**Demodality: profiling a novel category at the tense/aspect – modality divide**

I will define *demodality* as a post-modal category, originating in complex forms with composite TAM (tense/aspect/modality) marking – either with a constructional/syntactic/lexical modal plus tense marking, or with multi-exponent TAM morphs. Demodality involves a past event description, corresponding to the validation (with a positive event) or invalidation (with a negative event) of some past modal content – i.e., some modal property came to be realized, or blocked; it is therefore not at issue content (Potts 2005), and is not a ‘live’ possibility in subsequent world-time pairs. Unsurprisingly, as we will see, past tense marking has crucially contributed to the diachronic development of demodal structures. French has thus conventionalized at least four types of demodal categories, depending on the underlying, validated/invalidated modal bases (Kratzer 1991):

1. Avertive demodality (bouletic/predictive modal base, (Kuteva 1998)), constructionalized (Trousdale 2014) with *faillir*<sub>past-perfective</sub>+ INF (1) for thwarted predictions, and with *vouloir*<sub>past-perfective</sub>+ INF (3) for thwarted intentions. Avertive demodality cannot be denied, negation only yields *de dicto* readings (2).

2. Abilitative demodality, constructionalized with *pouvoir/savoir*<sub>past-perfective</sub>+ INF, either positive (4) (the past possible ability ascribed to the subject-agent has been validated) or negative (5) (the subject-agent has failed to validate it). In both cases though, the ability/inability is not ‘live’ at ulterior times (both successes and failures are restricted to particular – and adverse – past circumstances).

3. Deontic demodality, conveyed by *devoir*<sub>past-perfective</sub>+INF (6), whereby some (external or internal) obligation has been fulfilled by the agent/subject. It is obligatorily positive (negation only yields *de dicto* readings).

4. Circumstancial demodality, constructionalized with *croire*<sub>past-perfective</sub> + INF (7); (sentient) subject came to mistakenly entertain a (circumstancial and uncertain) past belief, which has proven to be wrong at some ulterior time. This subcategory borders on post-evidentiality as epistemic modality and evidentiality are closely interrelated.

(1) Sous l’effet du vent, la porte a failli s’ouvrir.
(2) Je n’ai pas failli partir. [= it is not true that I nearly left] (*L’Equipe*, 19/10/2017)
(3) J’ai voulu ouvrir la porte (et la poignée m’est restée dans la main).
(4) J’ai pu/j’ai su les aider/
(5) Je n’ai pas pu / su les aider.
(6) J’ai du partir.
(7) J’ai cru me noyer/voir double.

Abilitative and deontic demodality are already as *actuality entailments* (Bhatt 1999; Hacquard 2006; Hacquard 2009), but they have received neither extended language-internal descriptions, nor constructionalization/grammaticalization-minded analyses, accounting for their likely origin and development – nor have the two other kinds of demodal meanings been treated on a par with them.

Yet, the existence of demodality as a coherent categorical cluster becomes obvious in the light of recurrent typological patterns. Thus, in many Australian indigenous languages, modal and demodal meanings are often conveyed by structures with composite TAM marking
– where a unique modal expression (inflectional, or lexico-constructional) appears to have developed parallel modal and demodal meanings, (8)-(10). Furthermore, when combined with negation, these forms convey negative past events (11). I will show how all these facts suggest that demodality is indeed a significant categorical cluster, where past tense and modal markers have concurred to elaborate converging types of form/meaning pairings.

(8) Bija ngana iwarnbarngarri aja ngan-ngun=ni-yinya-nangka
THEN PROB brown.snake sit 1-IRR=be-PAST-DAT
‘I would have/nearly sat on a snake’. (Worrorra) (Clendon 2014:374)

(9) Maraka warra-wan-da dangka-a niwan-ji kurdala-th
IRR far-ORIG-NOM man-NOM 3sg-MLOC spear-ACT
‘One (would have) believed that a stranger speared him [but it was a close relative].’
(Kayardild) (Evans 1995:379)

(10) Yimarnek kam-ra-yinj la Ngarridj bi-rrahme-ng,
CTRFAC 3hitherp-go-IRR CONJ [subsection] 3/3hP-block-PP
‘She nearly came but the Ngarrrij prevented her from coming’ (Bininj-Gun Wok) (Evans 2003:611)

(11) mere ngurri-dha Ngandimeli-yu
NEG 1sgS.GO(6).PstIrr-Plmp Ngandimeli-dm
‘I didn’t go to Ngandimeli (yesterday).’ (Murrinh-patha) (Nordlinger & Caudal 2012:83)

References