

6.

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Predict (like *anticipate* and some other verbs) co-occurs with a clause that contains a “future” morpheme: (see e.g. Farkas 1992)

- (1) a. Mary predicts that John will push the button.
b. Mary predicts that John is going to push the button.
c. * Mary predicts that John pushes the button.
d. * Mary predicts that John is pushing the button.
e. * Mary predicts that John pushed the button.
f. * Mary predicts that John was pushing the button.

Why is there this co-occurrence restriction?

Presumably, at LF as on the surface, *predict* combines with a finite clause. On a popular view, the lexical entry of a verb can stipulate what kind of constituent the verb combines with at LF, but the stipulation may refer only to “global properties” of the constituent, like the constituent’s syntactic category label or semantic type. There is no reference to pieces of the constituent. Could the co-occurrence restriction arise from a stipulation of this kind?

Probably not if the stipulation has to do with semantic type. There is no reason for thinking that the semantic type of the embedded clause in (a)-(b) is different from the semantic type of the embedded clause in (c)-(f).

And probably not if the stipulation has to do with syntactic category. Even if we suppose for argument’s sake that the presence of *will* or *going to* determines a distinct syntactic category for the embedded clause, an account of this kind would not be complete. Why don’t we find a verb *predict** that combines with a different kind of finite clause and gives rise to the same meaning that sentences with *predict* give rise to?

So why is there this co-occurrence restriction? It must have something to do with the details of *predict*’s semantics, and with the semantics of embedded clauses – and with what happens when the items combine. But what *exactly*? For instance, can one avoid the (selectively) unpopular position that embedded clauses contain reference to a specific time, like the speech time or the time of prediction?

(And does the analogous problem of mood selection have an analogous solution?)

References

Farkas, D. (1992) "On the Semantics of Subjunctive Complements," in P. Hirschbuehler and K. Koerner eds, *Romance Languages and Modern Linguistic Theory*, John Benjamins, Amsterdam, 69-104.