

Theoretical approaches to inter- and cross-linguistic variation in futurity

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Presentation of the workshop

The notional category future raises a variety of difficult issues. The first of these is whether there is such a thing as 'the' future across languages, as is often assumed. Recent years have seen the emergence of cross-linguistic theoretical work on futures and future-oriented forms in a number of languages (Copley 2002/2009, Giannakidou and Mari, 2012a,b e.g.), indicating that future and future-oriented forms can differ inter- and cross-linguistically in quite dramatic ways. We propose this workshop as a way to encourage cross-linguistic work on future orientation that will shed light on significant theoretical questions.

One such question is whether futurity is contributed by modal or temporal operators. Both interpretations have been proposed across languages.

One argument for the modality of futurity is the fact that higher aspectual operators have been shown in languages such as English, Indonesian, and Turkish (Copley 2002/2009) to play a role in the interpretation of future and future-oriented forms; they would not be expected to do so on a strictly temporal analysis. On the assumption that futurity is indeed contributed by modal operators, theoreticians disagree as to whether it involves quantification over metaphysical (e.g. Condoravdi, 2002; Copley 2002/2009; Kaufman, 2005; Werner, 2006) or epistemic alternatives (Giannakidou and Mari, 2012a,b), or indeed whether the answer to this question could be different for different forms in different languages. Mixed solutions have also been proposed, in which the notion of settledness plays a role (Bonomi and Del Prete, 2008). Finally, French provides the difficult puzzle of determining whether, in this language, futures are non-veridical or non-veridical, with a verification component (see among many others Dendale, 2001 de Saussures and Morency, for the most recent account, Mari, 2013). The relationship between evidentiality and futurity is also relevant to modal analyses of futures. It has been proposed that futures are not an evidential (Dendale, 2001) while the epistemic modal has an evidential component; *a contrario* it has also been proposed that futures have an evidential presupposition (Giannakidou and Mari, 2012a,b) or assertion (Squartini 2004, 2012).

Yet there is disagreement as to whether futurity is (or is always) modal. More recent single branch proposals for futures—one, temporal with a present epistemic operator (Kissine, 2008) and another, situation-based with a metaphysical development into the future (Copley & Harley, to appear)—have found ways to account for both the modal-like and single-branch properties of future reference. It has similarly been argued that Dutch futures only contribute epistemic perspective and not even modality per se (Broekhyus and Verkuyl, 2013).

On top of these issues the contributions at the workshop will consider in a broader sense ‘future orientation’ (e.g. Laca, 2008; Matthewson, 2013 a.m.o.). Forward-shifting of the time of the eventuality is not a peculiarity of the future. Modals more broadly can have a future orientation on their root reading (most notably, deontic, abilitative and teleological). The explanation of this phenomenon most often appeals to lexical aspect and the eventive /stative distinction. It has in fact been observed that eventives forward-shift while statives do not (see e.g. Bertinetto, 1979, Copley, 2002/2009, 2009, Condoravdi, 2003, Copley, 2009). Moreover, cross-linguistically, future orientation may occur in the absence of any obvious marking, with or without apparent presuppositions of plannability of the eventuality, depending on the language (Copley, 2008). The analysis of the precise mechanisms at play are still under investigation.

The workshop gathering researchers working on different languages, who discuss these questions from a theoretical perspective, and/or present data from familiar and unfamiliar languages which theories of future reference need to take into account.

Program

16 June 2014, Aula Mancini

- 11:30-12:30 *Future reference: Exploring the hypothesis space*
Bridget Copley (SFL-CNRS/Paris 8)
- 12:00-12:30 *Future and information (Italian and French in contrast)*
Alda Mari, Institut Jean Nicod
- 12:30-13:15 *Future conjectures***
Brenda Laca, Université Paris 8 (invited speaker)
- 13:15-14:30 Lunch
- 14:30-15:00 *The spectrum of future*
Eleni Staraki (University of Chicago)
- 15:00-15:30 *Weak and strong epistemic meanings of the future tense(s) in French and Italian*
Louis De Saussure (Université de Neuchâtel) & Laura Baranzini (Università di Basilea)
- 15:30-16:00 *Interface of the Akan future tense marker ‘Be-’ and modality*
Joana Portia Sakyi (Universiteit Antwerp)

Please note that **Anastasia Giannakidou (University of Chicago)** is also participating as an invited speaker in this workshop, but due to unavoidable travel constraints her talk ***Future and evaluation*** (with Alda Mari) will take place the next day at 9:00 in session Q1 "The future".

About the organizers

Bridget Copley is a chargée de recherches at the laboratory 'Structures Formelles du Langage' jointly affiliated with the CNRS and the Université Paris 8. Her research interests include the semantics and syntax of futurity, aspect, modality, and causation, as well as cognitive implications thereof. Copley received her Ph.D. in Linguistics and Philosophy in 2002 from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and spent two years as a post-doctoral fellow at the University of Southern California. She is the author of *The Semantics of the Future*.

Alda Mari has been a CNRS chargée de recherches since 2001, appointed at Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Télécommunications. After one year as visiting scholar at CUNY, she was appointed to the Institut Jean Nicod in 2006. She works on reciprocals, genericity (she is the co-editor of *Genericity*, Oxford University Press) and plurality. Her current interest is in modality and tense. She is the author of two books, one on polysemy and one on modality and time, forthcoming at Peter Lang Ag. She has been in charge of a four-year ANR project on generics, and has organized 14 venues for discussion, among which CSSP (since 2007), the Genericity Conferences and a variety of workshops and thematic conferences.

Selected References

(for space limitations all cited references do not appear here below).

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