
Swabian, German, Chinese and German Sign Language: Multi-source convergence on a cartographic array of modal flavors

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Donnerstag
09.03.2017
09:00 – 09:30
B4 1, 0.22

The aim of this talk is to provide novel cross-linguistic evidence for an essentially cartographic theory (Cinque 1999) of modal meanings in several unrelated languages: Middle Swabian, Standard German; Chinese and German Sign Language. We will argue for a modal flavor that projects between deontic and circumstantial modality. We dub this flavor ‘design modality’ and leave it open as to whether it fully coincides with, or covers only a subdomain of, Rubinstein’s (2012) goal-oriented modality. We argue that the different shades of modality conventionalize in the (morpho-)syntax as a function of their respective ordering sources/modal anchors (Kratzer 1991, Hacquard 2006). We consider the (presumably incomplete) shades of modality and their characterizations in (1). The order provided is one that, we assume, holds in the syntax as well:¹

- (1)
- a. epistemic ‘What can or must hold in view of what the speaker knows?’
 - b. [deictic tense]
 - c. bouletic/volitional ‘W.c.o.m.h.i.v.o.w. the subject wants?’
 - d. deontic ‘Wcomhivow the asymmetric power relations are like?’
 - e. design ‘Wcomhivow the relevant participant was designed for?’
 - f. circumstantial ‘Wcomhivo causality affecting the relevant participant?’
 - g. root ‘Wcomhivo the inherent properties of the modal anchor?’

We will provide evidence to the effect that moving down the hierarchy in (1) makes a (morpho-)syntactic difference for each step in at least one of the languages surveyed.

References: • Cinque, G. (1999): *Adverbs and functional heads. A cross-linguistic perspective*. New York: Oxford University Press. • Hacquard, V. (2006): *Aspects of modality* (Doctoral dissertation, Massachusetts Institute of Technology). • Kratzer, A. (1991): Modality. In: von Stechow & Wunderlich, D. (eds.): *Semantics: An International Handbook of Contemporary Research*. Berlin: de Gruyter. 639-650. • Rubinstein, A. (2012): *Roots of modality* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Massachusetts Amherst).

¹ W.c.o.m.h.i.v.o.w. = ‘What can or must hold in view of what’