

A causality puzzle in the domain of Finnish necessity modals

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A primary contrast to be drawn between *täytyy* and *pitää* in the descriptive literature on Finnish pertains to their *implicative* properties (Hakulinen et al. 2014; VISK § 1576). When conjugated in the *imperfekti* (the simple past), *täytyy* gives rise to the inference that the embedded proposition occurred in the actual world, whereas *pitää* may have an implicative or counterfactual reading, the latter is best translated as *was supposed to*, that is, there existed a point on the timeline where it was *intended or preferred* that p occur.

(1) a. Minun piti jättää veroilmoitus... mutta en tehnyt

1p. pitää.IMP submit tax.return... but NEG do.PRT

‘I was supposed to submit a tax return but I did not do it’

b. Minun täytyi jättää veroilmoitus... # mutta en tehnyt

1p. täytyy.IMP submit tax.return... but NEG do.PRT

‘I had to submit a tax return... # but I did not do it’

I will argue for a division of labour between these two modals where *täytyy* is a purely circumstantial modal, that is, it has an empty ordering source on a Kratzerian (1981, 2012) analysis. Appealing to differing restrictions on conversational backgrounds provides an explanation for data such as (2), which targets a circumstantial reading without an additional ordering. Here speakers report a clear contrast between the two modals (judged in a context where this is a general statement, not a deontic statement).

(2) a. Jokaisen ihmisen täytyy kuolla

every person täytyy die

‘Every person must die.’

b. ?? Jokaisen ihmisen pitää kuolla

every person pitää die

‘Every person must die.’

This leaves us with a puzzle, however. Contrary to what would be expected on this analysis, *täytyy* is licit in teleological contexts requiring an ordering source, such as “In order to get to work, he has to buy a new car”. In this talk, I will present a preliminary approach to analyzing *täytyy* as involving a not-at-issue causal component (as in Lewis 1973) as shown in (3), where *g* is the ordering source (this approach draws on Rubio-Vallejo 2017’s analysis of the Spanish necessity modal *deber*).

(3) $\lambda p.\lambda w. \forall w' [w' \in R_{\text{circ}}(w) \rightarrow p(w') = 1]$; defined iff $q [\text{CAUSE}(q,p)] \neg q \rightarrow \neg p \wedge g(w) = 0$

References

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