BE and epistemic construals in Romanian

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1. Introduction. Well-studied ambiguities of modal verbs have been recently shown to rely on different scope relations between Asp and Mood. Such is the root/epistemic reading of modals in the perfect cross-linguistically, and more specifically, effects of perfective aspect on the veridicality of the event. Two main types of explanations have been proposed, in terms of a) Movement of Asp above Mood (Haquard 2006); b) Merge of Mood at different levels in the structure broadly corresponding to the division of the sentence in phases (Avram 1999, Butler 2004, Zagona 2008). In this presentation, arguments will be offered on the basis of Romanian data in favor of multiple layers of Modality in the structure of the sentence and its periphery, supporting a type b) analysis. I will address the behavior of modals in 'implicative sentences' as well as the structure of epistemic periphrases in Romanian. Differences between Romanian and other Romance languages (i.e., French and Spanish) concerning modals in the perfect will be shown to confirm the hypothesis that Modality can be introduced at different levels, namely under CP, T/Asp and vP. Romanian periphrases expressing epistemic modality, labeled 'presumptive' in Romanian grammars, also call for an analysis involving introduction of Modality at different levels of the sentence.

I will eventually investigate the connection between the two means of expressing epistemic modality in Romanian (namely, with a modal verb and with a modal periphrasis), and show that they both rely on raising structures. The insertion of BE, overt in Romanian epistemic periphrases, and, I will argue, covert in epistemic constructions with modal verbs, will be shown to contribute precisely the raising structure essential for epistemic construals.

2. Romanian Modals: bi-clausal epistemic constructions. Asp and Mood do not seem to interact in the same way across languages. Only root readings are available for perfect can/may in Romanian (see (1)), as opposed to e.g. French, where 'modals in the perfect' are ambiguous (see (2) for French, (3) for English and (4) Spanish (cf. Bhatt 1999, Haquard 2006), Demirdache & Uribe-Extebarria 2007, Laca 2008).

(1) a. Petre a putut să deschidă ușa — Romanian
Peter has could to open door-the
→ *It is possible that P opened the door
→ P managed to open the door

(2) a. Pierre a pu ouvrir la porte — French
→It is possible that Pierre opened the door (OK he did'nt)
→Pierre managed to open the door (*he didn't)

(3) Peter could have opened the door — English

(4) a. Pedro pudo abrir la puerta. — Spanish
b. Pedro ha debido abrir la puerta

The determining factor for the actuality entailment was taken by Haquard (2006) to be the Movement of Aspect above the modal. Aspect comes with its own world variable, which needs to be bound by the closest binder possible. When below a modal, the modal would bind Aspect's world argument; when above the modal, Aspect's world argument would be bound by the matrix binder, yielding an actual event. Laca 2008, however, brings evidence that Spanish modals do not fall under this type of analysis. Moreover, since epistemic readings seem to be blocked by PERF in Romanian, one could suppose, in a Haquard-type of analysis, that Asp could not take a position above Mood in this language. But it is difficult to see what precisely could allows this movement in some languages but not in others (French vs. Romanian), and this cast doubts with respect to the scope-reversal analyzes of implicative sentences. The analysis proposed instead goes in the lines of Butler 2004, Zagona 2008, integrating suggestions from Avram 1999, within a phase-based analysis of modal

constructions. In order to obtain a high, epistemic reading, modality has to be introduced by an operator taking scope over the whole sentence: at the edge of CP.

I propose that this can be realized in Romanian in two ways: a bi-clausal structure with a lexical modal verb in an impersonal structure and the periphrastic presumptive. I first demonstrate that constructions with *a putea* 'can' are typically bi-clausal constructions; moreover, only in the impersonal use epistemic readings appear, and the derived epistemic structures with full subjects involve raising. The modal verb has its own temporal domain, as well as Mood inflection. A *realis* Mood inflection and agreement marks are incompatible with epistemic readings, so that epistemic readings are blocked when *a putea* bears Perfect inflection. I propose that a multiple-layered modality can also be assumed for French. Modals may be introduced above T/Asp (i.e. the modal is not in the scope of Tense) or above vP, deriving the observed readings, in the lines of Picallo 1990 for Catalan. French has mono-clausal modals, and lacks epistemic periphrases; and thus merging of the Modal at different levels derives the corresponding interpretations.

3. Romanian 'Presumptive': instantiating BE in epistemic construals. The second mean of expressing epistemic modality in Romanian are periphrastic constructions labelled 'presumptive', interpreted as epistemic-evidentials:

(5) a. o fi citind cartea
will be reading book-the
"he might be reading the book"

b. o fi citit cartea
will be read book-the
"he might have read the book"

c. – Văd flori. (I see flowers)
– O fi/ o fi fost/ o fi trecut mama
will be/ will be been / will be come mother "It'll be / have been my mother"

These are morphologically close to other non-actual moods, namely future, conditional, and subjunctive paradigms, all of them using the auxiliary *A FI* 'be' as a perfect auxiliary, but have two peculiarities: a) they are built with a non-finite form involving a PROG/PERF alternation, while Romanian, unlike English or Spanish, does not independently have a specific form for PROG; b) they use the modal auxiliary *o*, which following Avram 1999 I analyze as a short form for *vrea* 'will'. I depart from traditional views stating that *A FI* is a perfect auxiliary, and propose instead that, introduced above AspP, it is a vehicle for modality. Actually, it is inflected for Tense and Mood, and combines with AspP or a Small Clause including an AspP (PROG/PERF), which allows deriving the difference between one of the paradigms expressing future and the presumptive. It actually puts a propositional content in an existential construction; then modality is introduced by Mood (future inflection). This analysis of *A FI* is supported by other occurrences where it independently functions like a propositional-attitude verb, e.g. in (6a-b). However, BE does not by itself introduce modality, but allows it to be predicated about a propositional content, also triggering the raising construction.

(6) a. așa a fost să fie
like-this has been to be

b. ce-o fi să fie
what will be to be

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