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Abstract

Two competing views (an epistemic interpretation vs. an evidential one) are contrasted in analyzing the semantic and pragmatic properties of the Italian Future in its concessive use. By comparing the Future with another concessive marker (the modal *potere* ‒may̸) the analysis demonstrates the semantic restriction of the Future to factual contexts, which proves at odds with the downgrading of factual commitment required by the traditional epistemic interpretation. A pragmatic analysis centred on the interactional properties of concessivity further supports an evidential interpretation, showing that, as a discourse strategy, the concessive use of the Future signals the evidential role of the speaker, who becomes a secondary source by acknowledging information that is intersubjectively shared with other participants in the interactional exchange. Other modal occurrences of the Italian Future fulfilling various discourse functions are also analyzed as marked interactional strategies used by the speaker to draw attention to states of affairs that are intersubjectively shared in the pragmatic context.

Keywords: evidentiality, epistemic modality, future, concessive, intersubjectivity

1.   *Epistemicity, evidentiality and conjectural assumptions*

The recent õburgeoning interest in the concept of evidentialityö (Narrog 2009:113) has caused much debate on the relationship between evidentiality and modality, with a special concern on õsetting the boundariesö (de Haan 1999). Most discussion concentrated on distinguishing between evidentiality and epistemicity, two categories in which some degree of õfluidityö (Mithun 1986:90) has often been recognized. The controversies concerning the relationship with respect to evidentiality ended up blurring the traditional borders of epistemicity and surfaced descriptive inconsistencies such as those pointed out by van der Auwera and Ammann (2005:307) in describing grammatical markers that, albeit belonging to õevidential-prominent systemsö, do have õfunctions closely corresponding to epistemic modalityö, which might even suggest that some of the difficulties ultimately derive from a clash among different terminological traditions (Cornillie 2009). However, the ‒evidential vogueø (Aikhenvald 2003a:19) also contributed to pin down those epistemic functions in which

epistemicity and evidentiality overlap (most prominently Palmerøs 1986, 2001 "epistemic judgementsø), thus highlighting novel boundaries between evidential-epistemic functions (Kronning 2003, Pietrandrea 2005) and pure epistemicity variously interacting in "modalizedø vs. "non-modalizedø evidential systems (Plungian 2001, 2010). Along these lines some Romance and Germanic inflectional verb forms and modals were reappraised (Dendale 1994; Mortelmans 2000; de Haan 2001, Diewald and Smirnova 2010a) trying to disentangle epistemic and evidential functions.

Assumptions, intended as the linguistic expression of speakersø own beliefs and conjectures, represent a semantic area that has revealed particular complexity as far as the distinction between evidentiality and epistemic modality is concerned. Being connected to the speakerøs judgements, this kind of reasoning is traditionally considered as belonging to epistemic modality, as is for instance the case with the English conjectural modals *may* and *will* ("She *may* be at home now / Sheøll be at home nowø). Nonetheless, as also explicitly recognized by Palmer (2003:8), assumptions are in fact listed among evidential categories in typological surveys derived from extensive research on genetically unrelated languages:

> Semantic parameters involved in languages with grammatical evidentials: VISUAL, SENSORY, INFERENCE, ASSUMPTION, REPORTED, QUOTATIVE (Aikhenvald 2004, 2007:211)

Thus, assumptions based on the speakerøs world knowledge (õwe assume this on the basis of what we already knowö) are expressed in Tariana (Aikhenvald 2003b, 2004:2-3) by a special morpheme paradigmatically belonging to the same grammatical system to which typical evidential notions such as "visualø, "sensoryø, "reportedø also pertain. As apparent in Aikhenvaldøs (2004) glosses and translations, what is categorized as an "assumptionø corresponds to speaker-internal õreasoning, general knowledge and, ultimately, conjectureö (Aikhenvaldøs 2004:3), which calls for a more accurate reconsideration of the status of this kind of reasoning with respect to the boundary between epistemicity and evidentiality.

If one applies these typological generalizations to Romance languages, confirmations can be found that conjectures are closely linked to the other evidential notions listed in Aikhenvald (2007:11), especially in the reportive area. The behaviour of the Portuguese Future is particularly indicative of the functional relationship between conjectures and reports, for this form is not only used as a conjectural marker, as is generally the case in Romance, but it also occurs as a reportive marker (Squartini 2001, 2004). Similarly, reports coexist with conjectures in the French Conditional, which, unlike other Romance Conditionals, not only expresses reports but is also

admitted in questions expressing conjectures and inferences (Squartini 2001, 2004, Rocci 2007). In this respect, one can also mention the behaviour of the Catalan inferential modal *deure* ('must' + infinitive), which, unlike its Romance cognates, can also occur in conjectural questions as in *Què deu ser?* ('What is (lit. 'must be') it?') thus neutralizing the distinction between conjectures and inferences (Squartini 2010). Provided that inferences not only belong to Aikhevald's list, but are also recognized among evidential notions even in descriptions of languages of Europe (Dendale 1994), the polyfunctionality of the Catalan modal 'must' covering both conjectures and inferences is another element urging for a reconsideration of the correct interpretation of conjectures between epistemicity and evidentiality.

Apart from confirming that some evidential functions are regularly expressed by Romance verb forms, these data generally suggest that no sharp distinction can be drawn between the supposed 'epistemic' nature of conjectures and the evidential basis of reports or inferences. In this perspective, any semantic map of modality along the lines explored in van der Auwera and Plungian (1998) should be organized in a format that can accommodate these results either by recognizing a special area in which epistemicity and evidentiality overlap (a solution explicitly excluded by Boye's 2010 discussion) or by strengthening the link between conjectural epistemicity and assumptive evidentiality, as also implemented by Anderson's (1986:284) semantic map of evidentiality.

Nonetheless, it must also be admitted that conjectures represent a peculiar form of indirect evidential knowledge in which the speaker, being the only source, has no external evidence, apart from world's knowledge. Due to the lack of external evidence, which is instead the objective basis of proper inferential reasoning (Squartini 2008), conjectures are necessarily much more subjective and therefore more compatible with a reduction of the speaker's commitment. Note that reference to the speaker's commitment is traditionally a key element in most definitions of epistemicity, as for instance in Bybee et al. (1994:179), who state that epistemic modality "indicates the extent to which the speaker is committed to the truth of the proposition". Thus, the degree of subjectivity intrinsically connected to conjectures naturally blurs the distinction between epistemicity and evidentiality, making theoretical arguments solely based on a conjectural usage inevitably complex and difficult to assess.

The present study will focus on the Romance Future, which is a well described representative of this complex cluster of functional properties connected to conjecturality. Apart from the neutralization of conjectures and reports mentioned above with respect to the Portuguese Future, in which the interplay of epistemicity and evidentiality is particularly apparent, what follows aims to demonstrate that the role of evidentiality should also be more thoroughly considered

as far as conjectural uses of Futures in other Romance languages are concerned. For the most part, attention will be paid to Italian data, even though some comparative elements with other Romance languages will additionally be suggested throughout the text. In order to provide the reader with a descriptive basis, the conjectural meaning of the Italian Future will be briefly sketched out in section 1.1, including the pros and cons of an evidential interpretation as opposed to the traditional epistemic definition. This will be intended as a preparatory background to the bulk of the discussion, which will be mostly devoted to a special semantic extension of the Future, its concessive use. By leaving aside the conjectural function, in which the interaction of epistemicity and evidentiality is especially difficult to disentangle, it will be argued that, unlike its conjectural counterpart, the concessive usage provides a clearer understanding of the role of evidentiality in the Romance Future. Apart from retrospectively shedding light on the conjectural use, concessivity more aptly demonstrates the interaction of semantic properties and discourse practices. In this respect, it will be shown that a generalized evidential interpretation not only explains the semantic restrictions of the Future as a concessive marker but also its interactional properties, in which the speakerøs ꞌconceding moveø can be ꞌevidentiallyø interpreted as confirmation of information provided by an external source. Other modal occurrences of the Italian Future fulfilling various discourse functions will also be analyzed as marked interactional strategies used by the speaker to draw attention to states of affairs that are intersubjectively shared in the pragmatic context.

1.1. *Conjectural Futures*

The Italian version of the well known example of the postman represents the typical modal usage in which the inflectional Future expresses a conjectural meaning:

(1)   [Suonano alla porta] *Sarà* il postino
        ꞌ[The bell rings] It will be [be:FUT[1]] the postmanø

Due to the intrinsic complexity of conjectures discussed above, this usage has been variedly interpreted, especially among those interested in reshaping the mutual relationship between epistemicity and evidentiality. Whereas Dendale (2001), Dendale and van Bogaert (2007:79-83) and Pietrandrea (2005) consider the Italian Future in (1) as well as its corresponding form in French as consistently and solely epistemic, Radanova-Kuꞌeva (1991-1992), Rocci (2000:249), Squartini (2001) and Giacalone and Topadze (2007:25-29) subscribe to an evidential interpretation.

These discrepancies are basically due to the interpretation of the notion of evidential source: those who plead for an evidential interpretation consider the feature [SELF] (Frawley 1992:413) as a

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[1] Abbreviations used: COND = Conditional, FUT = Future, PF = Perfect, SUBJ = Subjunctive.

possible source (by using the Future the speaker indicates herself / himself as the source of the utterance). In this perspective greater attention is paid to the paradigmatic opposition that in Italian can be observed between the Future (3) and the Conditional (2), where the latter is used as a reportive marker while the Future underlines the speaker's own assumptions (see Radanova-Kuševa 1991-1992:346-347):

(2)   Secondo Marco, Andrea *sarebbe* già *arrivato*
       'According to M., A. has already arrived [arrive:COND.PF]'
(3)   Secondo me, Andrea *sarà* già arrivato
       'In my opinion, A. has already arrived [arrive:FUT.PF]'

This functional distinction can be straightforwardly interpreted as an evidential opposition between an external source marked by the Conditional and an internal source in which the speaker's own reasoning provides evidence for the information contained in the utterance.

As opponents to an evidential interpretation of the Future, those who prefer to stick to the traditional epistemic view of the Romance Future insist rather on the contrast between the Future and non-modal forms (forms unmarked for modality). Thus, in opposing a Future Perfect which has a conjectural meaning (5) to a modally unmarked Present Perfect (4) it can be observed that the former seems to convey a reduced degree of certainty:

(4)   Andrea *è* già *arrivato*
       'A. has already arrived [arrive:PF]'
(5)   Andrea *sarà* già arrivato
       'A. has already arrived [arrive:FUT.PF]'

Nonetheless, the alleged downgrading of the epistemic commitment cannot be easily conciliated with the empirical observation that the Future also collocates with an adverb expressing strong commitment such as *sicuramente* 'certainly, definitely', which shows that, when using a Future, a speaker may also convey 'subjectively' strong commitment (Bertinetto 1991:118-119, Squartini 2008:926). In what follows these arguments will not be pursued further, leaving aside conjectural uses and concentrating the discussion on the concessive usage of the Italian Future. In a sense, focussing attention to this secondary function is intended as a strategy to break the deadlock created by the confrontation between the evidential as opposed to the epistemic interpretation of conjectural forms.

1.2.   *Concessive Futures*

In dealing with verb forms that convey a concessive meaning Bybee et al. (1994:227) mention the Romance Future, which is represented in their sample by the following Spanish example (originally from Gili Gaya 1951[3]:144):

(6)   ó Fulano es un sabio
        ó Lo *será*; sin embargo, se ha equivocado algunas veces
        ┤Fulano is a wise man
        ┤He may be [be:FUT]; nevertheless, he has been mistaken at timesø

Similarly to Spanish, the Italian Future has a concessive meaning (Bertinetto 1991:116, Berretta 1997), as is shown by the Italian translation of the Spanish example in (6):

(7)   ó Fulano è saggio
        ó Lo *sará*; tuttavia, qualche volta si è sbagliato
        ┤Fulano is a wise man
        ┤He may be [be:FUT]; nevertheless, he has been mistaken at timesø

The extension from conjecturality to concessivity, which is demonstrated by the Italian as well as by the Spanish Future, cannot be generalized as a common Romance feature, a significant exception being the French Future, which can occur in a conjectural context such as (1) but has no concessive use (Rocci 2000). This distribution, in which the occurrence of the concessive meaning implies the conjectural use (Italian and Spanish have both) while the opposite implication does not hold (French Futures can be conjectural but not concessive), can be considered as supportive evidence for the diachronically derived nature of the concessive uses, as tacitly assumed in most analyses and explicitly recognized by Bybee et al. (1994:226-227), who propose a general semantic path leading from conjectural to concessive markers.

In the spirit of the present article, this diachronic evolution calls for a semantic explanation that should justify how a conjectural marker can eventually move into concessivity, which interestingly forces us to reappraise the semantic interpretation of conjecturality. As discussed above, the conjectural meaning expressed by the Romance Future has been inconsistently interpreted as epistemic as well as evidential. In this respect, the evolution towards concessivity can be seized as an opportunity to contrastively evaluate these two interpretations contributing to a comprehensive understanding of the semantic and pragmatic properties involved in the modal uses of Futures.

2.   *Semantic properties of concessivity*

Semantically, concessivity is particularly interesting as far as the interplay between factuality and non-factuality is concerned. In this respect, it must be emphasized that concessivity is in itself

independent from factuality, non-factual concessives also being admitted, as is clearly the case of English concessive conditionals (*even if*). However, in describing non-conditional concessive relations ('although p, q'), König (1988:146-147) acknowledges a basic semantic requirement: "the two clauses that enter into a concessive relation have a *factual* character", which means that they refer to what the speaker considers as an actual state of affairs (a 'fact' in the actual world). Futures occurring in a concessive premise p are also supposed to fulfil this requirement: in (6-7) the speaker commits himself / herself to the truth of p ('F. is a wise man') as well as to the truth of q ('he has been mistaken at times'). By means of the concessive construction the speaker emphasizes that between p and q, albeit both true, there is 'incompatibility' (König 1988:146) based on a generalized 'topos' (Verhagen 2000:366). In a situation such as (6-7) the topos can be formulated as follows: 'If you are wise, you usually don't make mistakes'. Apart from the topos, which, being based on a common assumption, can in itself be interpreted as a form of epistemic reasoning (Verhagen 2005), the required factuality of p patently runs counter to the traditional interpretation of the Future as an epistemic form downgrading the degree of certainty.

Actually, Bybee et al. (1994:227), not unlike Sweetser (1990:70), were aware of the incompatibility between the factual nature of concessive premises and the concessive usage of forms traditionally defined as non-factual, similar concerns also being expressed by König (1988:154) with respect to Subjunctives, whose occurrence in a concessive clause "is totally unmotivated for this 'factual' construction". As to Subjunctives, Bybee et al. (1994:226) correctly observe that their occurrence in concessive clauses demonstrates that the traditional view, in which Subjunctives are treated as non-factual, should be revised, otherwise one cannot justify why Subjunctives occur in the factual environment required by concessive clauses.

With respect to Romance Subjunctives the occurrence in concessive clauses can be independently justified considering that a factual interpretation also emerges in 'thematic' Subjunctives, i.e. those occurring in topicalized clauses that refer to information which is most typically already given in the textual background and therefore assumed as factual (Giorgi and Pianesi 1997:226-228).[2] A similar explanation is suggested by König (1988:158) with respect to the recurrent typological finding that conditional connectives are among the most frequent sources of concessive markers (cf. Latin *et-si* 'and/also if', Italian *anche se* 'even if/even though'), which

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[2] An Italian Subjunctive, not regularly admitted in a complement clause depending on the matrix verb *sapere* 'know' (i), is acceptable if the complement clause, being left dislocated (ii), becomes a topicalized and therefore thematic element:

    (i)   *So che *sia partito*
              'I know that (he) has left [has:SUBJ left]'
    (ii)   Che *sia partito*, lo so
              'That (he) has left [has:SUBJ left], I know'

seems to suggest connections to the non-factual character of conditional clauses. Again, this would be inconsistent with the factuality of a concessive premise. König (1988:158) solves this inconsistency by suggesting that non-factuality is not an intrinsic property of conditional constructions in general, for the propositional content of ÷thematicø conditionals (8) can be contextually given (÷given conditionalsøin Sweetser 1990) and therefore inferred as factual:

(8)   (A) I was in France for a year
       (B) If you were in France for a year, your French must be excellent

A common heuristic element shared by König (1988:158) and Bybee et al. (1994) in discussing concessive Subjunctives and conditionals is that concessivity is intended as an opportunity to revise traditional and over-simplistic grammatical descriptions concerning the relationship between a given form (Subjunctives, conditional clauses) and non-factuality.

Trying to extend this argument to the concessive uses of Futures would imply that, parallel to a thematic or factual conditional clause, a ÷factualø conjectural use of the Future should also be admitted, which is obviously inconsistent with any properly ÷epistemicø definition. This should have led Bybee et al. (1994) to revise the traditional definition of the Romance Future. Bafflingly and inconsistently with their own analysis of Subjunctives, Bybee et al. (1994:227) do not extend this line of reasoning to concessivity. Rather, they elaborate an alternative explanation based on the assumption that the semantic evolution from conjecturality to concessivity can be explained as a case of scope-broadening, similarly to other grammaticalization processes (Tabor and Traugott 1998). Thus, in concessive statements the original epistemic meaning of the Future as a conjectural marker, broadening its scope, õapplies to the connection between the two propositions, rather than to the proposition which contains the epistemic markerö (Bybee et al. 1994:227). Actually, a problematic point in this explanation is that scope may broaden, but this should not involve a complete reversal of the original semantic properties. If an epistemic form is described as involving a reduced degree of commitment to the truth of the proposition, how can it become factual in concessive contexts? Scope-broadening only implies an extension of the semantic properties beyond the original syntactic level, which can be joined by a semantic generalization. Nonetheless, the original semantic properties should not be reversed or cancelled, this being a potential counterexample with respect to the process of semantic generalization.

Nonetheless, it might also be observed that, from a strictly logical perspective, concessivity is in fact characterized by intrinsic contradiction (Verhagen 2000:365-366), which ultimately derives from the contrast between the entailed factuality of both p and q and the unexpected non-actualization of the generally accepted topos. This inconsistency, which in a sense is the semantic

essence of concessivity, has been cognitively solved by postulating multiple mental spaces, thus admitting the possibility that the topos, albeit generally valid, is not actualized in the given situation (Verhagen 2000:365-368). From a linguistic perspective, the coexistence of different representational levels seems to be mirrored by the structural complexity and markedness of specialized concessive constructions across languages, which, apart from being non-ubiquitous, tend to develop relatively late in the history of those language where they occur (König 1988:151).

The variety of sources listed by König (1988) in his typological survey of concessive connectives also confirms the structural complexity of concessivity. On the one hand, given the semantic requirement on the factuality of both propositions, it is not surprising that among these connectives one finds elements õemphatically asserting the truth of one of a pair of clauseö (König 1988:154-155) such as ÷true, fact, well, indeedø (cf. English *true p but* í as in *True he is old, but not helpless*; German *zwar p aber* í, in which *zwar* derives from *es ist wahr* ÷it is trueø). But, as already mentioned above, one should not forget that, apart from factual concessives, also concessive conditionals (*Even if I try very hard, I wonøt manage*) exist, in which the requirement on factuality, if any, is restricted to the apodosis q and does not necessarily involve the protasis p (König 1986:231-234, König 1988:158, Haspelmath and König 1998). The sheer empirical finding that one and the same connective occurs as concessive as well as concessive conditional (Haspelmath and König 1998:589-592), as is the case of the Italian connective *anche se,* which not only means ÷even thoughø but also ÷even ifø,[3] suggests that the boundary between factuality and non-factuality is not strictly delimited and can be variously arranged across languages. In this respect, one might venture to suggest that the occurrence of Futures in concessive contexts should be regarded as another instance of the lack of formal distinctions between factuality and non-factuality, which would parallel the behaviour of concessive connectives such as Italian *anche se* ÷even though / even ifø). But, if this is the case, one would expect Futures to be compatible with non-factual concessive conditionals and not only with factual ones. This hypothesis will be tested in section 2.1, where a comparison will be proposed between the concessive use of the Future analyzed so far and the Italian modal *potere* ÷mayø + infinitive.

2.1 *Non-factuality, genericity and concessivity*

Like the English modal *may* (9-10), the Italian modal *potere* can occur both as a conjectural and a concessive marker, as is shown by the Italian translations (11-12) of the English examples in (9-10):

(9)   He *may be* at home now

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[3] The two readings of Italian *anche se* ÷even though / even ifø are only partially regulated by the morphosyntactic alternation Indicative vs. Subjunctive, see Mazzoleni (1991:787-789).

(10)   She *may jog*, but she sure looks unhealthy to me (Traugott and Dasher 2002:115)
(11)   *Può essere* a casa adesso
(12)   *Può* anche *fare jogging*, ma a me non sembra una persona in salute

A comparable distribution can be found with the Italian inflectional Future, which, as already demonstrated above, can be both conjectural (13) and concessive (14), and is another viable translation of the English modal *may* in (9) and (10), respectively:

(13)   Adesso *sarà* a casa
(14)   *Farà* anche *jogging*, ma a me non sembra una persona in salute

These data seem to suggest that the modal *potere* and the inflectional Future are virtually synonymous as far as their modal meanings are concerned, but a differential behaviour emerges by forcing a non-factual interpretation. In (15) a non-factual reading is triggered by the concomitant effect of a free-choice quantifier (*quanto gli pare* 'whatever he likes, as he likes') and a generic subject (*uno* 'one'):

(15)   Uno *può essere* alto quanto gli pare, ma lassù non ci arriva
        'One may be as tall as one likes, but one can't reach up that high'

Free-choice quantifiers (König 1986, 1988, Haspelmath and König 1998) open up a series of possible worlds none of which can satisfy the concessive relation between the premise p ('No matter how tall one is') and the consequence q ('One can't reach there'). Since these worlds are all equally possible, they cannot be all true at the same time, only one of them corresponding to the actual world. However, the generic context in (15) excludes any reference to the actual world, making this context intrinsically non-factual.

The interesting contrastive point is that the Future cannot substitute for the modal *potere* in similar generic contexts:

(16)   [??]Uno *sarà* alto quanto gli pare, ma lassù non ci arriva
        'One is [be:FUT] as tall as one likes, but can't reach there'

Significantly, the Future becomes grammatical if an appropriate deictic anchoring (Mazzoleni 1991:788) transforms a generic interpretation into a specific one:

(17)   *Sarà* alto quanto gli pare, ma lassù non ci arriva
        'He may be [be:FUT] as tall as he likes, but he can't reach there'

In (17) specificity is triggered by substituting the generic subject 'one' with a non-generic 3rd person null subject, which shows that in (16) it is the generic subject 'one' that crucially permits the

non-factual interpretation, thus making the Future ungrammatical. The free-choice quantifier per se is instead compatible with the Future, as confirmed by (17). In order to interpret these data it should be borne in mind that concessive clauses containing free-choice quantifiers, even though classified by König (1986, 1988) as a subtype of concessive conditionals, cannot be totally equated to those introduced by the English connective *even if*.[4] While the latter are indisputably non-factual, the indefinite set of possible worlds referred to by free-choice quantifiers also contains the actual world, thus admitting a factual interpretation. However, a factual interpretation can be excluded if the free-choice quantifier is combined with a generic subject, as in (15-16).

If one considers the whole set of data just presented, it can be concluded that the Future can only occur in those contexts which admit a factual interpretation, while *potere* + infinitive is also admitted in non-factual contexts referring to a generic set of unspecified possible worlds. This behaviour shows that, even though concessivity may extend beyond factuality, Italian Futures do show restrictions to factual situations. Obviously, this is not what one would expect under the assumption that concessivity derives from an epistemic Future, whose definition is traditionally based on a reduced commitment with respect to factuality.

The comparison between *potere* and the Future is particularly illuminating, for it demonstrates that bona fide epistemic markers such as *potere* + infinitive are compatible with non-factual concessive contexts. This means that the solution proposed by Bybee et al. (1994), based on scope-broadening of the original epistemic meaning, may fit well in explaining the distribution of the modal *potere*, and possibly of its English counterpart *may*, but cannot be extended as such to the Italian Future, due to different restrictions of these forms with respect to non-factual contexts.

In this perspective, the two Italian concessive forms might be representative of different semantic evolutionary paths, both eventually leading to concessivity, but following different routes. The modal *potere* can be lexically contrasted to the modal *dovere* ='must', whereby the former shows a reduced degree of certainty, similarly to the distinction between English *may* and *must* (van der Auwera and Plungian 1998:85-86). Thus, *potere* involves an epistemic dimension in a proper sense, which explains why, once it is used as a concessive marker, it can also occur in non-factual contexts (15). Note that acknowledging the non-factuality of *potere* in (15) is not tantamount to considering it as an epistemic marker expressing conjectural reasoning. As extensively argued in Sweetser (1990:69-73), once modals are used as concessive markers, they are 'conversationally reinterpreted' as speech-act modals, thus losing their original root and epistemic meanings.

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[4] Note that concessives containing free-choice quantifiers have also been treated separately from proper concessive conditionals (i.e. the *even if*-type) defining them 'unconditionals' (Mazzoleni 1990:49-50).

However, what *potere* retains of its epistemic origin is a closer connection to non-factuality, which makes it compatible with the generic context in (15). In this respect, *potere* actually represents a semantic evolution from root possibility and epistemicity to concessivity, as suggested by Bybee et al. (1994). On the contrary, the Future has no paradigmatically modal form with respect to which it involves a lower degree of commitment. As shown above, the Future (5) can be epistemically contrasted to non-modal forms such as the Present or the Present Perfect (4), while, among modal forms, the Future (3) can be opposed to the Conditional (2) in an evidential contrast in which the Future identifies the speaker's reasoning as the source of information, whereas the Conditional marks reports. Thus, in the modal system the Future turns out to be marked with respect to the source of the information, without necessarily implying an epistemic reduction of factuality. As already mentioned above, this is confirmed by the empirical observation that the Future collocates with adverbs of strong commitment (*sicuramente* 'certainly, definitely') and not only with weak epistemic adverbs such as *forse* 'perhaps' (Squartini 2008:926). The interesting point now is that the evidential nature of the Future, independently shown by paradigmatic oppositions with respect to the Conditional and syntagmatic collocations with modal adverbs, is also mirrored in its evolution towards concessivity, which does not include non-factual contexts. Cases such as (15) are too tightly rooted into the downgrading of the speaker's commitment connected to epistemicity and are therefore only compatible with a proper 'epistemic conjectural' marker (*potere* + infinitive) but not with an 'evidential conjectural' marker (Future). In a more general perspective, the contrast between these modal forms recapitulates the results of typological research on the grammaticalization of concessive connectives (König 1988), in which, as shown in section 2, concessivity is fostered by a varied array of sources, including factual (*True he is old*) as well as non-factual markers ('even if').

All in all, the analysis conducted so far has demonstrated that the Future is too factual to be defined as a proper epistemic form, which makes the alternative, i.e. evidential, interpretation more reasonable. Consistently with this conclusion, it can be maintained that not only will the evidential interpretation be preferred as far as the concessive use of the Future is concerned, but it should also be extended to its conjectural use, whose disputable status between epistemicity and evidentiality has been the starting point of the present discussion.

Now, the issue that still remains open is to establish what kind of evidentiality is expressed by the Future as a concessive marker. In the next section it will be shown that a major contribution in elucidating this point is provided by an integration of the semantic analysis followed so far with a different look on concessivity based on its functions in discourse interaction.

3.   *Concessivity in interaction*

A classical õconcern of rhetoriciansö (Couper-Kuhlen and Thompson 2000:383), conceding has been extensively studied as a major discourse phenomenon in recent pragmatic analyses that have particularly emphasized its function as an interactional strategy basically intended to mitigate contrast in conversation. As noted by König and Siemund (2000:356), discrepancy between semantic and interactional perspectives can be found in the role of the inferential topos on the basis of which a contrast between p and q is posited (Verhagen 2000). Being a typically covert background assumption, this ÷generalized inferenceø is not explicitly recognized in interactional analyses of concessivity, in which the following three overt conversational moves are distinguished (Couper-Kuhlen and Thompson 2000:382):

1st move   A: States something or makes some point

2nd move   B: Acknowledges the validity of this statement or point (the conceding move)

3rd move   B: Goes on to claim the validity of a potentially contrasting statement or point

Considering that the generalized topos proposed in semantic analyses is licensed by an inferential process often referred to as ÷epistemicø (Verhagen 2000, 2005), avoiding reference to the generalized topos has indirectly contributed to defocusing the role of epistemicity. On the contrary, what is focussed on in an interactional perspective is the ÷polyphonicø dimension of concessivity, which more directly impinges on evidentiality rather than epistemicity (Kronning 2003). As is apparent in Couper-Kuhlen and Thompson (2000:382), interactional concessivity is fundamentally intended as involving more than one participant (usually a dyadic structure), in which participant B, acknowledging a statement made by participant A, õreportsö it, this being considered the core of concessivity (õthe conceding moveö).

This reportive interpretation has been pointed out as particularly salient in concessive modals, which in fact were the first concessive elements thoroughly analyzed in an interactional dimension. Since Sweetserøs (1990:70-71) original observations, the English concessive modal *may* has been repeatedly discussed as evidence for an intersubjective interpretation of modality (Traugott and Dasher 2002:115). The interesting point here is that intersubjectivity has also been referred to as a significant dimension of evidentiality (Nuyts 2001a:34-35, 2001b, 2006: 13-15 and Cornillie 2007a,b). It should be admitted, though, that Nuytsø intersubjectivity squarely differs from Traugottøs. This point is explicitly emphasized by Traugott (2010:34), when she observes that in her view intersubjectivity is a dynamic process evolving from a subjective basis and gradually

involving "coding of greater attention to addressee", while in Nuyts (2001a:34-35, 2001b, 2006: 13-15) and Cornillie (2007a,b) intersubjectivity is not intrinsically connected to subjectivity and may even cover objectivity (what is objective is also intersubjectively shared). Nonetheless, concessivity would be considered intersubjective in both accounts. In Traugott's interpretation concessive markers evolve out of subjective modals (e.g. English *may*) enhancing the speaker's attention towards the addressee and are therefore intersubjective, but they might also be instances of shared knowledge between participants in an interactional exchange, which is the way in which Nuyts connects intersubjectivity to evidentiality. This connection also clearly appears in Traugott and Dasher's (2002:115) gloss to their example of *may* as a concessive marker ("although she may jog, *as you say* … "). This example was already discussed in section 2.1 above and is repeated here for clarity's sake:

(10)   She *may jog*, but she sure looks unhealthy to me (Traugott and Dasher 2002:115)

When they interpret intersubjectivity as a reference to what "the interlocutor or someone has said", Traugott and Dasher (2002:115) actually pave the way to evidentiality. This is most clearly so, if one considers that quoting, even though notionally distinct from reportive evidentiality, belongs to the same pragmatic "meeting ground" in which evidentiality shares a major role (Güldemann and von Roncador 2002).

As to the Italian Future, an evidential interpretation of concessivity was already proposed by Berretta (1997) and a comparable analysis was also suggested by Bolón Pedretti (1999:837). However, contrary to the general definition of concessivity provided above on the basis of Couper-Kuhlen and Thompson (2000:382), a concessive usage of the Future is not always based on a quote, since it is also admitted when both the speaker and the interlocutor directly perceive the relevant state of affairs. In (17) above, it is not necessarily the case that speaker A has just said that someone is tall, this most probably being a state of affairs perceivable to both participants.

Trying to interpret these observations in an evidential perspective, it can be observed that direct perceptions as well as reports can be considered as evidential sources (see Aikhenvald's 2004, 2007:211 list of evidential functions in section 1 above), which provides a unifying semantic umbrella for these phenomena. Nonetheless, an obvious problematic point immediately arises from this analysis: how is it possible that two cognitively opposite dimensions of evidentiality, i.e direct perception and indirect knowledge via reports, can be expressed by one and the same form? I think that an answer to this question comes again from the intersubjective interpretation repeatedly suggested in interactional analyses of concessivity. Direct perceptions and reports can be interpreted as two different sensory dimensions of intersubjectivity. What is openly perceivable to

conversational participants, either because heard (report) or seen (direct perception), can be considered as equally intersubjective, being based on a common ground shared by all participants.

Intersubjectivity can be conceived as an evidential relationship between the speakerøs subjective SELF and external inputs, whereby the speaker acknowledges what external inputs provide. Due to this interactional interplay, concessivity represents a very complex cognitive procedure in which SELF and OTHER, the two basic dimensions of evidentiality (Frawley 1992), are concomitantly at work: a subjective SELF acknowledges what comes from external sources that are intersubjectively shared by other participants. As seen above, this interactional interplay can be considered intersubjective in Traugott and Dasherøs (2002) perspective, for it involves a dynamic extension from the speakerøs subjectivity to the addresseeøs sphere, but is also intersubjective in Nuytsø (2001a:34-35, 2001b) sense for it is based on the interlocutorsø shared and possibly also objectively perceived knowledge.

Intersubjective acknowledging is what distinguishes concessive from conjectural uses of the Future, for the latter only expresses cognitive products of the speakerøs SELF. By accepting or acknowledging what is provided by external sources (either sensory data or report) the speaker subscribes to these sources, thus sharing some form of responsibility with respect to the informational content of the proposition. In evidential terms this co-responsibility can be represented by treating the speaker as a secondary source of the information. This implies that the evolution from conjecturality to concessivity can be depicted as a change in the status of the speaker, who switches from the role of primary to secondary source. In an evidential perspective, the cognitive (Verhagen 2000:365-366) as well as morphosyntactic (König 1988:151) markedness of concessivity mentioned in section 2 can be interpreted as being due to the interplay of two different evidential sources, in which the speaker, albeit ÷grudginglyø (Sweetser 1990:71), accepts the role of secondary source by acknowledging what external primary sources provide. From an interactional perspective the intersubjective dimension of concessivity might be interpreted as representative of what Cornillie (2010) calls ÷pre-emptiveø use, in which modality permits the speaker to signal that potential (counter)-arguments of the interlocutor have been taken into account. Following this line of reasoning, in the next section it will be shown that the same marker (the Future) can fulfil rather different interactional functions, while maintaining the same intersubjectively shared evidential sources.

4.   *Beyond concessivity: other interactional Futures*

Having shown how the concessive use of the Future can be interpreted in an evidential perspective and to what extent this can be capitalized on in order to revise traditional epistemic definitions,

attention will now turn to other ―modal‖ uses of the Italian Future that share an interactional dimension with the concessive use seen above. The most relevant point that will be made with respect to these further instances of interactional Futures is that they can also be interpreted as evidential, consistently with the description of conjectural and concessive uses provided above.

Bazzanella (1994, 2000) and Bazzanella and Bosco (2000) have already underlined the discursively marked role of Italian Futures, even though they don‖t explicitly mention the colloquial usage in (18), in which the speaker retorts to an insult by ―quoting‖ an insolent utterance originally produced by another participant in the same conversational exchange:

(18)   Scemo *sarai* TU!
        ―YOU are [be:FUT] stupid!

The marked illocutionary force of (18) is signalled by its ―exclamative‖ intonation (see also Bolón Pedretti, 1999 on Spanish ―exclamative‖ Futures), whose prosodic focus can be found in the postverbal pronominal subject *tu* ―you‖. The inflectional form of the Future is an additional morphosyntactic element contributing to the marked illocutionary force of this utterance. From an interactional point of view (18) can be considered as an expression of dialogic contrast, which ultimately is interactionally connected to concessivity (concessions dialogically prelude to a potential contrast, see Couper-Kuhlen and Thompson 2000:382). Nonetheless, the discursive element that (18) really shares with the concessive uses described in section 3 is the intersubjective dimension based on the reportive nature of this usage: by retortively repeating an insulting utterance the speaker is also ―reporting‖ what another participant has said. The quoted part of the utterance (*scemo* ―stupid‖) is a given element as far as discursive informational flow is concerned and is therefore syntactically located at the left periphery of the sentence, where thematic elements are typically placed. The part of the utterance that is discursively new (the pronoun *tu* ―you‖) is prosodically and syntactically marked as a focus at the end of the sentence.

Providing a connection between the Future in (18) and the concessive examples seen above this reportive interpretation confirms that the common feature among these Futures is represented by an evidential source intersubjectively shared by discourse participants. By making concessions or expressing contrast with respect to what the addressee has just said the speaker refers to the addressee as an external source to which the speaker dialogically reacts.

Elaborating on intersubjectivity one can also interpret other intonationally marked utterances (19-20), where, unlike (18), it is the Future to be prosodically underlined with a higher pitch:

(19)   [Ho dimenticato le chiavi] SARÒ scemo!
        ―[I forgot my keys] I am [be:FUT] stupid‖

(20)   SARÀ carina questa bambina!
          'Isn't [be:FUT] she nice, this baby?'

Consistently with prosodic differences, the interactional interpretation of (19-20) is radically different from (18). Instead of contrast, the Futures in (19-20) are dialogically used to attract other participants' attention to some given state of affairs, this being also interpretable as a request for confirmation, as shown by the English translation in (20). The situation to which attention is drawn is directly perceivable by all participants (20) or inferable from external sources, as in (19), where a circumstantial piece of data ('I don't have my keys') triggers a generalized inference ('if you forget your keys, you must be stupid'). As shown above in Aikhenvald's list (section 1), sensory evidence and inferences are both evidential notions, whose common applicability in (19-20) confirms the role of evidentiality in explaining the occurrence of a Future in these 'exclamative' contexts. The unifying element in different interactional contexts (concession, contrast, request for confirmation and, possibly, other functions) is represented by reference to an external piece of evidence that is intersubjectively shared, either through direct perception, report or inferences.

More generally, it can be concluded that evidentiality, due to its intersubjective basis, can provide a comprehensive umbrella encompassing the functional behaviour of the Italian Future, which obviously lends additional credit to the hypothesis that the conjectural use should be more consistently considered as evidential rather than epistemic. The non-epistemic nature of the Future is particularly apparent in the 'exclamative' contexts discussed in this section. Analyzing these uses as connected to the epistemic meaning of the Future (a lower degree of certainty) would produce contradictory results: How could we explain the direct perception of a state of affairs (20) as a case of lower degree of certainty? In (20) the speaker is not at all undermining the degree of certainty, being rather interested in intersubjectively sharing his / her perception with other participants, which is an evidentially-based interactional practice.

These data might also indicate some interesting hints for an interlinguistic comparison. As mentioned above, Spanish admits pragmatic extensions of the Future comparable to those discussed above (Bolón Pedretti 1999). Apart from concessive contexts (see section 2 above), the inferentially-based context in (19) admits a Future in Spanish as well:

(21)   ¡*Seré* boba, me olvidé las llaves! (Bolón Pedretti 1999:837)
          'I am [be:FUT] stupid, I forgot my keys'

Unlike Italian and Spanish, these pragmatically extended uses of the Future are not documented in French, which might be tentatively connected to the observation that French also differs from Italian and Spanish in having no concessive usage of the Future. This seems to confirm that the

concessive extension can be considered as systematically connected to the other pragmatically marked uses presented in this section, which explains why they consistently develop and vary across Romance languages.

Nonetheless, French Futures have developed other ʻexclamativeʼ extensions (*Futur dʼindignation*, Martin 1981, Soutet 2007) that are not admitted in Italian:

(22)   On *aura* tout *vu*! (Novakova 2000:131-132)
        ʻWe have seen [have:FUT seen] everything!ʼ

Apparently, the Future in (22) is not only used to intersubjectively share information by drawing other participantsʼ attention to external data. More prominently, it expresses the subjective surprise of the speaker with respect to a given state of affairs, which is not the case in the Italian examples discussed in this section. Surprise or speakerʼs ʻunprepared mindʼ are connected to another grammatical category, mirativity, whose relationship to evidentiality has also been intensively debated (DeLancey 1997, 2001, Lazard 1999). A comparison with French exceeds the limits of this work, but on the basis of these preliminary data it can be imagined that an interlinguistic comparison among Romance languages should also take into account the role of mirativity in determining the semantic and pragmatic behavior of modal forms, thus introducing an additional tricky boundary.

5.   *Conclusion*

The analysis presented above has demonstrated the extent to which the semantic treatment of a grammatical category can be fruitfully integrated by a discursive interpretation of its interactional functions. Concessivity has proven as a particularly stimulating empirical domain as far as the interplay between semantic and pragmatic dimensions is concerned. In this respect, the first part of the analysis has demonstrated that a semantic requirement (factuality of concessive premises) makes it extremely difficult to maintain the traditional epistemic interpretation of the Future. The comparison between two different concessive verb markers (the inflectional Future and *potere* + infinitive) has shown that the evolution from conjecturality to concessivity may be more varied than generally assumed, demonstrating that the modal *potere* represents the evolution of an epistemic conjectural marker, which, even when used as a concessive form, maintains its compatibility with non-factual contexts. On the other hand the concessive use is representative of a different evolution that proves itself more consistent with an original evidential interpretation of its diachronic source (the conjectural use of the Future).

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The pragmatic analysis has shown that not only is evidentiality more compatible with the semantic properties of the concessive use, but also more consistently goes together with the pragmatic properties of concessivity as an interactional phenomenon in discourse. The interplay between the speaker's own conjectural reasoning and the acknowledgment of external evidence is the evidential basis of concessivity, which combines the subjective nature of the conjectural use with an intersubjective dimension, transforming the speaker from a primary source of conjectural reasoning into a secondary source. Other illocutionarily marked occurrences of the Italian Future have supported a general evidential analysis based on the intersubjective sharing of external evidence. As suggested by a tentative comparison to French, future research should now concentrate on the role of mirativity in explaining some additional pragmatically marked occurrences of the Romance Future.

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