

NOM Prénom : CAPPELLE Bert, DEPRAETERE Ilse

Nature de la mission (séjour de recherche, participation à un colloque...): organisation d'un workshop 'Modal meaning in Construction Grammar' lors du 3^e colloque international de la International Society for the Linguistics of English (ISLE 3)

Lieu et date : Zürich, 24-27 août 2014

Frais de mission attribués par le laboratoire :

Projet international Lille 3 : 1216 euro

STL : 122 euro

Description de la mission (par ex. résumé de l'intervention proposée/activités de recherche réalisées au cours de la mission...):

Nous avons animé un workshop dont le but était d'appliquer la Grammaire des Constructions à l'étude de la modalité. Il y avait aussi bien des collègues qui étaient convaincus de l'atout que peut apporter le cadre théorique que des collègues dont l'avis était plus mitigé sur la question. Les présentations ont donné lieu à un débat animé. Le programme était comme suit (<http://www.isle3.uzh.ch/Workshops/islemodal.html>):

- Bert Cappelle et Ilse Depraetere. *Introduction*
- Alexander Bergs, Universität Osnabrück. *Modals in Construction Grammar: Constructing a construction*
- Ronny Boogaart, Universiteit Leiden. *Modal vs. temporal readings of auxiliaries: a constructionist view*
- Bert Cappelle, UMR 8163 STL, Université de Lille 3 and Ilse Depraetere, UMR 8163 STL, Université de Lille 3. *Implicated modal meaning in Construction Grammar*
- Martin Hilpert, Université de Neuchâtel. *Recent change in modal meanings: evidence from collocational shifts*
- Elizabeth Traugott, Stanford University. *How can semantic maps of modality be used in a constructionalization model*
- Raphael Salkie, University of Brighton. *English modals and Construction Grammar: rethinking monosemy*
- Anna Wärnsby, Malmö University. *Modal constructions: a helpful generalisation or an undue simplification?*

Tous les résumés:

Modals in Construction Grammar: Constructing a construction

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One notorious problem in the grammatical description of English is the analysis of futurity. Does *will*, for example, serve as a 'pure' future tense auxiliary, or is it an auxiliary of mood (which also expresses future time)?

In this paper, I will present a detailed description and analysis of future and modal *will* from a Construction Grammar viewpoint. In particular, I will argue that the very nature of constructions as form-meaning pairings allows us to develop a systematic account for both future and modal *will* as different constructions. *Will* in both these readings only superficially looks alike. On closer inspection,

it turns out that there are subtle constraints for both on the form side. These are complemented by co- and contextual factors, which can also be captured systematically in a construction, and which underline the distinction between the two constructions. What this amounts to eventually are two different constructions: future *will* and modal *will*, with both different form and meaning sides. The same applies to other expressions of futurity, including *going to*, the simple present and the present progressive.

In the second part of this paper, I will discuss whether the same kind of analysis can also be applied in the description of other modals and the dichotomy between deontic and epistemic readings (e.g., *You must go now* versus *That must be John*). I will argue that indeed we can identify more or less subtle grammatical, co- and contextual constraints that distinguish, for example, an epistemic *must* and a deontic *must* construction.

Again, it will be shown that the theoretical apparatus of Construction Grammar actually allows us to distinguish between these different readings in a systematic way – which could eventually render some of the traditional debates and problems, including polysemy versus mononymy and pragmatics versus semantics, redundant.

Modal versus temporal readings of auxiliaries: a constructionist view

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In the study of modal meaning the notion of *constructions* is useful mainly since modal forms are notorious for being polysemous and constructions may provide constraints on polysemy. After having provided a brief overview of construction based research on mood and modality to date (cf. Boogaart & Fortuin, to appear), I will apply this basic insight to the classic question whether ‘future’ auxiliaries are basically modal or temporal in meaning.

The debate has been revived by Broekhuis and Verkuyl (2013) (B&V), who argue in favour of the claim that Dutch *zullen* and English *will* are exclusively modal in meaning. In fact, for Dutch, the idea that *zullen* (‘will’) is a modal verb rather a marker of future time is generally accepted. In earlier analyses (e.g. Kirsner 1969), the temporal reading is treated as an instantiation of a more general modal meaning (‘hypothetical’). B&V, however, argue that the future reading of utterances containing *zullen/will* has nothing to do with the presence of the modal verb, but should be attributed to the vague semantics of the present tense. The meaning contributed by *zullen/will*, according to B&V, is to express that the speaker is ‘sufficiently confident’ that what he says is true. Despite the differences, the Dutch tradition clearly converges on a modal and monosemous approach to the meaning of *zullen* – as does the English tradition for *will* (see Salkie 2010 for a critical overview).

In this talk I will argue that B&V’s idea that *zullen* (‘will’) never expresses temporal meaning is incompatible with the fact that, diachronically, the modal meaning developed from the temporal reading, which, synchronically, clearly persists in certain contexts and constructions. Moreover, the exclusively modal reading of *zullen*, that does not concern future situations, only arises in highly specific combinations, i.e. constructions, with an aspectually stative complement and modal particles. Such restrictions would obviously be hard to explain if the modal meaning were inherent to the verb *zullen* as such. Based on a collostructional analysis of the verb *zullen*, along the lines of Hilpert (2008), I will show that few *zullen*-constructions are in fact either strictly ‘modal’ or ‘temporal’. For the most frequent combinations, the issue seems to be irrelevant altogether. While a construction based approach does not ‘explain away’ all kinds of classic problems, such as how to account for the modal and temporal reading of ‘future’ auxiliaries, it does offer a much needed fresh perspective on them.

References

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Implicated modal meaning in Construction Grammar

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In a programmatic article, Boogaart (2009) argues that Construction Grammar provides a useful framework that can handle questions of modal polysemy adequately, as well as deal with elements of meaning linked to 'linguistic information across clause boundaries or non-linguistic information' (2009: 237). Stefanowitsch (2003) analyses indirect speech acts (ISA, *Can you pass me the salt?*) within the framework of Construction Grammar. He argues that they are constructions, many of which lose the meaning of the direct speech act (e.g. inquiry into ability). In cases like these, the ISA value constitutes the core meaning of the sentence and should therefore be represented as such.

In empirical studies of modals, it has similarly been pointed out that certain meanings 'arise in context' and that in certain cases the specific functional load of an utterance is the principal meaning of the modal. For instance, Facchinetti (2002) posits a meaning type which she calls 'dynamic implication': it refers to examples in which the sentences have a specific 'communicative function' (Keck and Biber 2004), such as a command (*You can bloody well keep your hands off*) or a suggestion (*Perhaps we can talk about that on another occasion*). In other words, in Facchinetti's analysis, illocutionary force is one of the taxonomic principles in the categorization of modal meaning. The aim of our presentation is twofold: we start by giving an overview of constructions involving the core modal verbs, which is based on the analysis of data from the BNC. This will involve taking a theoretical stance on the notion of 'construction' and deciding how to handle what Wårnsby (2002) has referred to as the potential 'bewildering web of constructions' (2002: 7). Our main aim is to show that while specific pragmatic or discourse-functional meanings are foregrounded in certain constructions, the differentiated status of the layers of meanings (implicated or not) should be reflected in the constructional representation.

References

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Recent change in modal meanings: Evidence from collocational shifts

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This talk addresses recent processes of change in the nine English core modals *can*, *could*, *may*, *might*, *shall*, *should*, *will*, *would*, and *must*. Given the rich literature on the topic, what is there that can be usefully added to the discussion? This talk will present a corpus-based study that diachronically tracks the collocational behavior of the English modals over the past 150 years. What are the lexical verbs that used to co-occur most frequently with modals such as *shall* and *could* in the 19th century, and which verbs do we find today? As will be shown, an analysis of this kind can capture observations that have been made regarding semantic change in modal auxiliaries, and these can be integrated into an analysis that also takes pragmatic and genre-related changes into account. The main claim of the analysis is that the most important aspects of recent change are to be found along two dimensions: the

first of these is the dynamics of deontic and epistemic meaning; the second one is the contrast between involved and informational text types.

Methodologically, this paper draws on data from the COHA (Davies 2010). All nine core modals are diachronically analyzed with regard to the frequencies of collocating lexical verbs in the infinitive. For each modal, in each decade of the corpus, a frequency vector of the collocating verbs was created.

These frequency vectors form the basis for a quantitative analysis. The motivation for using data of this kind is that modals that occur with similar sets of collocates at similar frequencies can be assumed to share semantic, pragmatic or genre-related characteristics. The set of frequency vectors is submitted to a multidimensional scaling analysis that allows a dynamic visualization (Hilpert 2011) of how the nine modals have changed diachronically.

The visualization of the quantitative changes allow several observations that reflect both diachronic stability and change. Certain modals, among them *might* and *could*, largely retain their collocational behavior. By contrast, the modal *may* shows a substantial diachronic shift that reflects an increasing propensity towards epistemic meaning (cf. Millar 2009). The modal *shall*, which diachronically retreats in terms of its text frequency, also changes its collocational behavior. Specifically, it shows a drift towards informational texts, which represent the genre in which *shall* continues to be used.

The empirical results will be used to raise a theoretical question, namely whether change in the English modals can be usefully seen as a case of constructional change (Hilpert 2013). Clearly, the English modals have formal and functional features in common that would be suggestive of viewing them as instances of an overarching modality construction (Diewald 2009). Individual diachronic changes in certain English modals do however point to the fact generalizations at lower levels of abstraction form an important part of speakers' linguistic knowledge.

English modals and Construction Grammar: rethinking monosemy

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Boogaarts (2009) argues that a Construction Grammar approach to modals can overcome the weaknesses of polysemy and monosemy analyses. Although I have much sympathy for Construction Grammar, I argue that its value for the analysis of English modals has yet to be demonstrated, and that the problems which Boogaart highlights for a monosemous analysis can be resolved. He contends that (a) monosemous analyses cannot account for the differences in frequency between different uses of modals; (b) monosemous analyses tend to be highly abstract; and (c) such analyses commit what Cognitive Linguists call the 'generality fallacy' and the 'rule-list fallacy'. Regarding (a), it is misleading to expect semantics alone to account for frequency facts: pragmatics, lexical idiosyncrasies of particular words, and independent sociolinguistic historical changes are surely also relevant. With respect to (b), Boogaart asks whether language users have, or need to have, access to the proposed abstract levels of analysis: but (as Chomsky has argued at length) even phonological representations are highly abstract, and there is no reason to think that semantics should avoid abstractness (cf. Chomsky (2000: 151, 170). Furthermore, some of the specific problems with the analysis of Dutch *kunnen* in Boogaart's paper result from his equating 'x enables y' with 'x is compatible with y'. In Salkie (2014) I have argued that enablement and compatibility are crucially different: enablement involves causal potential. In addition, recent work by Depraetere and her collaborators (eg Depraetere & Reed 2011) has proposed explicit criteria for distinguishing different uses of modals: by integrating these into my analysis, I have claimed that a monosemous analysis of *can* and *may* is able to capture both the differences and the similarities between different uses of modals. As for problem (c), this seems to me to be based on a rejection of standard scientific practice and can be ignored.

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Do semantic modal maps have a role in a constructionalization approach to modals?

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Semantic maps have been used for at least sixty years as graphic representations of semantic polysemies. In some cases they have been intended as hypotheses about possible and impossible connections, unidirectional paths of development and implicational universals. Particularly influential in the modal domain is Van der Auwera and Plungian (1998). Recently, a synchronic statistical grid approach has been developed (see e.g. Croft and Poole 2008; Cysouw, Haspelmath, and Malchukov 2010) that maps proximity rather than connectivity (Van der Auwera 2013).

A construction is a form-meaning pair (Goldberg 1995, 2006). Goldberg's and Croft's (2001) construction grammars are language-specific, and constructionalization is the development of form_{new}-meaning_{new} pairs in specific languages (Traugott and Trousdale 2013). What role, if any, can semantic maps play in a constructionalist perspective on change in modality since the semantic maps pertain to meaning alone and most are conceived as representing cross-linguistic semantic structure?

One suggestion is that to the extent that semantic maps capture recurrent cross-linguistic connectivities or proximities, they need to be conceptualized as supra-constructional generalizations across languages (Fried 2013a). However, how these generalizations would relate to the architecture of construction grammar is unclear.

I suggest that connectivity maps can be usefully adapted to a constructionalization model provided that i) they are considered to be more than graphic representations, and ii) the nodes on the map are understood as form-meaning pairings in language-specific grammars. The hierarchic potential of connectivity maps (Van der Auwera 2013) can be linked to the hierarchy of specific and schematic constructions, and to their gradience (Trousdale 2013). To be of optimal value for studies of constructionalization, maps need to be reconceptualized as "constructional maps" (Fried 2013b) that encompass not only meaning but also the different kinds of syntactic categories that may become available for modal expressions over time: verbs (Van der Auwera and Plungian 1998), adverbs (Simon-Vandenberg and Aijmer 2007), nouns (Kanté 2010), and adjectives (Van linden 2012). The value-added for study of modals is the focus on form as well as meaning, and on gradience at various levels of abstraction.

Testing modal constructions

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When speakers are confronted with modal expressions in their native language, especially those that contain a modal verb, they are immediately able to interpret these expressions, for example, as epistemic or non-epistemic. What enables the speakers to interpret these modal expressions accurately? In many studies, epistemic examples were shown to differ systematically from non-epistemic ones, and speakers have been claimed to be sensitive to these differences (e.g. Coates 1983, Wärnsby 2006). This paper discusses the possibility of applying a Construction Grammar (CG) approach (Goldberg, 1995) to the analysis of epistemic expressions containing modal verbs in Swedish and English. In particular, one of the proposed modal constructions, <NP AUX state> is tested in some detail. The adequacy of CG approach for describing utterances containing modals is also addressed. The investigation is based on the evaluation of data retrieved from the English-Swedish Parallel Corpus.

References

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Bénéfice de la mission (pour le chercheur/l'enseignant-chercheur, pour le laboratoire) :

Les collègues qui ont fait une présentation et ceux qui ont assisté au workshop trouvaient la thématique bien choisie : la modalité n'a pas encore été étudiée en détail dans le cadre de la Grammaire des Constructions. Bert Cappelle et Ilse Depraetere vont continuer la recherche. Dans un premier temps, nous avons fait une proposition pour un numéro thématique de *Constructions and Frames* (Benjamins), qui a été acceptée par les éditeurs. Dans un deuxième temps, nous raffinerons notre méthode empirique et présenterons nos résultats lors d'autres colloques (p.ex. le colloque international de linguistique cognitive).