
A model of TAM-semantics

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Résumé

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Theoretical linguistics (with some comparative notes)

In my talk, I would like to focus on the semantic connection between T(ense), A(spect) and M(odality). All of these categories have been associated with the feature [+/-]‘being claimed’. For example, Palmer captures the contrast between realis and irrealis in terms of the contrast ‘being claimed’ vs. ‘not being claimed’ (Palmer 2001:3-4); similarly, Wolfgang Klein defines tense and aspect as relations to the particular time for which a claim is made, i.e. to the Topic Time (Klein 1994). In my view, these traditions call for being combined in a unified model of TAM-semantics, which, however, differs in some crucial respects from its predecessors (e.g. in the definition of modality):

see figure in more detailed abstract, attached

I will present the model in more detail, discuss its strengths as well as its weaknesses and point to its relevance for some current debates. For example, the model might prove useful in comparative studies, as it offers a purely semantic definition of (non-)finiteness that is cross-linguistically applicable.

The talk will close on a short note about E(videntiality), arguing that in a truly semantic model of TAM, evidentiality is included in the category of modality, whichever separate expressions it might receive in the languages of the world.

References

- Klein, Wolfgang. 1994. *Time in language*. London [et al.]: Routledge.
Palmer, Frank R. 2001. *Mood and modality*. 2. ed. Cambridge [et al.]: Cambridge University Press.

Mots-Clés: semantics, TAM

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