Modal flavor/modal force interactions in German

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Von Fintel and Iatridou (2008) show for a range of languages that counterfactual morphology, added to a strong necessity modal like must, leads to the weak necessity (WN) reading of English ought. We generalize the analysis of Rubinstein (2012) for this phenomenon and analyze German müssen and sollen against this background, building on Ehrich (2001), among others. German shows interaction with modal flavor and allows WN readings only in the synthetic form [modal_{KONJ,II}], not with analytic forms [würde_{KONJ,II} + modal]. For müssen we find the expected WN reading with epistemic flavor as in (1b).

(1)  
a. Peter muss in der Küche sein. (only option given the evidence)  
b. Peter müsste in der Küche sein. (not only option)  
c. #Peter würde in der Küche sein müssen. (würde + modal: *WN)

However, the deontic use of müssen does not have such a WN alternative, as shown in (2b). We find instead a WN politeness reading, as indicated in (2b). The analytic form is again not possible, cf. (2c).

(2)  
A: Wie komme ich nach Amherst?  
a. B: Du musst Rt. 9 nehmen. (presented as only road to A.)  
b. B: Du müsstest Rt. 9 nehmen. (presented as only road to A., Konj.II adds an element like ‘if you don’t mind’) ≠ You ought to take Rt. 9. (pres. as best but not only road t.A.)  
c. #B: Du würdeste Rt. 9 nehmen müssen. (würde + modal: *WN)

The analytic form [würde + modal] is possible where Konj.II is licensed by a counterfactual conditional and does not have a WN reading:

(3) Wenn er ein Auto hätte, würde er es anmelden müssen.

References:  
• Ehrich, V. (2001): Was nicht müssen und nicht können (nicht) bedeuten können (...). LB Sonderheft 9, 149-176.  