

Mario Squartini
Università di Torino
mario.squartini@unito.it

Tense, Aspect, Modality, Evidentiality ... What else in Romance?

Tense and Aspect are now well established functional categories of the Romance verb system, either as independent notions or as strictly intertwined within a neo-Reichenbachian tense-aspect macrocategory. On the contrary, the role of modality is still much more debated, especially with respect to its multifarious relations to tense and evidentiality. In reviewing these connections, I will show how inter-Romance comparisons might contribute to disentangle the independent role of evidentiality by separating it not only from non-factuality (strictly intended as the creation of possible worlds), but also from the expression of the speaker's epistemic commitment. The role of evidentiality is also confirmed by some extensions of Romance Futures and Conditionals as mirative markers, which I will investigate in order to show to what extent they are connected to the conjectural, reportive and concessive uses of these forms, thus eventually contributing to shedding retrospective light on their evidential / epistemic functions. In particular, some differences in the mirative uses of the French Futures and Conditionals vs. their Italian and Spanish counterparts will be reinterpreted by connecting them to the special behaviour of the French Conditional as a conjectural marker in direct questions and the non-occurrence of the French Future in concessive contexts. In more general terms, these (pragmatic?) extensions open the discussion on the possibility of 'domesticating' within the realm of Romance linguistics not only evidentiality but also mirativity as a coding strategy of information status (the speaker's modalized reaction to extremely new information).