

TO WHAT EXTENT IS EVIDENTIALITY ENCODED IN THE SPANISH TENSES?
EVIDENCE FROM L1/L2 SPANISH AND FRENCH

This talk will focus on one way in which the Spanish imperfect (IMP) differs from the future tense (FUT), in relation to evidential interpretations, and will link the distinction to empirical data. The IMP encodes temporal-aspectual meaning; evidential readings are derived from this tense by way of a last-resort, pragmatic interpretive procedure arising only in linguistically restricted environments. Specifically, discourse conditions involving telicity, imperfectivity, and the absence of an accessible past temporal frame trigger the process (author, 2016). In contrast, we consider the Spanish FUT to have evolved into denoting inferential evidentiality (Escandell-Vidal 2010, 2014), obtaining this reading even in seemingly neutral contexts such as (1). To express chronology, the periphrastic future (P-FUT) is becoming the default tense (2) (Squartini 2001; Cartagena 2017). This implies that the evidential interpretation of Spanish FUT is derived directly from linguistic processing.

In other Romance varieties, such as French, evidential IMP may be found, but with more highly restricted discourse conditions; and the evolution of FUT into an evidential has not taken place (Barceló, 2007; Abouda and Skrovec 2006, 2015). The French morphological future (M-FUT) can have epistemic readings, but they are derived by means of pragmatic enrichment processes (Saussure, 2013): conjectural readings similar to (3), are possible, but concessive constructions in M-FUT, equivalent to (4), are not acceptable.

The talk will present two sets of data related to how these distinct means for expressing evidentiality (IMP and FUT) are interpreted by L1 and L2 Spanish-speakers. In relation to L2 acquisition, data on interpretation of the Spanish IMP and M-FUT by L1 French speakers (two series of multiple choice interpretation tasks performed by L2 Spanish learners at two different proficiency levels, from upper-intermediate to advanced), and by L1 European Spanish-speaking controls. Additionally, we examine the results of a follow up, oral production task performed only by L1 Spanish speakers, aiming at providing evidence of spontaneous spoken uses of future tenses.

If evidentiality is at the core of the Spanish M-FUT, interface-related properties are not systematically involved in the evidential interpretation of the tense by L1 speakers. Thus, based on the predictions of the Feature re-assembly hypothesis (Lardiere 2008, 2009), a significant degree of inconsistency is expected in the L2 data (these speakers are in the process of reconfiguring the L1 M-FUT features), while variability should be much less prevalent in L1 Spanish interpretations.

Nevertheless, in the interpretation tasks (based on written input), significant differences were only found in hypothetical and concessive environments: the L1 Spanish speakers almost systematically chose M-FUT; the L1 French speakers were able to distinguish between different interpretations of FUT (in L1 and L2 Spanish), but often choose lexico-syntactic devices to express hypothetical and concessive content in L2. For the items expressing future time reference L1 Spanish and L2 French speakers, interpretation results were similar, as both groups showed high degrees of variability between M-FUT and P-FUT.

Thus, more research was needed to empirically ascertain the claims of the evidential future hypothesis (Escandell 2010, 2014). To this end, an oral production task was designed, consisting of a semi-structured interview, priming the description of future plans and events, as well as hypotheses on causes and developments of forthcoming and past events; and applied to 20 L1 speakers of European Spanish. If the answers

spontaneously given by speakers displayed a significant preference of P-FUT in the former case, and of M-FUT in the latter, this would clearly favour the evidential future hypothesis. Provisional results show scarce use of FUT as means for expressing future temporality, while the tense is spontaneously used to express hypothetical content. This suggests confirmation of the ‘de-temporalization’ of this verb tense.

EXAMPLES

- (1) Se lo traerá.
S/he will bring (M-FUT) it to him/her.
- (2) Creo que no va a venir.
I think s/he is not going to come. (P-FUT).
- (3) María no ha venido. Estará enferma...
María hasn't come. She must be ill (M-FUT)
- (4) A: Jorge es muy listo.
B: Será muy listo, pero no lo parece.
A: *Jorge is very clever.*
B: *He may be (M-FUT) very clever, but he doesn't seem like it.*

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