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Epistemic “must” and the presumptive mood in Hindi

The Phenomenon: This paper serves to look at the semantics of the epistemic *must*, particularly by looking at the presumptive mood in Hindi (2) in cases of direct and indirect speech. Used to indicate a speaker’s assumptions about states of affairs, the presumptive mood on the part of the speaker indicates more certainty than the subjunctive (3), but less than the indicative (1) which is used to convey a speaker’s beliefs. In cases of indirect or reported speech, the presumptive mood as the embedded clause is interpreted to have the same meaning as the subjunctive (4-5).

Possible Approaches: I will investigate two possible approaches to the semantics of the presumptive mood in Hindi. The first approach is to treat the presumptive as a modal (Kratzer, 1977, 1981). Such an approach implies that the utterance in the presumptive mood depends on the possible worlds and conditions for which the proposition will hold true. The second method is to treat the presumptive mood as a type of evidential (Davis, Potts, and Speas, 2007). Because the presumptive mood is a specific construction used only when the speaker has access to some specific piece of evidence and conveys this to the hearer, it could be an evidential construction and therefore follow a model of pragmatic reasoning.

The Proposal: It appears that the presumptive mood behaves more like a modal than an evidential. This proposal places the epistemic *must* as supported from the data of the presumptive mood as a strong form of “*probably*”, which extends the current framework of modals that has already been laid down by Kratzer (1981). This claim is first supported by the presumptive mood failing to assert or change the given context, as well as failing to raise initial contextual standards. These are the empirical tests of the evidential construction that I used, as stated by Davis, Potts, and Speas (2007). Instead, a modal approach based in truth conditional semantics accounts for the meaning of the presumptive mood, as well as its behavior in cases of reported speech.

Conclusion: This proposal shows that the epistemic *must* in the presumptive mood is a modal that is based on truth conditional semantics and expands on the given distinctions of *must* within theories of modality. Furthermore, this view of modality explains the case of the presumptive and subjunctive moods in embedded clauses of reported speech providing the same meaning and therefore truth conditions while also changing the meaning of the matrix clause verb.

(1) Rajam kal mandir gayi thi
Rajam yesterday temple go.PERF. female be.PAST.female
Rajam went to temple yesterday → **INDICATIVE**

(2) Rajam kal mandir gayi hogi
Rajam yesterday temple go.PERF .female be.FUT. female
Rajam must have gone to temple yesterday → **PRESUMPTIVE**

(3) Shayad Rajam kal mandir gayi ho
Maybe Rajam yesterday temple go.PERF.female be. SUBJ
Maybe Rajam went to temple yesterday/Rajam may have gone to temple yesterday → **SUBJUNCTIVE**

(4) Sundar.ne kahaa ki Rajam kal mandir gayi hogi
Sundar.OBL say.PERF that Rajam yesterday temple go.PERF.fem be. FUT. Female
Sundar said/thinks that Rajam must/may have gone to temple yesterday → **PRESUMPTIVE**

(5) Sundar.ne kahaa ki Rajam kal mandir gayi ho
Sundar.OBL say.PERF that Rajam yesterday temple go.PERF be.SUBJ
Sundar said/thinks that Rajam must/ may have gone to temple yesterday → **SUBJUNCTIVE**

(6) Sundar.ne kahaa ki Rajam kal mandir gayi thi
Sundar.OBL say.PERF that Rajam yesterday temple go.PERF be.PAST
Sundar said/knows that Rajam went to temple yesterday. → **INDICATIVE**