found in colloquial speech. The so-called Hindi moods which have been put forward by most grammarians are just not there as distinct formal categories. It seems the grammarians have followed either classical tradition or purely notional criteria in distinguishing them. Our critique in the fifth chapter examines the whole issue in a fairly detailed manner. The conclusion we have reached may not be acceptable to many Hindi grammarians, but what is more interesting than the conclusion is the relevance
of formal criteria for grammatical analysis which we have emphasized. It is in the light of such criteria that we have put forward some new proposals for characterizing the Hindi verbal group in a slightly different manner. We have proposed that the perfective aspect be treated as the neutral unmarked aspect which may take either the person-number or the gender-number markers with it depending on the semantic function for which it is used. We have also proposed that infinitival forms with 'naː' be treated as aspectual forms when they occur as regular parts of the verbal group as in 'mujhe ghar jaːnaː hoː' (I have to go home). We have called it the determinative aspect. We have classed it as an aspect on purely distributional grounds. One more proposal that we have put forward is that the tense system in Hindi has, like English, the contrast between past and non-past, and the so-called future tense marker 'gaː' is indeed a modal auxiliary which belongs to the common set which has 'sak', 'caːhiye' and 'par/ho' as its other members. We have dismissed 'cuk' from this set. While some grammarians include it in their analysis, 'cukː', in our view, is rather an aspect-marker like 'rahaː'. The proposal about the tense system is not altogether new. Bahl (1967) also put forth the same proposal, but our analysis differs from his in respect of the system of modality and aspect.
We have also dismissed categories like tense-mood, perephrastic mood etc., as far as English and Hindi are concerned. Again, the argument is based on formal ground and draws very much on the multifunctionality of grammatical categories. Tenses may be used for modal functions, so can moods be used for temporal ones, besides the basic function of each category, but this multifunctionality should not affect the nomenclature of these categories which is based primarily on their basic function. P eriphrastic moods proposed by Sweet and others have already been dismissed by Jespersen and several other grammarians. Such moods are the product of confusion regarding the criteria for distinguishing moods. Syntactic moods proposed by Halliday involve either this confusion, or imply a different concept of mood. We have not used Halliday's concept of sentential mood. We still prefer to use the label 'sentence types' for all such moods as are proposed by him. We have argued how his concept, based on sentence structure, can lend us in serious difficulties.

By mood we mean only that mood form which is inflexional in nature. As Fillmore (1968) has drawn a distinction between case-relation and case-form, we could possibly make a distinction between modality-relation (i.e. the attitude of the speaker towards the proposition he puts forward and various other speech acts in which he plays significant roles) and mood-form. In that case we could claim that modality
relations are universal. The next problem would be to enumerate and specify them exactly. This may prove a formidable problem. Although we have not pursued such an ambitious aim, we have surely indicated in the second chapter what such modality relations could be. They could be categories like possibility, necessity, permission, obligation, ability, intention, willingness etc. They underlie various modal forms which may consist of both moods and modal auxiliaries. Whether these modality-relations could be syntactically significant in the same way as case relations are in the case-grammar proposed by Fillmore, we do not yet know. What has appeared significant to us is the conceptual framework of common categories they provide for setting up concept-equivalence between the moods and modals of English and those of Hindi. We have drawn for this chiefly on two theories, namely, the theory of modal logic which had been initiated by Aristotle, and that of speech acts whose chief exponent was the philosopher Austin. We have found through our discussion that in many instances modality and illocutionary force function as two sides of the same coin, although they are not totally identical in every case.

3. An interesting feature of our study is the classification of the English and Hindi modals into the discourse-oriented (DO), subject-oriented (SO) and epistemic (Ep.) classes. This is the scheme that Palmer (1974) has used for classifying
the English modals. When we applied the same scheme to the Hindi modals we found that it suited them equally well. There are both syntactic and semantic motivations for making such a classification of them. Not only English and Hindi, but the modals of Konkani, another Indian language, can be classified accordingly, as Prabhu (1973) has shown. This shows that the scheme is some kind of cross-linguistic formal or organizational feature. It is just possible that the modals in some other languages may be classified on the same lines.

4. In addition to the above, the examination of the hypothesis about treating auxiliaries (of which modals form an important part) as main verbs in the light of the Hindi data has proved quite interesting. Although the limited facts that we have put forward cannot conclusively prove that the Hindi modals are not auxiliaries, but full verbs, they do support Palmer's moderate position that the modals are gradients on the scale of the category 'verb' whose extreme ends are auxiliaries and full verbs. The fact that arguments similar to those advanced by Ross and Huddleston can apply to the Hindi modals shows that the issue is of a general nature.

5. Finally, we would like to say that even pedagogues may find our study interesting and useful. Any teaching programme that aims to develop communicative competence in English in the speakers of Hindi has to grapple with the
problems of concept-equivalence between English and Hindi. Modality, whose chief function is interpersonal, is realized somewhat differently in these languages. If the learning of a language, even a second language, is essentially the process of learning how to mean, as Halliday firmly believes, the learners will always draw on the meaning-potential they already have in learning a foreign language. The conceptual categories that we have laid out (and in terms of which we have compared the modals of English and Hindi) are indeed essential parts of the communicative grammar of either language. The same would also constitute an important part of a notional or functional syllabus for the learners of English in India.

The study would perhaps also help a practising teacher of English in handling some of those problems that arise when the students are faced with some culturally unfamiliar patterns, and when they try to reduce or simplify them according to their familiar patterns. As bilingual competence means a near-equal mastery of two languages - English and Hindi for our purposes - and also of the associated cultures, the teacher has to help the learner grasp different conceptual distinctions, and their formal realizations in the target language. The present study will hopefully make some humble contribution to that end, as far as modality in English and Hindi is concerned.