TAM-E Conference Tense, Aspect, Modality – Evidentiality Comparative, Cognitive, Theoretical and Applied Perspectives, Thursday, November 17 – Friday, November 18, 2016 University of Paris Diderot, France.

Epistemic control and the TAM-E systems in English and Spanish: A cognitive and cross-linguistic perspective on Evidentiality.

Area(s) of research: Comparative & Cognitive linguistics.

This paper examines the functions of inferential and reportative evidentiality in relation to tense-aspect -modality systems. Temporal concepts, as Jaszczolt (2013) argues, reflect degrees of commitment to or detachment from the certainty of an eventuality. From a CG account, the systems of tense-aspect-modality and evidentiality are best conceived as dimensions of epistemic assessment concerning the existential status of the profiled occurrence. As Langacker (2016:6) notes, "they help fulfill the referential function of a clause by way of achieving epistemic control and intersubjective alignment".

Inferential evidential values have been posited for epistemic necessity modals, English *must* and Spanish *deber (de)*, and also for the modal/future maker 'will' (Squartini 2004; Boye 2012). Following Brisard (2013), it is assumed that temporal and modal meanings are best conceived of as instantiations of a common epistemic schema, where inference is a basic component of both evidentiality and the tense-aspect-modal systems (Langacker 2016).

Inferential values are found in association with the future simple and perfect in Spanish, while the reportative value is characteristically found with the conditional simple and conditional perfect (Squartini 2001; Cruschina and Remberger 2008). It is hypothesized that the semantic extension of the conditional and conditional perfect to the indirect-reportative subdomain may be doubly motivated by conceptual distancing from the ground, both in terms of non-immediacy and of the feature irrealis (Givon 1989). Non-immediacy is conveyed in the shift from personal to non-personal involvement, and the feature irrealis contributes to enhance speaker's diminished responsibility concerning evidentiary justification.

The paper presents results of a contrastive case study (English vs. Spanish) on tense-aspect-modality markers realizing evidential functions. The data consists of naturally occurring examples, randomly selected from spoken and written corpora in the two languages (BNC, CREA, CESJD-UCM). The analysis of the data will focus on indirect-inferential (perception-based and conception-based) and indirect-reportative values of evidentiality.

References

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