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Acquisitive modals

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1. Introduction

Let an 'acquisitive modal' be an expression of modality that goes back to a predicate meaning 'acquire, get'. The phenomenon is illustrated with English (1c). Imagine a child that has got the permission of a parent to watch TV one night or, more generally, any night. The child could report on this permission with *can* or *may*, but the verb *get* is also a good option.

- (1)
- a. *I can watch TV tonight/at night*
 - b. *I may watch TV tonight/at night.*
 - c. *I get to watch TV tonight/at night.*

It does not matter for our purposes whether one wants to consider the predicate *get* in (1c) to have its lexical 'get, acquire' meaning or some kind of causative or aspectual meaning and consider the possibility sense as derived from this (see Gronemeyer 1999 for a state of art synchronic and diachronic analysis of the various *get* uses). All that matters is that *get* lends itself easily to the expression of a notion of possibility, more particularly, at least in (1c), one of permission, and that it is plausible to relate this usage diachronically to a lexical verb meaning 'acquire'.

We are by no means the first to draw attention to this phenomenon. Apart from some work on English (see Gronemeyer 1999 for references, indirectly also Viberg 2002)², there are short typological comments by Bybee et al. (1994), van der Auwera and Plungian (1998), and Viberg (2002, 2006), there is contrastive work starting from Swedish (Wagner 1976; Viberg 2002; Ramnäs 2002, 2004, 2006; Östlund 2006), and for languages of Mainland Southeast Asia there are several papers and even an entire monograph (Enfield 2003). And yet the phenomenon is understudied. In this paper we will explore its consequences for the geometry of the semantic map of modality (van der Auwera and Plungian 1998) and we will argue that a part of the map needs to be redrawn. Given the importance of this revision and the very many interesting issues that are triggered by it (see section 7), we think that the phenomenon deserves a term of its own and that 'acquisitive modality' does the job.³

Since acquisitive modals will be accommodated in a specific semantic map proposal, it is important to present the latter's relevant properties. We revisit this map, with the wisdom of hindsight, in section 2. Section 3 discusses how the map dealt with acquisitive modality. In

section 4 we have a more detailed look at acquisitive modality, more particularly, possibility, in Northern Europe, and in section 5 we do the same for South(east) Asia. This allows us, in section 6, to *rerevisit* the semantic map. Section 7 discusses some unexplored problems, and section 8 is the conclusion.

2. Modality's semantic map revisited⁴

The semantic map of modality proposed by van der Auwera and Plungian (1998), henceforth 'MM', works with a relatively restricted concept of modality: modality refers only to dimensions of necessity and possibility. From this point of view, the examples in (1) are relevant, but the ones in (2) are not. (2a) concerns volition, and (2b) is arguably an expression of evidentiality. For the purposes of the map and hence also for this paper, neither volition nor evidentiality falls within the domain of modality, though they are, of course, related domains, and it is perfectly acceptable to embrace a wider notion of modality.

- (2) a. *I **want** to go home now.*
b. *He **is said** to be a hero.*

MM also does not encompass what could be called 'illocutionary' modality, as with the imperative in (3) – Bybee et al (1994) call this 'speaker-oriented modality'.

- (3) *Go home now.*

The examples in (4) also fall outside the realm of modality.

- (4) a. *I **got** a TV yesterday.*
b. ***May** he live a hundred years!*

(4a) illustrates the verb *get*, the same verb as we see in (1c), but whereas *get* is put to a modal use in (1c), in (4a) it merely carries its lexical meaning. The latter is the source of the modal use – in the terminology of MM a source meaning is called 'premodal'. The *may* of (4b) forms a nice contrast with premodal *get*; in this sentence *may* illustrates an optative use, which is considered 'postmodal', the idea being that the optative use of *may* developed out of a modal use (i.e., an expression of some of notion of possibility). The meaning is no longer modal, however: it is not enlightening to say that the *may* of (4b) expresses possibility. There is no contrast with a necessity modal, for instance, which is at least typical for English modality, nor can *may* be replaced by any other possibility modal, such as *could*, *may* or *might* – which would also be typical for English modality.

- (5) ****Must/could/may/might** he live a hundred years!*

Finally, the particular subtype of the postmodal meaning in (4b) – MM illustrates a large range of such meanings – is not modal for yet another reason: an optative marker is to be situated at the illocutionary level, just like the imperative of (3).

MM further distinguishes between four types of modality. For possibility, they are illustrated in (6).

- (6) a. *I **can** swim.*
 b. *To get to the station, you **can** take bus 66.*
 c. *You **can** stay home – you have my permission.*
 d. *He **may** be home, or he **may** not – I don't know.*

The big divide is between (6d) and (6a-c). (6d) expresses the speaker's uncertainty and it is generally called 'epistemic modality'. (6a-c) are all non-epistemic, they do not involve a possibility in the knowledge or commitment of the speaker, but rather a possibility in the states of affairs that is believed to hold. Within non-epistemic possibility, the next dividing line is between (6a) and (6b-c). In the former the possibility is internal to some participant, normally the subject of the sentence: the possibility related to swimming is this participant's ability (capacity). This is absent in (6b-c). Of course, the *you* subject still has to have the capacity to step onto a bus or stay within the confines of a home, but that is not the point. The point in (6b) is to explain part of the transportation system of a city, which is something external to the participant *you*. Similarly, the possibility in (6c) is external to the participant, in this case, we are dealing with the possibility called 'permission', and this may either come from the speaker – as in (6c) – but it may also come from a third party (rules, laws, morality). MM calls the possibility of (6a) 'participant-internal' and those of (6b-c) 'participant-external', and to distinguish between (6b) and (6c), the latter is called 'deontic' and the former 'non-deontic'.

For necessity, the classification is the same – we suffice with giving four examples.

- (7) a. *I **have** to have a cup of coffee, otherwise I can't function.*
 b. *In order to get to the station, you **have** to take bus 66.*
 c. *You **must** stay home now, and this is an order.*
 d. *He **must** be home now; he left the office a long time ago.*

MM does not claim that the classification in four subtypes cannot be made more specific: it can. For participant-internal possibility, for instance, Old English employed the ancestor of *can* for intellectual ability and the ancestor of *may* for physical ability. Another difference is that the ability could be more or less permanent. English (1a) is vague in this respect: the ability could be generic or specific to the moment of speaking, allowing sentences like (8).

- (8) *I **can** swim really well but I **can't** now: I hurt my knee.*

Or for deontic possibility, a distinction could be made as to whether it is the speaker that authorizes the permission or not – in the first case, the deontic possibility is frequently called 'subjective' or 'performative'. There is also no claim that the distinctions are always very clear: on the contrary, they are often vague, as is made very clear in Coates (1983), the classic study of the English modals. Nor is there a claim that the distinctions make sense for every marker and every language: often deontic and non-deontic shades of participant-external modality do not attract dedicated marking. Finally, there is also no claim that the distinction between possibility and necessity is an *either-or* distinction. It is really a scale, going from impossibility over degrees of possibility to necessity, and the MM approach further allows for markers to be indeterminate about this degree. MM has examples of modal markers based on 'be', 'have' and, to wit, 'get' etymons, which do not by themselves seem focus on any degree of possibility. (9) illustrates this with a German 'be' expression.⁵

- (9) *Wesensprobleme **sind** mit den Mitteln der Ontologie*
 problems.of.being are with the means of.the ontology

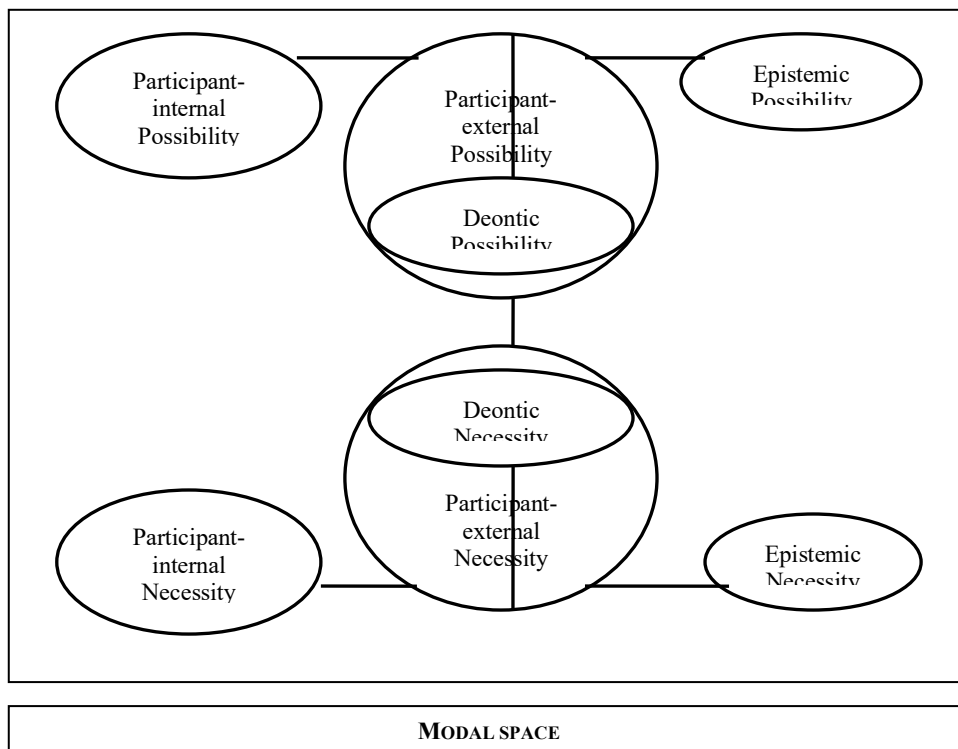
zu lösen.
to solve
‘Problems of being can/must be solved with the means of ontology.’

Finally, although the examples so far have all concerned modal auxiliaries or, at least, modal verbs, the MM map is proposed for any marker, whether lexical or grammaticalized, that a language chooses to recruit in the service of modality, thus also the suffix *-ya* in Korean (10a) and, also in Korean, the syntagm ‘even if VERB, it is good’ ((10b)).

- (10) Korean (Wymann 1996: 106; Sohn 1994: 348)
- a. *I pyõnci-lül ilk-õ-ya ha-n-ta.*
this letter-ACC read-CON-NEC do-PRS-FIN
‘He has to read this letter.’
- b. *Ne-nũn ka-to coh-ta.*
you-TOP go-even good-FIN
‘You can go.’

A first version of the semantic map of modality is shown as Map 1.

Map 1: *The map of modality – first version*

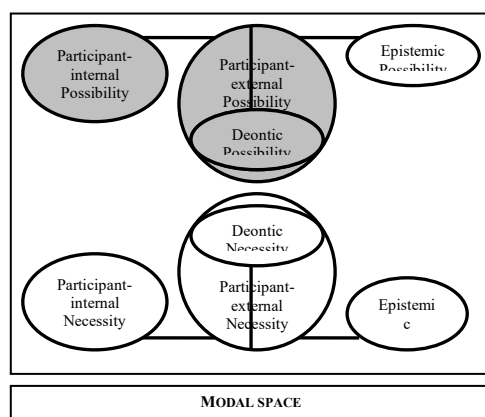


The semantic space of modality contains eight oval shapes, each symbolizing a notion of modality. For both possibility and necessity, there are four labels, ‘participant-internal’, ‘participant-external’, ‘deontic’, and ‘epistemic’, each standing for a subtype of modality, already described and illustrated earlier. The deontic ovals are enclosed within the participant-external ovals: this symbolizes the generally accepted hypothesis that deontic modality is a subtype of participant-external modality. The complement of deontic participant-external

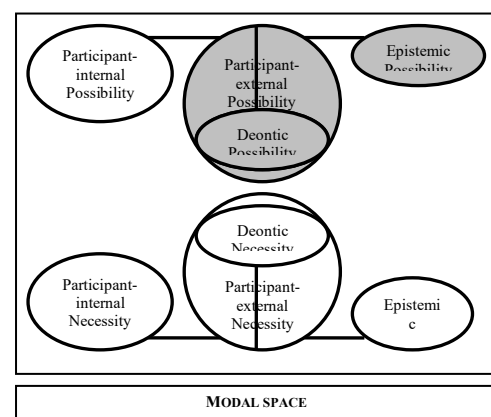
modality is non-deontic modality, which can therefore be considered to be a fifth type, again both for possibility and necessity, and the two participant-external regions could be seen as of a bigger region, participant-external modality as such, vague between possibility and necessity – this is necessary for German (9).⁶ Some of the regions are connected by lines. The vertical lines connect deontic and general participant-external modality, which again relates to the hypothesis that the former is a subtype of the latter. The horizontal lines connect participant-external modality to both participant-internal and epistemic modality; we will call these modality types ‘contiguous’. A type and subtype are also directly connected, thus participant-external possibility and its deontic subtype are also contiguous (and there is therefore also a connecting line). Obviously, when meanings are not directly connected, they are not contiguous: epistemic possibility is thus not contiguous with deontic possibility nor with participant-internal possibility. We thus see that the map is quite expressive. However, it also has its limitations. Most importantly perhaps, Map 1 does not show how the meanings glide into one another.

We now have a map similar in structure to the ones proposed for other domains, such as the perfect (Anderson 1982), indefiniteness (Haspelmath 1997) or semantic roles (Luraghi 2001). Like the other maps, the main goal is to account for the polysemy of constructions. Let us illustrate this with the verb *can*. Maps 2 and 3 repeat Map 1 (though, for simplicity’s sake without the line connecting participant-external possibility and necessity), but they include the claim that present-day English positive declarative *can* is used for participant-internal and participant-external possibility (both deontic and non-deontic), but not for epistemic possibility, and that present-day English positive declarative *may* is used for participant-external possibility (again both deontic and non-deontic) as well as for epistemic possibility, but not for participant-internal possibility. Note also that the map is called a ‘semantic map’, which means that the distinctions are truly semantic, rather than pragmatic.⁷

Map 2: *Present-day English positive declarative can*



Map 3: *Present-day English positive declarative may*



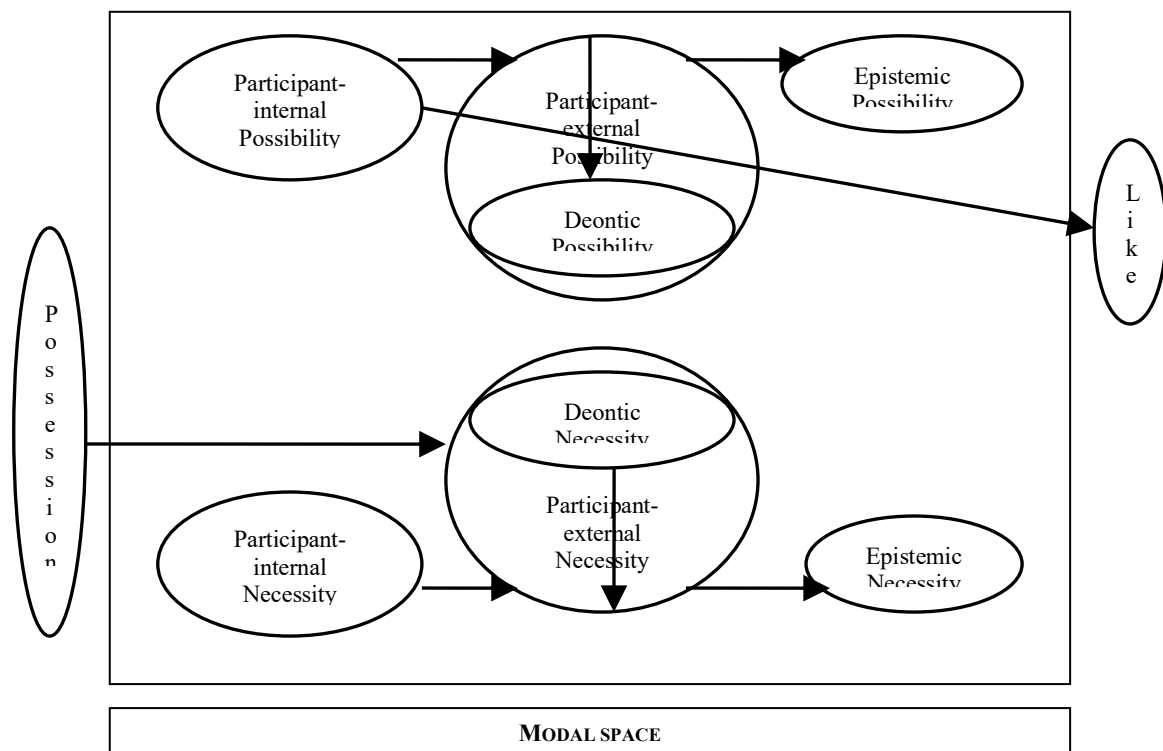
The claim embodied in semantic maps is that polysemy results from diachrony. In other words, markers develop meanings from one another in systematic ways. These ways are indicated by the lines. But what is more, at least for some meanings we know that markers ‘travel’ these ways in only one direction. For the history of English *may* and *can*, for instance, we know that both markers started in the participant-internal domain, then moved to participant-external modality and then, at least for *may*, to epistemic modality. And English is by no means an isolated case: Bybee et al. (1994) have shown this scenario to be a universal one. They furthermore take this development to go hand in hand with grammaticalization.

Map 4 repeats most of Map 1, but it has arrows instead of lines, and the arrows are to mean that the markers historically developed their polysemy in the direction indicated by the arrow. Map 4 also added one example of a premodal and one example of a postmodal meaning. For the premodal, we have chosen the meaning of ‘possession’, which in many languages (e.g. English *have*) developed into a marker of participant-external necessity. For the postmodal, we took the ‘like’ meaning of Dutch *mogen* ‘may’, which arguably arose from the participant-internal modal use.

- (11) a. *I have two brothers.*
 b. *I have to go now.*

- (12) Dutch
 a. *Ik mag gaan.*
 I may go
 ‘I may go.’
 b. *Ik mag soep.*
 I may soup
 ‘I like soup.’

Map 4: *The map of modality – with some diachronic paths*



The diachronization of the connections between the meanings on the semantic map does not only enrich the map, it is also useful for making precise what is one of the most important properties of semantic map, viz., the contiguity requirement. In its simplified version, it says that if a construction has two or more meanings, these meanings have to be contiguous. The underlying idea is simply that semantic similarity is reflected formally: if the form is identical, then the meanings have to be close (so that this form may be considered to

be sensibly polysemous) or even identical (if one prefers a monosemy account with vagueness instead of polysemy) and any intermediate meanings should attract the same form as well. However, this simple version is *too* simple. There are enough cases in the literature in which two meanings, not partaking in homonymy, share the same marker and an intermittent one does not. An example from the realm of modality concerns the Dutch counterpart to English *may*, viz. *mogen* (see van der Auwera 1999). Unlike *may*, *mogen* is not felicitous for non-deontic participant-external possibility nor for epistemic possibility.

(13) Dutch

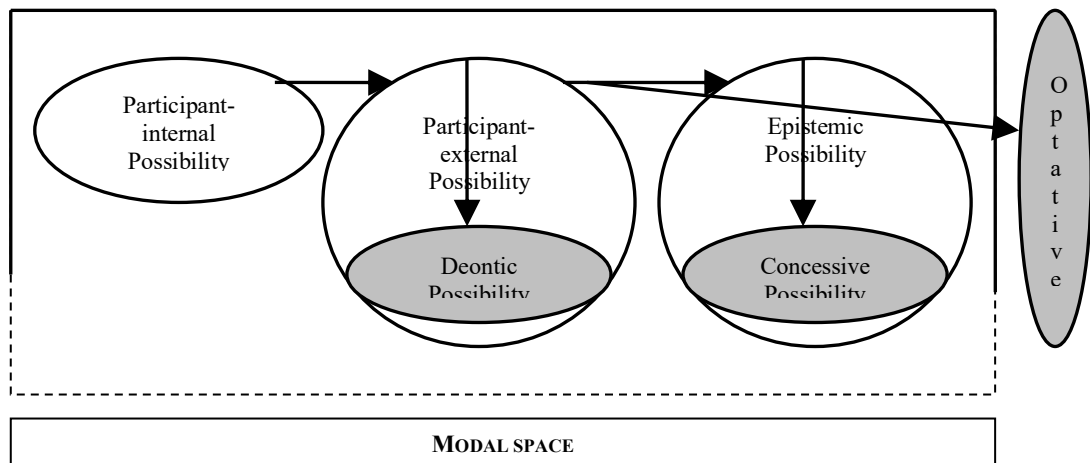
- a. **Om naar het station te gaan,*
to to the station to go
mag je bus 66 nemen.
may you bus 66 take
‘To get to the station, you may take bus 66.’
- b. **Hij mag thuis zijn, ik weet het niet.*
he may home be I know it not
‘He may be home, I don’t know.’

Like English *may*, *mogen* is fine for deontic participant-external possibility ((14a)) as well as for the concessive meaning ((14c)). The status of the latter is a bit unclear (see Souesme in print), but it may be either a subtype of (what then becomes ‘general’) epistemic possibility or a further development. For our purpose, the exact status does not matter and we take it as a subtype of epistemic possibility. *mogen* also has the optative meaning ((14b)), which we take to be a postmodal meaning deriving from general participant-external possibility.

(14) Dutch

- a. *Ik mag gaan.*
I mag go
‘I may go.’
- b. ***Moge hij honderd jaar leven!***
may he hundred year live
‘May he live a hundred years!’
- c. *Hij mag slim zijn, sympathiek is hij niet.*
he mag clever be nice is he not
‘He may be clear, but he is not nice.’

Map 5: Present-day Dutch *mogen* ‘may’⁸



Map 5 shows that the three meanings covered by Dutch *mogen* are not contiguous. But at least there was a historical contiguity in that they share some of their ancestors. The optative and the deontic possibility are one step removed from general participant-external possibility and the concessive subtype is two steps removed from it. Thus MM formulated a more refined contiguity requirement: meanings covered by a marker have to be contiguous or go back to a common ancestor.

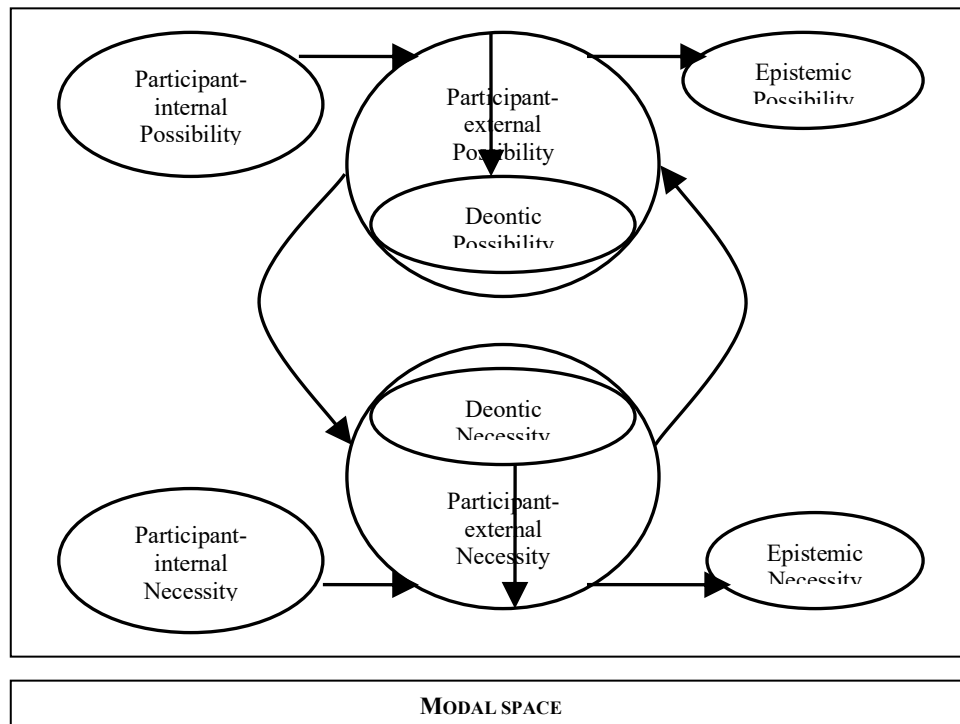
The last general point that is relevant for acquisitive modality concerns the directionality of the semantic change symbolized by the arrows. So far all the arrows have been unidirectional, and this is indeed a property of most of the changes described in MM, but not of all. Interestingly, the only changes found in the data covered by MM are changes between possibility and necessity. Thus we know that English *must* and its cognates in other Germanic languages started out as markers of possibility and that they are now necessity markers or they are in the process of becoming necessity markers (Danish) – an intermediate situation calling for the same type of analysis as German (9). This process may happen to *may* and its cognates as well. What we need is that a necessity implicature conventionalizes, such as the implicature in English (15), uttered by a general to a corporal, or the one in Dutch (16), uttered in a context where the husband hates cooking (observation due to Gronemeyer 2001: 6)

(15) *You may go now.*
implicature: ‘You must go now.’

(16) Dutch
Jullie ma is niet thuis. Dus mag ik weer koken.
your mom is not home. so may I again cook
implicature: ‘Your mom isn’t home. So I must cook again.’

And then there is at least one attested change in the opposite direction, viz. that of German *dürfen*. Both the change from necessity to possibility and that from possibility to necessity arguably happened in the participant-external domain (perhaps more specifically in the deontic subdomain). Map 6 represents these facts with two arrows, connecting participant-external possibility and participant-external necessity.

Map 6: *The bidirectionality in the participant-external domain*



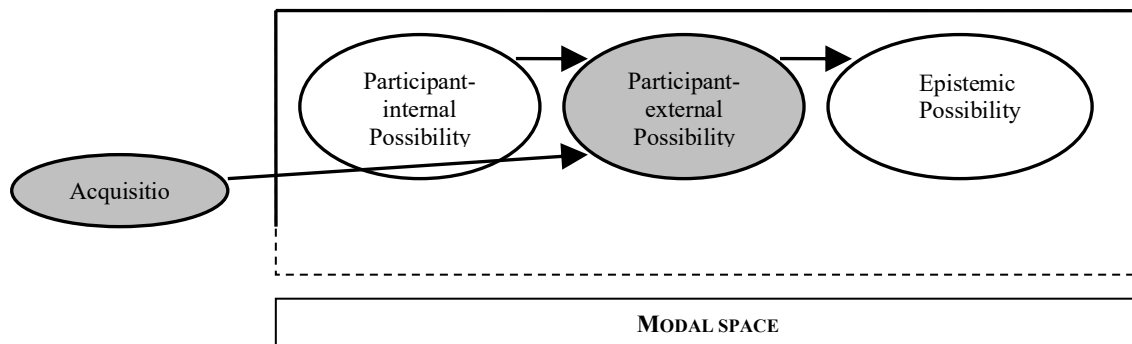
3. Acquisitive possibility in MM

The problem posed by acquisitive modals concerns the relation between participant-internal and participant-external possibility. As mentioned already, MM accepted and confirmed the universalist hypothesis in Bybee et al. (1994) that the directionality goes from participant-internal to participant-external modality. Of course, a marker for participant-external possibility need not come from participant-internal possibility: as the case of *dürfen* shows, it may also come from participant-external necessity or directly from the premodal domain (see the arrow from possession on Map 4). The latter kind of path was posited for the acquisitive modality of *get*, illustrated in (1c) and repeated below as (17) (MM 104).

(17) *I **get** to watch TV tonight.*

Map 7 shows the connection between premodal ‘acquisition’ and participant-external possibility. For the sake of simplicity Map 7 – and all further maps – does not separate out the deontic subtype anymore.

Map 7: *From acquisition to participant-external possibility*



With respect to the hypothesis that the link between participant-internal and participant-external possibility is unidirectional from internal to external, the facts of English seemed most welcome, for English *get* cannot express capacity, as illustrated in (18).

- (18) **I get to swim.*
'I know how to swim.'

As MM (104) mentioned, the modal extension of a 'get' verb is not restricted to English. The following languages were listed (MM 104, 119): Swedish (Wagner 1976), the Tibeto-Burman language Lahu (Matisoff 1973: 233, 551, 1991: 419; also mentioned in Bybee et al. 1994: 191), and Hindi-Urdu as well as Bangla (van der Auwera 2001a); MM (119) further referred to Matisoff (1991: 419-425) and Li (1991) as documenting Southeast Asian languages other than Lahu. The unidirectionality thesis was not focussed upon by MM and was allowed to stand.⁹ MM briefly alluded to two interesting phenomena. First, it was pointed out that the Swedish 'get' verb *få* allows both what was called a 'participant-external actuality' and a 'participant-internal actuality' sense. The former sense is illustrated with English (19).

- (19) *John got to know the whole truth.*

The state of affairs of the complement clause is realized. The subject John had no active role, he was a recipient only, and the truth was imparted to him from a source that was external to him. With respect other activities, however, the subject must be assumed to play a more active role, as in English (20).

- (20) *John got to learn Japanese.*

The actuality here is no doubt also due to favorable external circumstances, such as the good teacher or teaching method or the fact that John was immersed in a Japanese environment, but John's brilliance, energy and concentration will have had a role too. There is therefore a stronger participant-internal component to it, such that *get* here comes closer to *manage*. The relevance of this is that we see that in the right context the actuality may be participant-internal. If this can happen with actuality readings, why can't it happen with possibility readings? This would then allow (18) and *get* could mean 'be able to'.

Interestingly – and what follows is a new remark, absent in MM – English 'get' has other uses, some of which are in fact participant-internal. Consider the purely lexical use in (21).

(21) *John got a book.*

It is possible that John was a recipient who only had to open his hands but it is no less possible that snatched it way from someone else. In the latter sense, *get* allows an imperative, which is not available for verbs like *receive* and *acquire*.

(22) *Get/*receive/*acquire a book.*

This more agentive reading is actually possible for (1c) also. What MM had in mind was only the participant-external reading, which involves a TV watching opportunity ‘befalling’ upon the subject, but there is a participant-internal reading in which the subject secured himself/herself of this opportunity. Should this be the first usage, then this is relevant for the unidirectionality hypothesis, because we would then have to allow acquisition to directly feed into at least a subtype of participant-internal possibility. But we don’t know this. Gronemeyer (1999: 30-2, 35) actually claims that what she calls ‘permissive’ *get* derives from ‘causative’ *get*, illustrated in (23), a use which definitely refers to a participant-internal, causative force.

(23) *John got me to clean his car.*

This is not very plausible, though. Gronemeyer (1999: 31) refers to the cross-linguistic fact that causative markers often also have permissive uses, but this is irrelevant here, because it would predict that the causative sense of ‘somebody caused something’ would spawn ‘somebody permitted something’, but the resultant meaning, in English (1c), is ‘somebody was permitted something’.

The second fact briefly alluded to in MM (119) was that the Sino-Tibetan language Lahu, as described by Matisoff (1973: 551), had a modal that would have clear participant-external as well participant-internal possibility readings. MM assumed that the participant-external reading came first, and therefore the facts of Lahu could be problematic. However, Lahu did not after all worry the authors of MM: they were put at ease by Matisoff’s (1973: 551) hunch that this extension was due to language contact, more particularly, to interference from the Tai-Kadai language Shan. Thus the unidirectionality thesis was saved, for language interference need not follow semantic paths, it has a sociolinguistic motivation, not a semantic one.

MM appeared in 1998. It is now – ten years later – clear that Lahu, with an acquisitive modal allowing both participant-external and participant-internal readings is not an isolated case. In Southeast Asia, Lahu will be shown to be one of many such languages. And we also find them in the general area where we find Swedish, i.e., Northern Europe. We will first have a closer look at Northern Europe.

4. Acquisitive possibility in Northern Europe

In Northern Europe, we find acquisitive modality in three families, North Germanic, Finno-Lappic (comprising Finnic and Saami) and Baltic. We have synchronic data for the languages listed in Table 1. Map 8 shows where they are spoken.

Table 1: *Languages of Northern Europe: acquisitive possibility markers and sources*

| Family | Languages | Verbs | Sources |
|----------------|----------------|------------------|--|
| North Germanic | Icelandic | <i>geta</i> | Thráinsson and Vikner 1995: 57, 85 |
| | Faroese | – | Thráinsson et al. 2004 |
| | Danish* | (<i>få</i>) | Kasper Boye (Copenhagen) p.c. |
| | Norwegian | <i>få</i> | Eide 2005: 75-7 |
| | Swedish | <i>få</i> | Wagner 1976, Viberg 2002 |
| Finno-Lappic** | Northern Saami | <i>oažžut</i> | Koskinen 1998: 134-139 |
| | Finnish | <i>saada</i> | Kangasniemi 1992: 321-329 among others |
| | Karelian | <i>soaha</i> | Pekka Zaikov (Petrozavodsk), Anastassia Trifonova (Tartu), Maria Peleshenko (Tartu) p.c. |
| | Veps | <i>sada</i> | Deniss Kavinov (Tartu) p.c. |
| | Ingrian | <i>sāvva</i> | Eeva Saar (Tartu) p.c. |
| | Votic | <i>sāvva</i> | Heinsoo 1990 |
| | Estonian | <i>saama</i> | Erelt 2003: 106-107 among others |
| | Livonian | <i>sōdā</i> | Tiit-Rein Viitso (Tartu) p.c. |
| Baltic | Latvian | (<i>dabūt</i>) | Ilze Zagorska (Tartu) p.c. |
| | Lithuanian | (<i>gauti</i>) | Aurelia Usoniene (Vilnius) p.c. |

* The brackets indicate that the meaning is marginal. Danish also has *gide*, which is interesting too, though it is not strictly speaking ‘modal’, in the restrictive sense used in this paper. It will be discussed later in this section.

** For all of the Finnic languages (Finnish, Karelian, Veps, Ingrian, Votic, Estonian and Livonian) we also consulted grammar descriptions, text collections and dictionaries. See Kehayov and Torn (2006) for details.

Map 8: *Languages of Northern Europe*

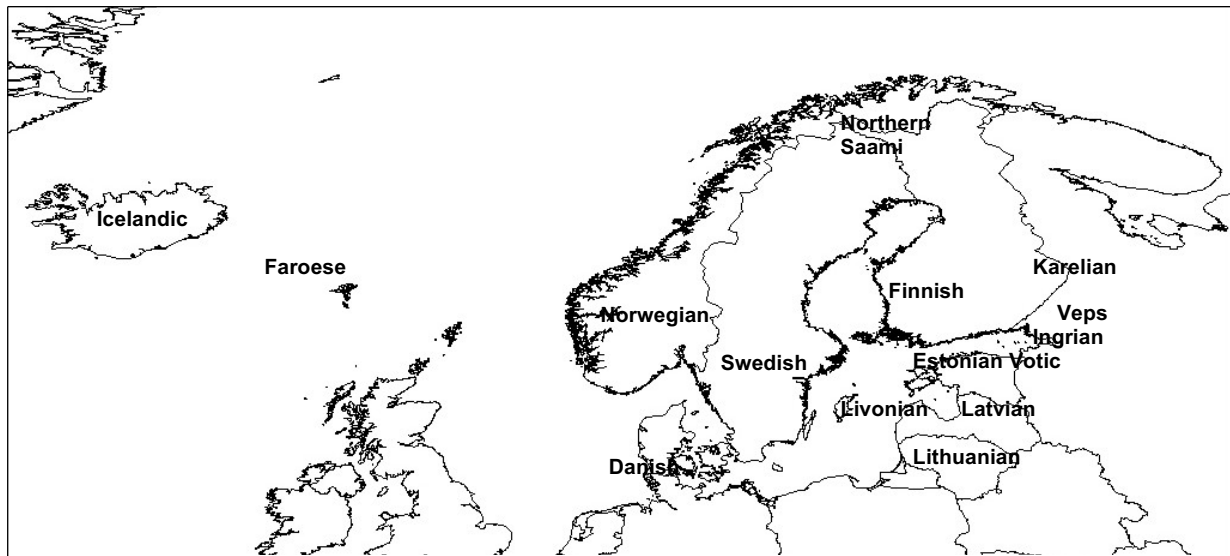


Table 2 gives an overview of participant-internal and participant-external possibility meanings.

Table 2: *Acquisitive possibility modals in the languages of Northern Europe*

| Languages | Possibility | Participant-external | Participant-internal |
|----------------|--|----------------------|----------------------|
| North Germanic | Danish, Norwegian, Swedish | | |
| Finno-Lappic | Finnish, Veps | + | – |
| Baltic | Lithuanian | | |
| North Germanic | Icelandic | | |
| Finno-Lappic | Northern Saami, Estonian, Ingrian, Livonian, Karelian, Votic | + | + |
| Baltic | Latvian | | |
| North Germanic | Faroese | – | – |
| No language | | – | + |

It is clear that Northern Europe does not only have Swedish as a language that has exploited ‘get’ for the purposes of expressing participant-external possibility. (24a-b) illustrates the participant-external meanings for Estonian *saama*.

- (24) Estonian (p.k., Erelt 2003: 107)
- a. *Saa-b* *ujuma* *minna* *kui ilma-d*
get-PRS.3SG swim.INF go.INF when weather-PL
on ilusa-d.
be.PRS.3SG beautiful-PL
‘It is possible (for us) to go swimming when the weather is better.’
- b. *Kaasa saa-b võtta 10 kroon-i.*
with get-PRS.3SG take.INF 10 crown-PRT
‘One is allowed to take 10 crowns along.’

Most interestingly, for the purpose of judging the directionality link between participant-external and participant-internal possibility, each family has at least one language that uses its ‘get’ lexeme for both participant-external and participant-internal possibility. This is again illustrated with Estonian.

- (24) Estonian (Erelt 2003: 107)
- c. *Sina saa-d mind aidata.*
you get-PRS.3SG me help.INF
‘You can help me.’

All by itself (24c) is vague between a participant-external and a participant-internal reading. In the intended reading (24c) can be paraphrased as ‘You are the kind of person that can help me’ or ‘You have all the qualities necessary for helping me’. These paraphrases make clear that the potentiality first and foremost resides in the *you* participant and that the characterization in terms of ‘participant-internal possibility’ is appropriate. (25) is another example, showing that participant-internal possibility may involve both a more permanent skill and a time-restricted ability (like example (8) for English).

- (25) Estonian (p.k.)
Tavaliselt ma saa-n nõu-sid pesta, aga
 normally I get-PRS.1SG dish-PL.PRT wash-INF but
praegu ei saa, sest mu käed valuta-vad.
 now NEGV get because my hands hurt-PRS.3PL
 ‘I can normally wash the dishes, but now I cannot wash them, because my hands hurt.’

Note that the claim that *saama* expresses participant-internal possibility does not mean that *saama* can cover all of the participant-internal possibility. For at least mental capacity, Estonian will use a verb *oskama* ‘know how to’. Thráinsson and Vikner (1995: 85) make a similar remark about Icelandic, although the parameters are said to be different: *geta* is temporary and *kunna* ‘permanent’. Just how the participant-internal domain is carved up depends on the availability of other modal verbs, and we have not studied this. But the facts of Estonian and Icelandic may well be generalizable. Obviously, modal verbs often come from expressions of might and knowledge, both of them states, and hence more permanent. If either or both yields a modal, and an acquisitive is there as well, then the former will associate with the specifically physical and intellectual and/or permanent ability.

The next thing to note about Table 2 is that Northern Europe has no language that uses ‘get’ only for participant-internal possibility. Thus at least in Northern Europe participant-internal uses are acceptable only for languages that also have participant-external uses. This synchronic observation is compatible with the idea that a language first has to have the participant-external use, and that it may or may not develop the participant-internal use. But it is no less compatible with the idea that the original meaning was in fact the participant-internal one or perhaps a subtype, which then simply disappeared in all these languages, just like the participant-internal sense of *may* disappeared in English. It is nevertheless a little suspicious that there is not a single language that has kept the supposedly original participant-internal use as its only use. Essentially though, we need detailed historical work to answer the question about the direction of the development, which at least for some of the languages can be done or has in fact already been done. That the idea of the participant-internal use coming first is not to be ruled out comes from the story of the Danish acquisitive non-modal *gide*. This verb now means ‘bother, be inclined to, feel like’, a usage that is similar to the one illustrated with Dutch (12b).

- (26) Danish (Brandt 1999: 48)
Jeg gider ikke læse lingvistik idag.
 I bother not read linguistics today
 ‘I don’t bother to read linguistics today.’

The present-day sense is clearly participant-internal (cp. Boye (2001: 56), who uses the analogous term ‘agonist-internal’), and its ancestor is the ‘get’ verb that still survives in Icelandic. It earlier also had a possibility sense and the extant literature (Skautrop 1944-70, Vol 2: 249; Hansen 1977) strongly suggests that its early possibility use was participant-internal. Here then it was a ‘get’ verb that never developed a participant-external possibility sense and later even dropped the participant-internal possibility sense, leaving only the non-modal – and postmodal – participant-internal sense illustrated in (26). Of course, this history of one Danish verb does not tell us anything about the histories of the unrelated Finno-Lappic and Baltic etymons.

Note that the histories of the Northern European ‘get’ etymons will also involve language contact. The area includes the Circum-Baltic region, which is characterized by

intensive micro-level contract interference, as made clear in Dahl and Koptjevskaja-Tamm (2001). Interestingly, though Dahl and Koptjevskaja-Tamm (2001) is the state of the art report of grammatical interference in the Baltic, acquisitive possibility is not mentioned. But we are aware of one claim relevant to Circum-Baltic acquisitive modality. On the basis of the nearly complete isomorphism between the auxiliary uses of Swedish *få* and Finnish *saada* and the fact that during many centuries it is Finnish that copied Swedish, Raukko and Östman (1994: 53) suggest that Swedish *få* served as the model for Finnish *saada*.¹⁰ This is a sensible hypothesis, but we need direct historical work, of course. At least, in North Germanic acquisitive modality is old. It was there since Old Norse, and even with two etymons: (i) *geta* (Zoëga 2004: lemma *geta*; Faarlund 2004: 130-131), the direct counterpart to English *get*, which survives in Icelandic until this day (and in Danish *gide*) and (ii) *fá* (Zoëga 2004: lemma *fá*), the etymon that survives in Swedish and Norwegian (and marginally also in Danish). One might also venture a comment on the role of contact in Latvian and Lithuanian. In these languages, the uses are more marginal and not standard. For Latvian, an influence from Finnic is not excluded, but then (Low) German (Axel Holvoet p.c.) could have been important, too. To judge from present-day uses, German *bekommen* ‘get’ and *kriegen* ‘get’ – as well as Dutch *krijgen* ‘get’ these languages could be credited with marginal acquisitive modality as well.¹¹ At least with transitive verbs, these three verbs allow participant-external possibility readings.¹²

- (27) German / Dutch (p.k.)
Ich bekomme/kriege *einen Film zu sehen.*
Ik krijg *een film te zien.*
 I get a film to see
 ‘I get to watch a film.’

Different from the ‘get’ uses in the other languages, however, intransitive verb complements are bad.

- (28) German / Dutch (p.k.)
 **Ich bekomme/kriege* *zu gehen.*
 **Ik krijg* *te gaan.*
 I get to go
 ‘I get to go.’

Of further notice is that the Latvian etymon probably is not even native: it is most likely a loan from Russian (Karulis 2001: 194). That in itself does not tell us about the meanings that were calqued, of course, and they probably were not the interesting ones, for the source language is Russian. An even better illustration of the need of making distinction between the origin of a form and its meaning comes from English: English *get* is actually a loan and even from the Scandinavian hotbed of acquisitive modality (*MED*, lemma *geten*). But this is indeed irrelevant for its modal history, for the form was borrowed in Middle English, and the first instances of modal *get* are found only in the 17th c. (*OED*, lemma *get*; Gronemeyer 1999: 30-1, 36).

5. Acquisitive possibility in South(east) Asia

The second hotbed of acquisitive possibility is South to Southeast Asia. This much was clear already since Matisoff (1991: 419-425) and Li (1991), but the topic has seen an entire

monograph devoted to in Enfield (2003), at least for Southeast Asia (see also Enfield 2001a, 2001b, 2004). The languages reported on are listed in Table 3. Matisoff (1991: 419-425) and Enfield (2003: 320-350) contains information on many other languages, as well, but it often does not suffice to decide which if any of the relevant possibility meanings the relevant markers cover. We will later also mention some facts of the Chinese dialect Xiang (based on Wu 2005) and of Tai Kadaic Nung (based on Saul and Wilson 1980).

Table 3: *South and Southeast Asian languages, acquisitive modals, and sources*

| Family | Languages | Verbs | Sources |
|--------------|---------------|------------------------|---|
| Indo-Aryan | Hindi, Bangla | <i>pa-</i> | van der Auwera 1999 |
| Sino-Tibetan | Burmese | <i>ya'</i> | Vittrant 2004: 311-7 |
| | Lahu | <i>gã</i> | Matisoff 1973, Matisoff 1991: 419 |
| | Lisu | <i>wã⁴⁴</i> | Bradley 2003: 231 |
| | Mandarin* | <i>(de/dé)</i> | Sun 1996: 129-38; Enfield 2003: 196-7; Li 2004: 158-60 |
| | Cantonese | <i>dak</i> | Matthews and Yip 1994: 242-4; Enfield 2003: 197; Cheng and Sybesma 2004 |
| Mon-Khmer | Khmer | <i>baan</i> | Matisoff 1991: 425-6; Haiman 1999; Enfield 2003: 189-92 |
| | Vietnamese | <i>được</i> | Matisoff 1991: 422-5; Enfield 2003: 202-3; Nguyen 2006 |
| | Muong | <i>an³</i> | Enfield 2003: 333-6 |
| | Pacoh | <i>boon</i> | Enfield 2003: 243-6 |
| Hmong-Mien | Hmong | <i>tau/taus</i> | Matisoff 1991: 421-2; Enfield 2003: 194-5 |
| Tai-Kadai | Lao | <i>daj⁴</i> | Enfield 2003: 75-162 |
| | Thai | <i>dây</i> | Iwasaki and Ingkaphirom 2005: 350-5; Srioutai (2006) |
| | Zhuang | <i>ndaej</i> | Sybesma 2006 |

* All the work reported on here relating to Mandarin concentrates on *de/dé*, but Peyraube (1999: 35) argues that Archaic Chinese had two acquisitive modals, the other being *huo*. There is also a form *děi*, which expresses necessity. We come to that in section 7. The brackets indicate that the construction is marginal.

Map 9: *Languages of South(east) Asia*

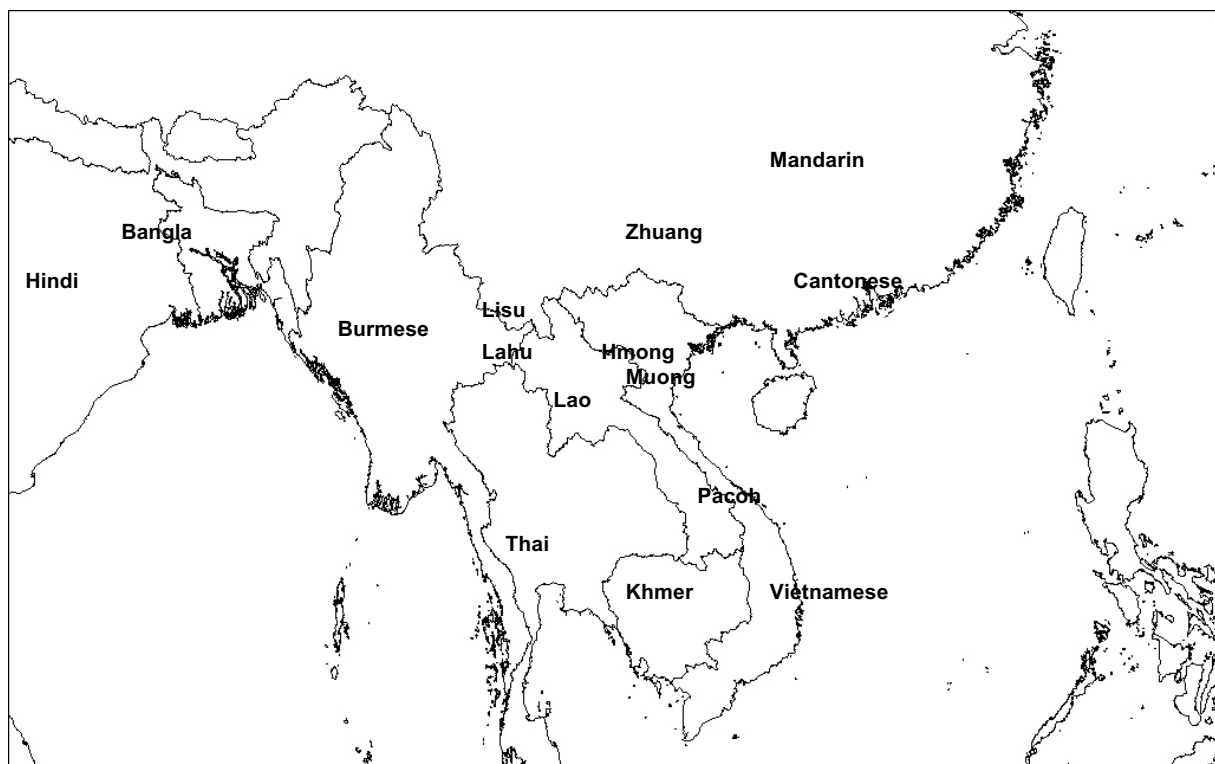


Table 4 gives an overview of participant-internal and participant-external meanings.

Table 4: *Acquisitive possibility modals in South(east) Asian languages*

| Languages | | Possibility | Participant-external | Participant-internal |
|--------------|----------------------------------|-------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Indo-Aryan | Hindi, Bangla | | + | – |
| Sino-Tibetan | Burmese | | | |
| Sino-Tibetan | Lahu, Mandarin, Cantonese, Xiang | | | |
| Mon-Khmer | Khmer, Muong, Vietnamese | | + | + |
| Hmong-Mien | Hmong | | | |
| Tai-Kadai | Lao, Thai, Zhuang | | | |
| Mon-Khmer | Pacoh | | – | – |
| No language | | | – | + |

If one compares Tables 2 and 4, one will see that the pattern is exactly the same: languages may use their ‘get’ verb for a participant-internal meaning but only if they also have it for a participant-external meaning. Lao (29) illustrates this point.

- (29) Lao (Enfield 2003: 101)
phen¹ vaw⁴ phaa²saa³ laaw² bò⁰ daj⁴
 s/he speak language Lao not get
 ‘S/he can’t speak Lao.’

The inability to speak Lao may be due to the absence of a permission (participant-external) or the lack of knowledge or learning (participant-internal). As made clear for the Northern European languages, the acquisitive markers entering the participant-internal area may have competition from other markers. In Lao, for instance, there is also a specific verb for intellectual capacity, i.e. *pên³*. How the competition is settled depends on the language: in Estonian, intellectual capacity remains exclusive to the relevant verb (*oskama*), in Lao, it is not: the domain allows both the specific *pên³* and the general (acquisitive) *daj⁴* (Enfield 2003: 101-2). Vietnamese, for example, seems to be like Estonian (see Simpson 2001: 125-6).

Like for Northern Europe, the present polysemies are again compatible with the hypotheses that when an acquisitive lexeme enters the realm of possibility, it either first reaches participant-external possibility and it may afterwards continue into participant-internal possibility or it reaches participant-internal possibility first, then continues towards participant-external possibility and loses the initial sense. For South(east) Asia, we have two kinds of evidence that the first path is more likely, at least for some languages. First, Enfield (2003: 38) points that the relevant ‘get’ verbs of the present-day Southeast Asian languages are all non-agentive, i.e., they are more like English *receive* and *acquire* than like English *get* – see the discussion of (22). If the relevant verbs were equally non-agentive, i.e. participant-external, at the time they developed the modal senses, then the first modal senses to be reached must have been the participant-external ones. Second, the hypothesis that participant-external possibility came first is supported in the diachronic study in Li (2004) for Mandarin. Li (2004: 227-9) argues that the *dé/de* verb (得), documented since the first inscriptions (1150-771), is attested first with a participant-external reading (3rd c. BC – 1st c.) and much later (from the 11th c. on) with the participant-internal one (cp. also Sun 1996: 108-162).¹³

Note also that like the Circum-Baltic region, Southeast Asia is an area with much language contact. Given the highly similar polysemies found in the area, given that the etymons are sometimes strikingly different – a point stressed by Enfield (2003: 320-35) – though sometimes also arguably similar, either because of a common origin or borrowing – the perspective taken by Li (1991: 42-6) and Matisoff (1991: 419-25) – given also that the

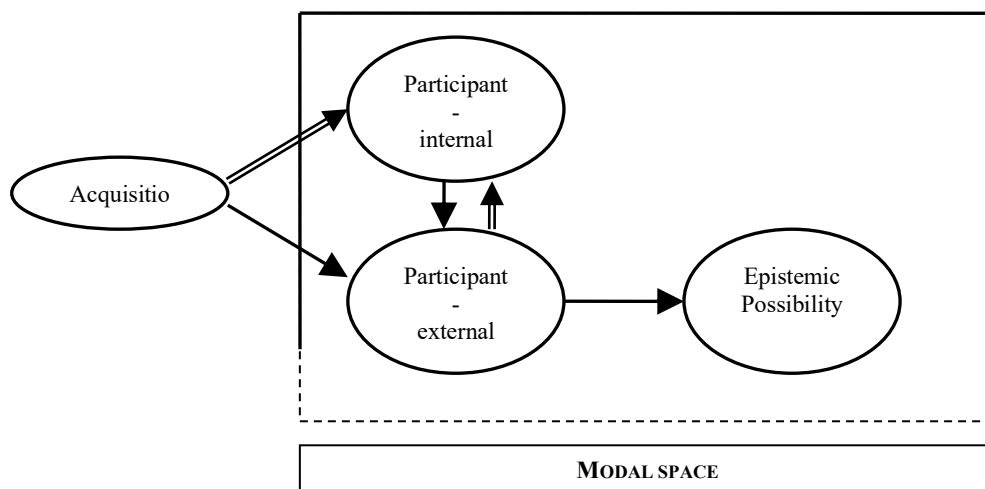
acquisitive modals sometimes have word order properties that set them apart from other auxiliary type constructions in the language – a point stressed by e.g. Simpson (2001) and by Sybesma (2006), it is clear that language contact must have played a significant role and that acquisitive possibility is an areal feature (see Simpson 2001: 91-2 for a diachronic hypothesis). Interestingly, even though for language-internal semantic reasons languages in this region will not develop a participant-internal meaning without having a participant-external one, they may of course neglect this and calque or borrow a participant-internal one only. But there is no evidence that this happened. This allows for the hypothesis that what was calqued was not an isolated use, but a use that relates to its polysemy, more concretely, a use that ties up modal sense with the non-modal ones. This process is captured well with the term ‘polysemy copying’ (see Heine and Kuteva 2005, Gast and van der Auwera 2006).

Note finally that we have not discussed the syntax of the various markers and patterns. For instance, the *daj*² in (29) is postverbal but it turns out that South(east) Asian markers can sometimes be preverbal as well as postverbal. We will briefly discuss this in section 7.

6. Modality’s map *revisited*

The analyses of the acquisitive modality in Northern Europe and South and Southeast Asia have made it clear that the link between participant-internal and participant-external possibility has to be reconsidered. The revision is double: (i) the meaning of acquisition may feed into participant-external possibility and from there into participant-internal possibility (we find direct evidence in Mandarin, indirect evidence in other South(-east) Asian languages, and the Northern European languages are all, except for Danish, compatible with this hypothesis); (ii) the meaning of acquisition may also feed into participant-internal possibility (direct evidence in Danish, and other Northern European languages are compatible with this hypothesis). We therefore propose to replace Map 7 by Map 10. The new arrows are the double-barreled ones.

Map 10: The bidirectionality between participant-internal and participant-external possibility



Compared to the original map, Map 10 is, of course, more permissive. From an esthetic or ‘theoretical’ point of view, this may be found deplorable, but not from an empirical point of view. Note also that the map does not show how frequently various paths are travelled. Given the available evidence it indeed seems to be the case that the path from participant-internal to participant-external possibility has been useful in languages from all corners of the

world, whereas the opposite, the change from participant-external to participant-internal seems to have happened in fewer areas.

7. Other issues

The map has been revised now. Acquisitive modality has been given its place. However, the introduction did not only promise a revision. It also promised at least a checklist of other important issues and tasks. Of course, the preceding sections have already pointed at some of them. They have stressed the need for detailed diachronic work, whenever possible, of course – the problem is that for many of the relevant languages historical records are simply lacking. More work, diachronic and synchronic, is also necessary to clarify the relation between the possibility meanings and the other meanings, especially the ones called ‘actuality’ in MM (illustrated with (19) and (20)), but more generally treated as ‘aspectual’. Map 10 represents the possibility meanings as deriving from ‘get’ etymons, but probably the aspectual meanings have to come in between. This was in fact already proposed in MM, and Enfield (2003) spells out this hypothesis for Southeast Asian languages in great detail. He also spells out the hypothesis (already found in the diachronic literature on Chinese – see Sun 1996: 108-62) that modality meanings arise along two paths, associated furthermore with a different word order. In the order with the ‘get’ marker in front of the lexical verb, the latter is originally the complement of ‘get’: so one does not get a simple thing, but a state of affairs. In the other path the ‘get’ is originally the second verb in a set of two verbs, a kind of serial verb construction, in which the second verb expresses to the result of the compound process – this path was already considered in Haiman (1999: 152). It is the second path that leads to the possibility meanings described in section 5, and, at least in Southeast Asia, according to Enfield (2003), the first path actually yields a necessity reading, more specially a participant-external one.

- (30) a. lexical ‘get’ + lexical verb → necessity + lexical verb
 b. lexical verb + lexical ‘get’ → lexical verb + possibility

The path of the necessity is illustrated with Lao (31).¹⁴

- (31) Lao (Enfield 2003: 147)
phen¹ huu³ nuak⁵ - daj⁰ vaw⁴ dang³
 (s)he ear deaf must speak loud
 ‘(S)he is deaf – one has to speak loud.’

The hypothesis about there being two paths is argued very convincingly, but we are less convinced about the correlation between the word orders and the two interpretations, or at least about the strength of the relation. First, in Mandarin, the relation holds only synchronically, not diachronically, for the ancestor of the current marginal possibility meaning, which is postverbal as expected, was preverbal – and still is in legal documents (Sun 1996: 131-2) as well as in at least one dialect area, the Xiang dialects of Hunan (Wu 2005: 343-63). Obviously, the scenario in (30b) does not explain this: the scenario is supposed to give only a postverbal possibility marker, not a preverbal one. Second, Vietnamese, Thai and Nung are problematic too. According to Enfield (2003) Vietnamese behaves according to the schema in (30), but then Nguyen (2006: 44) criticizes this, for Vietnamese also uses the relevant modal for preverbal possibility (cf. also Sybesma 2006). Thai is not really discussed at any length by Enfield (2003) and Nung is absent, but for Thai Srioutai (2006: 150-4) argues that *dây* can express possibility both in preverbal and postverbal position, and the same is

claimed for Nung *daj* (Saul and Wilson 1980: 48, 55-6). Third, when leaving Southeast Asia towards the West, one reaches Burmese, which has a marker with an absolutely fixed position, a postverbal one, which allows both participant-external possibility and necessity readings. This is illustrated in (32).

(32) Burmese (Vittrant 2004: 313)

- a. *di ja'-ne nin yoʔfnyon 'θwa lo'*
 this night-day 2SG movies go like
ya' tε
 get REA.ASS
 'You can go the movies tonight.'
- b. *'min ko tθ-son-tθ-ya me'myan khε' yin*
 2SG OBJ one-CLF-one-thing ask PST if
 'θwεʔ-θwεʔ-εʔ-εʔ- phye ya' mε
 quickly answer get IRR.ASS
 'If he asks you something, you must answer him quickly.'

Fourth, the same disregard for word order is found in Northern Europe. At least in Swedish, in Finno-Lappic and in both of the Baltic languages the markers also allow participant-external necessity readings – see Estonian (33).

(33) Estonian (Uuspõld 1989: 474)

- Sa-i-n oodata, et mine või hullu-ks.*
 get-PST-1SG wait.INF that go.IMP.2SG or crazy-TRANSL
 'I had to wait so long that I was getting crazy.'

At least four scenario's, all starting from a lexical 'get' present themselves as relevant for explaining the possibility-necessity polyfunctionality, and each may be correct, but for different languages or even different historical stages of a language:

- (i) each meaning results from a different path (e.g. Sun 1996, Haiman 1999, Enfield 2003);
- (ii) the possibility meaning came first and necessity developed out of it; this is what happened with English *must* and may happen again with *may*;
- (iii) the necessity meaning is the primary one, with possibility as the extension, as has happened with German *dürfen*;
- (iv) each meaning is just an instantiation of a vague participant-external modality; this is what we find with the German construction with *sein* 'be', illustrated in (9) (a scenario given to acquisitive modality in MM 104).

Note that for scenario's (ii) and (iii) negative contexts can be important, the equivalence of 'not necessary' and 'possible not' allowing necessity to be reanalysed as possibility and vice versa. Exactly this analysis has indeed been argued to be relevant for the Germanic changes, the change from possibility to necessity for *must* and the one from necessity to possibility for *dürfen* (Gamon 1993: 156-61; van der Auwera 2001b). One factor which may facilitate the reanalysis – and it was relevant for *dürfen* but not for *must* – is the negative polarization of the

modal, in which case the positive modal meaning may become opaque and unstable. It is suggestive that various South(east) Asian languages indeed have negatively polar acquisitive modals: Hindi and Bangla (van der Auwera 2001a), earlier Mandarin (Sun 1996: 122; Ziegeler 2002: 246-7) and Zhuang (Sybesma 2006).

Note that English also allows necessity *get* readings. One type is clearly still pragmatic. The sentences in (34) are the *get* counterparts to the *may/mogen* sentences in (15) and (16): in (34a) the general is speaking again and in (34b) we have the unwilling cook.

- (34) a. *You **get** to leave now.*
 b. *Your mom isn't home. So I **get** to cook tonight.*

The other type is rather different from anything else we have illustrated so far.

- (35) a. *I **have got** to go now.*
 b. *I **gotta** go now.*

The meaning of *get* in (35) owes its existence not so much to acquisition as to completed acquisition, i.e., possession, just like *have* in (11), a point already made in MM (119) and now fully corroborated by Gronemeyer (1999, 2001) and especially Krug (2000). The formal identity of the *got* in the *have*-less form *gotta* and the past tense possibility marker *got* must now amount to homonymy (see van der Auwera and Temürçü 2006: 133 for a brief discussion of the problem of homonymy in semantic maps and another illustration in the realm of modality).

Another issue we want to bring up is the following. We have argued that the relation between participant-internal and participant-external possibility is not unidirectional. But how about the relation between participant-internal and participant-external necessity? MM had this as unidirectional as well, from the internal to the external, but this is worthy of reconsideration, too. And in fact, it has been reconsidered, and what prompted it was not just any necessity marker, but one of the acquisitive type. Thus it is for the necessity meanings of acquisitive *děi* that Li (2004: 23) argued that it started in the participant-external range and reached the participant-internal domain later (cp. also Ziegeler 2002: 249). Li (2004: 92-3) also hinted at the plausibility of this hypothesis for English *need*, and in a detailed corpus-based diachronic study Taeymans (2006) finds this to be correct (in accord also with Loureiro Porto 2005: 122). Essentially, modern *need* goes back to an impersonal ‘it is compelled’ construction, which expresses an external compulsion (further back still is a personal construction in which the *need* verb meant ‘compel’). Of course, the necessity of *need* has nothing acquisitive about, different from the case of Mandarin *děi*, but both show that a modal development can go from the participant-external to the participant-internal.

A final issue concerns the epistemic meanings of acquisitive possibility. The semantic map predicts that participant-external acquisitive modals may but need not develop epistemic meanings. Not unexpectedly, they are much rarer than the ubiquitous participant-external ones, both in South(east)Asia and in Northern Europe. For the Finnic languages, for instance, as surveyed in Kehayov and Torn (2006) only Estonian is credited to have it. (36) is an example.

- (36) Estonian (p.k., variation on Ereht 2003: 107)
*Ootamatusi **saa-b** juhtuda.*
 surprises get-PRS.3SG happen.INF
 ‘There may be surprises.’

Curiously, according to Habicht (2001), this epistemic meaning is attested before the participant-external one. If the attestations reflect the true diachrony, then this is not the way it should be, at least not, semantically. Fortunately, Habicht (2001) offers at least a partial solution: the epistemic meaning is argued to be a calque from German *werden*. This then would be an example of a calque that does not respect the semantic map.

8. Conclusion

We have argued that there is enough evidence, indirect and direct, for the hypothesis that acquisitive modality forces us to rethink the directionality of the link between participant-internal and participant-external modality, more particularly possibility. We have analyzed some of the markers that are found in what seem to be two hotbeds of acquisitive modality, Northern Europe and South(east) Asia. Curiously, for both areas acquisitive modality constitutes an areal feature. We have pointed to the need for detailed historical research and we have briefly pointed at other issues, like the link between possibility and necessity meanings and the role of negation. With this article we hope to have contributed to the cross-linguistic visibility of acquisitive modality. Perhaps we will find it in other language families and areas too. Viberg (2002: 147) is a little pessimistic in this respect, and the perusal of 234 languages undertaken by van de Auwera and Ammann (2005) did not yield any positive results either. But we know of at least one more language, viz. Classical Greek with *χανδάνω* (*OED*, lemma *get*; Liddell and Scott 1961: lemma *χανδάνω*).¹⁵ Finally, this exercise also has an implicit methodological goal. Semantic maps may be wrong or incomplete, but they can be falsified and refined. Koptjevskaja-Tamm (in print) compares the work of Viberg (2002, 2006) and Enfield (2003) and laments on the lack of an appropriate cross-linguistically valid semantic meta-language. After the present *re*visit of at least some modal aspects of the polysemies of ‘get’ etymons in Northern Europe and South(east) Asia, the sustained usefulness of the semantic map tool keeps us optimistic.

Abbreviations

ACC – accusative, ASS – assertive, CLF – classifier, CON – connective, FIN – clause-final marker, IMP – imperative, INF – infinitive, IRR – irrealis, NEC – necessity marker, NEGV – negation verb, OBJ – object, PL – plural, PRS – present tense, PRT – partitive, PST – past tense, REA – realis, SG – singular, TOP – topic, TRANSL – translative. In the examples ‘p.k.’ stands for ‘personal knowledge’ and ‘p.c.’ for ‘personal communication’.

Notes

1 Some of the work was done by the first author when he revisited the semantic map (Kick-off meeting of CNRS Working Group on Modality, May 2004; 2nd International Conference on Modality in English, Pau September 2004). More work was done in the period that had Petar Kehayov and Alice Vittrant working in Antwerp (Winter 2005 and Spring 2006, predoc and postdoc) and Johan van der Auwera in Princeton (Winter and Spring 2007, sabbatical). For these fellowships we gratefully acknowledge the support of the Flemish and Estonian Governments (Cultural Agreement), the Flemish Fund for Research, the University of Antwerp and Princeton University. The work on Finnic was furthermore supported by a grant from the Estonian Scientific Fund. Several people are thanked in the paper, but we additionally want to thank the anonymous referee, the initially anonymous referee Nick Enfield (Nijmegen), as well as Zlatka Guentchéva (Paris), Renzhi Li (Shantou), Quan Hai Nguen (Cantho), Alain Peyraube (Paris), Jiranthara Sriouthai (Bangkok), Ekkehard König (Berlin), Daniel Van Olmen (Antwerp), Jan-Ola Östman (Helsinki) and Masha Koptjevskaja-Tamm (Stockholm) and we want to stress our gratitude to Kasper Boye (Copenhagen).

2 For English there is not much work though, and one may have the impression that the use shown in (1c) is recent. Given Gronemeyer 1999 (see also Austin 1997) this may only be an impression, but a sensible one, for this *get to* seems to align well with Krug's (2000) "emerging" modals" (including *have to*, *got to*, *want to* and *need to*).

3 The term was first used in the 2004 conference presentations mentioned in note 1. Enfield 2003 uses 'ACQUIRE' for the entire network of uses found with Mainland Southeast Asian 'acquire' etymons – for the same thing Sybesma (2006) uses 'ACQ'.

4 In this brief presentation we cannot claim to provide arguments or sufficient references. For these we refer to the original paper.

5 Further down (just before Map 6) we discuss cases of a possibility marker changing into a necessity marker and vice versa, and in this change there will be a stage in which a marker is vague between a possibility and a necessity reading. The case illustrated in (9) is different. The source meaning involving 'be' feeds into a meaning that has no prior possibility or necessity meaning.

6 The non-deontic participant-external meanings are not, however, given an oval of their own, which symbolizes that we do not know of any marker that has a participant-external non-deontic meaning without also having the participant-external deontic meaning. By the same token, the complete map will give an oval to the area containing participant-external possibility and necessity.

7 This is a little tricky. For any marker the map also shows its potential further development, and any further meaning will have to originate in a pragmatic extension first, i.e. in a particular 'use'. Seen from this perspective the map also shows uses, not just any uses, but pragmatically privileged ones.

8 This map, and a few more later, only shows the top part of the modal map. The incompleteness is symbolized by the dotted lines.

9 Interestingly, Heine and Kuteva (2002: 143-9), who were aware of very much the same literature as MM – though they were not aware of MM – implicitly also maintained the unidirectionality hypothesis.

10 Viberg (2002: 127, 147; 2006: 125; see also Koptjevskaja-Tamm in print) also notes the correspondence between Swedish and Finnish, and further remarks that despite the similar polysemies of the respective verbs, their current mutual translatability is actually rather low.

11 If we are allowed to add German then we get an areal feature that goes around the entire Baltic, even though it misses out on Slavic and it extends to English, Dutch, and Icelandic.

12 Depending on what is received (whether it is a film or a task, for instance), necessity readings are also allowed. This is discussed in section 7.

13 Wu (2005: 363) claims that in the Xiang dialects the *de* etymon meaning ‘obtain’ lead to volition before possibility. Her concern is with present-day Xiang. Even though it is clear that the preverbal *de* in modern Xiang can express volition – compare the discussion of Danish *gide*, it is not obvious how Wu (2005) can derive the diachronic hypothesis from the synchrony.

14 Enfield (2003) argues that in at least Lao this reading is only pragmatic, as a more or less common enrichment of a semantic aspect meaning.

15 Heine and Kuteva (2002: 144) list a language from another part of the world, too, viz. Réunion Creole French (with reference to Corne 1977: 144), but there the source meaning is ‘win, gain’ (French *gagner*). This is maybe a somewhat different matter though. In Southeast Asia we also find ‘win, gain’ etymons as a source of modality (Vittrant 2004 for Burmese and Enfield 2003 for Lao), but at least some of these are different from the ‘get’ etymons and when they are different they seem to yield participant-internal possibility, as does the Réunion Creole case.

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