Deictic and Epistemic Distance in Polish

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Abstract   This work investigates the range of pragmatic contexts in which the Polish distal deictic *TAM* 'there' appears and argues that these environments share the feature of epistemic uncertainty, which is the semantic common denominator to all sub-modes of irrealis. The use of *TAM* in contexts of epistemic uncertainty is motivated by its central meaning. *TAM* can not only convey semantic distance (spatial) with respect to a proposition, but also epistemic distance, i.e. it can absolve the speakers from the responsibility for the truth of the utterance. Epistemic distance is the feature triggering the expansion of uses from one conceptual domain to another.

Keywords   Polish. Deixis. Distance. Irrealis. Negation. Indefiniteness.

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1   Introduction

The frequency with which the Polish distal deictic *TAM*[1] 'there' is encountered in speech suggests its potential development as a pragmatic marker.[2] Based on investigation of corpus data, this work reveals

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[1]   In order to avoid mistranslations and inaccurate glosses *TAM* is cited throughout the paper in italics uppercase letters. The interlinear word-by-word glossing is followed by a freer paraphrase.

[2]   Following Bolly et al. (2017, 90) we understand pragmatic markers as the overarching category that groups expressions functioning at the level of interpretation and sub-

that *TAM* appears in a wide range of linguistic environments, including modal and negative sentences, non-declarative speech acts, indefinite expressions, approximate quantifications, disjunctive coordinations, and so on. What all of these contexts share is that they seem to convey irrealis meanings, as described, among others, by Comrie (1985), Givón (1994, 1995), and Plungian (2005).

The research is based on data from the Narodowy Korpus Języka Polskiego (http://nkjp.pl/). Most of the examples were collected from the subcorpus of spoken Polish (http://spokes.clarin-pl.eu/, further referred to as [Spokes] Pęzik 2015).[3] In addition, some examples were taken from the Web [Web].

2 Literature on *TAM*

Major dictionaries of the Polish language gloss some contextual meanings of *TAM*, however they fail to capture its overall irrealis use. The *WSJP PAN* (Żmigrodzki 2007-2012, http://www.wsjp.pl) gives two definitions of *TAM*. TAM_1 is a spatial adverb denoting a place different from the location of the speaker. TAM_2 has, colloquially, a variety of possible functional meanings that it can take on in different contexts of use. First, in sentences such as *Ja tam ją lubię* 'I *TAM* like her',[4] TAM_2 is used by speakers to emphasize something they are saying, at the same time contrasting it with something they are not, or cannot, say. Next, in indefinite sentences, TAM_2 signals the incompleteness or lack of definiteness of what is said. Finally, in negative contexts such as *żaden tam złodziej* 'he is no *TAM* thief', TAM_2 stresses that what has been said has to be rejected as inadequate. The SWJP (Dunaj 1996) provides three entries for this item. The first is the purely spatial function. The second *TAM* is a 'modulant'[5] with the help of which speakers signal their indifferent, ironic or sarcastic intent, as in *Coś tam mówił, ale nie słuchałem* 'He said something *TAM* but I wasn't listening'. TAM_3 is a metalinguistic operator which functions as a marker of enumeration as in *Taka kobieta, jak szła na targ, to miała w koszyku tam jajka, ser, tam masło* 'The woman, who was going to the market, in her basket had *TAM* eggs, cheese and *TAM* butter'. Along with its anaphoric and cataphoric referential qualities,

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jectivity, such as interjections, modal particles, response signals and discourse markers.

3   For this analysis, data was drawn from Spokes using the query 'tam' with the following results: 20,608 occorrences in 278,405 utterances, with a frequency of 0.07 per utterance.

4   All translations are made by the Author of this article.

5   In the Polish lexicographic tradition a modulant is an invariable part of speech expressing some pragmatic functions (Święcka 2017).

the SJP (Szymczak 1978-1981) also distinguishes some colloquial 'expressive' (*sic*) uses of *TAM*, including that of emphasising speakers' indifference towards, or uncertainty about, what is said.

Existing literature on *TAM* does not address the theoretical issue of its use in environments associated with the irrealis mode. Ożóg (1985) gives a survey of the range of contexts where *TAM* appears, from indefinite (*przyniosła mu jakieś tam prezenty* 'she brought him some *TAM* gifts') and approximative (*mam kilka tam tysięcy* 'I have several *TAM* thousands'), to jussive (*nie rób tam tego!* 'don't do *TAM* that!'), and disjunctive (*przyjdą panie z sanepidu i nie podoba im się czy tam lampa czy tam kąt* 'people from the State Sanitary Inspection will come and won't like either *TAM* a lamp or *TAM* a corner'). Similarly, and more recently, Adamczyk (2017) examines the pragmatic functions of the unit *gdzieś tam* 'somewhere *TAM*', categorising them into the following: communicating vagueness/indeterminacy, mitigating the illocutionary force of utterances, minimising the effect of stylistically atypical wording and helping to formulate concepts. Although valuable for the variety of pragmatic environments taken into consideration, these studies fail to elaborate on the implications of their findings and do not provide a theoretical explanation of the analysed material. Finally, Walusiak (2004), who works in the frame of Grochowski's classification of Polish synsyntagmatic elements,[6] investigates the syntactic and positional properties of *TAM*, classifying it as a proper particle, an adsentential operator, an adverb or an asyntagmatic unit. The study is interesting for its review of the syntactic environments where *TAM* usually appears, but it does not comprehensively discuss the semantic common denominator of the contextual uses of *TAM*.

3 Deixis, Epistemic Modality, Irrealis

The traditional definition of deixis as a contextual-referential mechanism establishing a connection to the ego-hic-nunc origo distinguishes three basic categories of deictic reference: person, place, and time (Bühler 1990, 145). Deixis of person encodes the participants in the speech event and is primarily found in the pronominal system. Deixis of space, which encodes the spatial locations in relation to the deictic centre, is divided in proximal deixis, i.e. forms that refer to locations close to the centre, and distal deixis, i.e. forms that refer to locations farther from the centre. Finally, deixis of time encodes certain points

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[6] Ie lexical items which cannot occur in syntactic structures by themselves, such as complementizers, relative pronouns, co-ordinators, etc. (Grochowski 2003).

in time relative to a temporal reference point, usually the moment of utterance (Kragh, Lindschouw 2013). Deixis and epistemic modality, the linguistic category conveying the opinion of the speaker towards what he/she says (Pietrandrea 2005), are connected as both encode the subjective experience of the encoder (Green 1992). Epistemic modality is concerned with the speaker's attitude to the reality of the event, therefore can be viewed in terms of the distinction between realis and irrealis (Grenoble 1998, 230). Realis includes situations that have actually taken place or are actually taking place, while irrealis includes more hypothetical situations and also predictions, including predictions about the future (Comrie 1985, 45).

According to Givón (1994, 269; 1995, 167), the majority of the clause-types marked by irrealis share a number of key features that include the following: they tend to be future-projecting and to allow non-referring interpretation of NPs under their scope; they tend to group into the epistemic and valuative-deontic sub-modes; they tend to involve communication under low certainty and, unlike realis, greater flexibility of modal perspective in interacting with the interlocutor. Epistemic uncertainty could therefore be seen as the semantic common denominator of the grammatical contexts marked by irrealis. The environments in which irrealis is commonly found are verb complements, such as complements of modality, non-factive perception-cognition-utterance and manipulation verbs; modal adverbs and auxiliaries; adverbial clauses; non-declarative speech acts; future and habitual tenses.

The variety of environments where *TAM* appears will now be investigated and it will be shown that this distal deictic tends to surface in those contexts that are usually marked by irrealis.

4 Distribution of *TAM*

The analysis of the collected examples identified seven pragmatic environments where *TAM* commonly appears.

4.1 Modal

According to Givón (1994), modal auxiliaries are typical irrealis-inducing operators and epistemic adverbs such as 'maybe', 'probably', 'possibly, 'likely', 'supposedly', etc., create an irrealis scope over the proposition in which they are embedded, overriding realis tenses such as past, present-progressive or perfect. In Polish modality can be expressed in a variety of ways. Apart from modal verbs such as *móc* 'can' and *musieć* 'must', Polish possesses a wide range of explicit lexical means for coding the modal notions of possibility and necessity, such as nouns like *konieczność* 'necessity', adjectives like *możliwy* 'possible', sentence adverbs like *prawdopodobnie* 'probably', *może* 'maybe', *chyba* 'surely' or parenthetical expressions as *powiedzmy* 'let us assume', *przypuśćmy* 'let us suppose', etc. (Polańska 2006).

In the collected corpus, TAM is often found in concessive clauses with the modal auxiliary *chcieć* 'want', as in the examples (1)-(2) below.

1.

Możesz	*być*	*królem*	*królową*	*prezydentem*	*kim*	*TAM*	*chcesz*
you-can	be	king	queen	president	who	*TAM*	you-want
Ale	*jeśli*	*nie*	*jesteś*	*człowiekiem*	*z*	*sercem*	*to*
but	if	NEG	are	person	with	heart	then
jesteś	*nikim*						
you-are	nobody						

[Web]

You can be a king, a queen, a president, whoever *TAM* you want, but if you are not a person with a good heart you are nothing

2.

Myślcie	*sobie*	*jak*	*TAM*	*chcecie*
you-think	REFL	how	*TAM*	you-want

[Web]

Think whatever *TAM* you want!

The marker of the conditional mood in Polish is the particle *BY*, which is movable, inflectable and can be attached to the verb itself, to the auxiliary *być* or to the subordinator. In examples (3)-(4) *TAM* follows

immediately after *BY* and helps to strengthen the conditional meaning conveyed by the marker:[7]

3.

Wakacje?	*Wyjazdy?*	*A*	*kto*	*by*	*TAM*	*chciał*	*opuszczać*	*'Ranczo'?*
holiday	trips	but	who	BY	*TAM*	wanted	miss	ranch

[Web]

Holidays? Trips? But who would *TAM* want to miss 'The Ranch'?

4.

Oszywiście	*komuś*	*może*	*się*	*to*		*nie*	*spodobać*	*ale*
of course	someone	can	REFL	that		NEG	appeal	but
kto	*by*	*TAM*	*takimi*	*drobiazgami:)*				
who	BY	*TAM*	such	trifles				

[Web]

Obviously someone may not like it but who *TAM* cares about such petty issues

4.2 Negation

Although the irrealis category was originally identified mainly with modal sentences, such as counterfactuals, conditionals, and imperatives, more recent studies have shown that there is a strong relation also between irrealis and negative sentences. According to Miestamo (2005, 196) "irrealis assertions and negative assertions have various semantic and pragmatic connections and similarities and they can be regrouped together under the super-modality of non-fact against the super-modality of fact". Malchukov and Xrakovskij (2016) consider negation one of the main factors triggering the use of irrealis markers, even if there is considerable variation among languages.

In examples (5)-(6) we find *TAM* embedded in the first person negative epistemic expression *nie wiem tam* 'I don't know *TAM*'. It is a subject-predicate construction composed of the 1st person singular present tense negated form of the epistemic verb *wiedzieć* 'to know'. When this type of epistemic complement-taking-predicate (CTP)-phrases are employed in interaction, the semantics of the epistemic verb is significantly bleached and they frequently appear with no object complement, operating as discourse markers with no subordination at all (Lindström, Maschler, Doehler 2016). A preliminary

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7 Spelling mistakes, typos or grammatical errors present in the corpus were not corrected.

analysis of the corpus examples of *nie wiem tam* (or, with a different sequential order, *tam nie wiem*) shows that the construction, on the epistemic level, can be used as an epistemic hedge to index uncertainty or, on the pragmatic level, as a speech management device allowing the speaker to reflect on an upcoming utterance or change a topic.

5.

ja	*nie*	*byłam*	*tak*	*chora*	*od*		*dzieciństwa*	*ja*
I	NEG	was	so	ill	since		childhood	I
to	*przecież*	*doszłam*	*do*	*wniosku*	*że*		*ja*	*byłam*
this	now	came	to	conclusion	that		I	was
chora	*nie*	*wiem*	*TAM*	*miałam*	*zapalenie*		*nerek*	*zapalenia*
ill	NEG	I-know	TAM	had	inflammation		kidney	inflammation

gardła
throat

[Spokes]

I have not been so sick since childhood I now came to the conclusion that I was sick I don't know *TAM* I had inflammation of the kidneys, inflammation of the throat

6.

fala	*była*	*wtedy*	*taka*	*duża*	*no*	*bo*	*to*
wave	was	then	so	big	well	because	this
już	*TAM*	*nie*	*I-wiem*				
right now	TAM	NEG	know				

[Spokes]

the wave was so big then well I *TAM* don't know

In examples (7) and (8) we find instances of *TAM* in negative contexts (with the modifier *żaden* 'any' and the negative marker *nie* 'no, not', respectively), whereas in (9) *TAM* surfaces in an object NP after the negative contrastive coordinator *ani* 'neither':

7.

ja	*jestem*	*zwolenniczką*	*prostych*	*konkretnych*	*komunikatów*	*i*	*tak*
I	am	supporter	simple	concrete	messages	and	like that
bym	*zrobiła*	*na*	*twoim*	*miejscu*	*bez*	*żadnego*	*TAM*
would	do	at	your	place	without	any	TAM
czekania	*nie*	*wiadomo*	*na*	*co*			
waiting	NEG	unknown	for	what			

[Web]

I'm a believer in simple, straightforward messages and I would act like that if I were in your shoes without any *TAM* waiting for who knows what

8.

Ja	*TAM*	*jej*	*nie*	*cierpie!*	*Jest*	*głupia*	*i*
I	TAM	her	NEG	suffer	is	stupid	and
wogule	*próżna*	*szastała*	*kasą*	*żyła*	*jak*	*chciała*	*robiła*
wholly	vain	squandered	cash	lived	how	wanted	did
co	*chciała*	*to*	*niech*	*teraz*	*płacze*	*w*	*pace!*
what	wanted	then	let	now	cry	in	jail

[Web]

I *TAM* can't stand her! She's stupid and completely vain. She squandered her cash, lived how she wanted, did whatever she wanted so let her now cry in jail!

9.

- Hiszpanie	*podobno*	*bardzo*	*zyskali*	*na*		*wejściu*	*do*	*unii*
Spaniards	supposedly	a lot	gained	at		entrance	to	union
znaczy	*to*	*to*	*to*	*bezrobocie*				
means	this	this	this	unemployment				
-no	*tak*	*tak*	*tak*	*oni*		*również*	*no*	*a*
well	yes	yes	yes	they		also	well	and
poza	*tym*	*że*	*to*	*że*		*był*	*Madryt*	*że*
beyond	that	because	this	because		was	Madrid	because
jakaś	*TAM*	*tradycja*	*i*	*historia*		*no*	*to*	*też*
some	TAM	tradition	and	history		well	this	also
ani	*TAM*	*specjalnego*	*przemysłu*	*ani*		*takich*	*bogactw*	*naturalnych*
neither	TAM	special	industry	or		such	riches	natural
nie	*mają*							
NEG	have							

[Spokes]

– The Spaniards allegedly gained a lot with the entrance to the European Union I mean unemployment
– well yes yes they also, well and besides there was Madrid some *TAM* tradition and history, well they don't have neither any *TAM* special industries nor such natural resources

TAM is also found in what we may consider to be negative assertions without negators. In (10) doubted or denied quality is expressed by a construction with the interrogative *jaky* 'what' in clause-initial position followed by *TAM*. In (11) *TAM* follows an interrogative quantifier and an indirect personal pronoun to convey negative or indifferent attitude. In these constructions it is only the presence of *TAM* that signals a negative assertion.

10.

hej	no	jaka	TAM	stara	ja	mam	35
hi	well	what	TAM	old	I	have	35
lat	i	ani	nie	wyglądam	staro	ani	nie
years	and	neither	NEG	look	old	or	NEG
czuję	się	stara					
feel	REFL	old					

[Web]

hey, but what *TAM* old… I'm 35 years old and neither I look old nor feel old

11.

Co	mi	TAM!
what	me	TAM

[Web]

I don't care *TAM*!

4.3 Non-declarative Speech Acts

Another irrealis inducing context is non-declarative speech acts, including questions, commands, requests, and exclamations that, according to Givón (1995, 119), fall under the scope of irrealis for two related reasons: first, because they are future projecting, depicting events that have not yet occurred, and, second, because they involve the deontic modality.

In the corpus there are examples of *TAM* employed in exclamations expressing various emotions such as dislike, sorrow, surprise, disbelief or interest such as (12)-(13) (see also (11) above):

12.

Ale	gdzie	TAM!
but	where	TAM

[Web]

But where *TAM*!

13.

Co	TAM	słychać?
what	TAM	hear

[Web]

What's up?

4.4 Indefiniteness

The most common context of occurrence of *TAM* is in indefinite expressions. In Polish, indefiniteness is either left unmarked (nouns without indefiniteness markers may be interpreted as indefinite) or it is marked overtly by some specialised suffixes, such as *-ś* and *-kolwiek* added to pronouns/adjectives and adverbs, or by the particle *bądź* (*ktoś* 'someone', *coś* 'something', *jakiś* 'a certain', *gdzieś* 'somewhere', *kiedyś* 'sometime', *ktokolwiek*, *kto bądź* 'whoever', etc. – Heine, Kuteva 2006, 126).

TAM is often found following or preceding indefinite pronouns or adverbs in discourse contexts where speakers are emphasising the indefiniteness of referents as in (14)-(16) below.

14.

ale	*wiesz*	*co*	*ja*	*autentycznie*	*ja*	*słyszałam*	*Miodka*
but	you-know	what	I	really	I	heard	Miodek
w	*jakimś*	*TAM*	*programie*	*kiedy*	*mówił*	*że*	*ustalają*
in	some	TAM	program	when	said	that	establish
sobie	*językoznawcy*	*na*	*jakichś*	*TAM*	*kongresach*	*i*	*to*
REFL	linguists	at	some	TAM	congresses	and	that
jest	*uzależnione*	*często*	*od*	*frekwencji*	*użycia*		
is	dependent	often	from	frequency	use		

[Spokes]

but you know what I really heard Miodek in some *TAM* program when he said that linguists establish it at some *TAM* congresses, and it is often dependent on the frequency of use

15.

ludzie	*wyszli*	*tutaj*	*coś*	*popatrzyli*	*no*	*to*	*my*
people	came out	here	something	observed	well	that	we
zaczęliśmy	*grać*	*to*	*oni*	*zaczęli*	*śpiewać*	*ci*	*Włosi*
started	play	that	they	started	sing	these	Italians
popatrzyli	*myślałem*	*że*	*nas*	*będą*	*przeganiać*	*a*	*oni*
observed	I-thought	that	us	will	chase	but	they
podeszli	*zaczęli*	*się*	*bujać*	*ktoś*	*TAM*	*zaczął*	*tańczyć*
came	started	REFL	swing	someone	TAM	started	dance

[Spokes]

people here came out and looked at something well we started to play they started to sing and these Italians were observing us and I thought that they will chase us away but they came over and started to swing someone *TAM* started to dance

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16.

ale	były	kiedyś	pamiętam	na	jednym	obozie	miałam
but	were	once	remember	on	one	camp	I-had
takie	*kucharki*	*starsze*	*kobitki*	*już*	*wszystkie*	*znaczy*	*takie*
such	cooks	older	women	already	all	means	Such
w	*sumie*	*weteranki*	*mówiąc*	*krótko*	*które*	*się*	*Znały*
in	total	veterans	speaking	briefly	who	REFL	Knew
ileś	*TAM*	*lat*	*ale*	*zawsze*	*jeździły*	*razem*	
how many	*TAM*	years	but	always	went	together	

[Spokes]

but there were once I remember at one camp I had such cooks older women already all I mean altogether veterans to put it shortly who had known each other for many *TAM* years but always went together

4.5 Approximation

TAM also marks approximation, i.e. it surfaces in quantification expressions where amounts are not given with certainty. In (17)-(18) the function of *TAM* is to relax precision in the same way as what a vague approximator such as *około* 'about' does.

17.

bo	dolar	to	jest	trzy	złote	no	no
because	dollar	this	is	three	zlotys	well	well
to	*jest*	*TAM*	*sześćdziesiąt*	*no*	*to*	*jest*	*jakieś*
this	is	*TAM*	sixty	well	this	is	some
złote	*siedemdziesiąt*						
zlotys	seventy						

[Spokes]

because a dollar is three zlotys well that is *TAM* sixty, well that is some seventy zlotys

18.

no	no	parę	groszy	drożej	TAM	dwieście	Czy
well	well	couple	cents	more expensive	*TAM*	two hundred	Or
TAM	*sto*	*euro*	*drożej*	*zapłaciłeś*	*ale*	*wiedziałeś*	*Że*
TAM	one hundred	euro	more expensive	you-paid	but	you-knew	That
masz	*samochód*	*wiesz*					
you-have	car	you-know					

[Spokes]

well well, a couple of cents more expensive *TAM* two hundred or *TAM* one hundred euros you paid more, but you knew that you had a car you know

4.6 Disjunctive Coordination

In Polish, disjunctive coordination between NPs is expressed by the disjunctive coordinator *czy* 'or'. *Czy* developed from the instrumental of Proto-Slavic *čьто 'what' and is also used as an interrogative marker in polar (Yes/No) questions. This path of development is not unusual because, as Mauri and van der Auwera point out (2012, 394), disjunctive connectives frequently evolve from irrealis markers, such as dubitative adverbs, hypothetical forms or interrogative markers. Both disjunctive connectives and irrealis markers present situations as possibilities rather than occurring or realised events. Disjunctive coordination is, therefore, an environment directly linked with the irrealis mode.

In (19)[8] *TAM* reinforces *czy*, appearing right after the connector and before the coordinand.

19.

– ale	*z*	*już*	*komputer*	*wbudowany*	*czy*	*sama*	*klawiatura?*
but	with	already	computer	built-in	or	REFL	Keyboard
– nie	*nie*	*komputer*	*wbudowany*	*znaczy*	*wiesz*	*no*	*To*
NEG	NEG	computer	built-in	means	you-know	well	Well
to	*jest*	*taki*	*klawisz*	*który*	*się*	*nadaje*	*Na*
that	is	such	key	which	REFL	suitable	On
hautury	*typu*	*dansing*	*bo*	*on*	*ma*	*dobre*	*Takie*
heights	type	dancing	because	it	has	good	such
podkłady	*powiedzmy*	*tłist*	*raktajm*	*czy*	*TAM*	*czy*	*TAM*
bases	say	twist	ragtime	or	TAM	or	TAM
czacza	*jakieś*	*takie*	*powiedzmy*	*też*	*typu*	*TAM*	
cha cha	some	such	say	also	type	TAM	
ograć	*coś*	*Stinga*	*czy*	*TAM*	*czy*	*TAM*	*no*
play	something	Sting	or	TAM	or	TAM	well
takie	*utwory*						
such	tracks						

[Spokes]

– but with the computer already built-in or the keyboard?
– no no the computer is built-in I mean you know well there is such a key that is suitable for heights such as dancing because it has good bases let's say twist ragtime or *TAM* or *TAM* cha cha some let's say sort of *TAM* playing Sting or *TAM* or *TAM* well such tracks

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8   The context in example (19) could also be interpreted as habitual. The relationship between habitual and irrealis is intensely debated. In some languages, irrealis morphemes are used to express real or actual notions such as habituals (Plungian 2005). According to Givón (1994, 270), the habitual is a "swing modal category par excellence", as it is "pragmatically like realis" but "resembles irrealis" in terms of its semantics.

Closely related to its connective use in disjunctive coordination is the employment of *TAM* in list constructions, where it marks the speakers' intention to continue their turn with an example, as reported in the SWJP and in the following sentence by Ożóg (1985):

20.

Józek	zrobił	tam	szafę	tam	stół	tam	jeszcze
Józek	made	*TAM*	wardrobe	*TAM*	table	*TAM*	also

jakieś	inne	meble
some	other	furniture

[Ożóg 1985, 159]

Józek made *TAM* a wardrobe, *TAM* a table *TAM* also some other piece of furniture

The occurrence of *TAM* in contexts of continuation and enumeration confirms the bleaching of its meaning towards the expression of vagueness, indefiniteness or incompleteness.

4.7   Evidential

In some contexts, such as (21) below, *TAM* appears associated with quotatives and other discourse verbs in contexts of reported speech.

21.

dzisiaj	dzwoniła	do	mnie	Jola	się	TAM	pytała
today	rang	to	me	Jola	REFL	*TAM*	asked
co	TAM	u	ciebie	ogólnie	miałaś	punkcję	jak
what	*TAM*	by	you	generally	you-had	puncture	how
wyniki	tak	dalej	ogólnie	to	i	to	
results	so	further	generally	that	and	that	

[Spokes]

today Jola rang me she *TAM* asked how *TAM* are you overall if you had a puncture what are the results and so on

The use of demonstratives in evidential environments is not unusual because evidentiality is a deictic category indexing information to some point of origin (Wiemer 2010). Evidentials are used to mark the distance from a reported action, i.e. they give speakers the possibility of distancing themselves from the reliability of an utterance. Their evidential meaning is thus usually linked to an epistemic assessment (Plungian 2010). The proximity between evidentiality, epis-

temic modality and irrealis is confirmed by the fact that in some languages irrealis markers are used as evidential devices (Martin 1998).

5 Discussion

This paper explored the environments where *TAM* occurs and found that they are highly correlated with the grammatical expression of irrealis. *TAM* systematically surfaces in contexts marked by the underlying denominator of epistemic uncertainty, which is the thread that runs through modal and negative sentences, non-declarative speech acts, indefinite expressions, approximative quantifications, disjunctive coordinations and evidential assessments. But why does a distal deictic like *TAM* appear in contexts expressing epistemic uncertainty? The irrealis use of *TAM* in other Slavic languages (Bocale 2018) suggests that its development into an epistemic marker must be guided by general pragmatic principles, such as the conventionalization of conversational implicatures, a process "whereby a meaning pragmatically inferrable from the use of a certain form becomes conventionalized to the extent that it enters the semantics of that form" (Pietrandrea 2005, 193). The distal spatial meaning of the deictic *TAM* makes possible the rise of pragmatic inferential meanings in certain environments. The inference of distalness that *TAM* generates is semanticized as a new coded meaning of the speaker's epistemic uncertainty (Traugott 1999; Traugott, Dasher 2002). The result of this metaphorically-driven process is an epistemic *TAM* that contributes to signalling the speaker's stance towards a proposition. *TAM* comes to express not only deictic distance (spatial) with respect to a proposition, but also "epistemic distance", i.e. "the speakers are released from the responsibility for the truth of the utterance" (Plungjan 2010, 47).

In most environments, *TAM* contributes but is not solely responsible for conveying irrealis modality. However, in some negative assertions and in quantification expressions where the quantity is not determined with certainty the occurrence of *TAM* is decisive to communicate irrealis values. Regarding the first case, the absence of a formal negator distinguishes not only the negative constructions with an indefinite or negative pronoun or adverb followed by *TAM* analysed in this work but also negative answers where *TAM* comes to mean 'not at all' as in (22):

22.

– *żona*	*spała*	*dobrze?*
wife	she-slept	well

– *TAM*	*spała!*
TAM	she-slept

[Ożóg 1985, 159]

– Did your wife sleep well? – *TAM* she slept = She didn't sleep at all!

Only a thorough diachronic investigation can reveal whether these constructions were originally two-part with a formal negator, which gradually disappeared leaving *TAM* as the only negation device, i.e. whether *TAM* went through a Jespersen's cycle (Nevalainen, Palander-Collin 2011). In contexts involving approximate calculations and estimates, *TAM* is essential to express vague quantification.

Overall, the fact that in some environments *TAM* carries all the marking of negation, co-occurs with indefinites, vague or cardinal determiners and is not contrastive to *tu* 'here' indicates the bleaching of its original demonstrative meaning. Moreover, the loss, in the same contexts, of referentiality, one of the key features of deictic reference, testifies to the ongoing development of its epistemic functions.

The use of distal deictics to express epistemic distance is attested crosslinguistically. For example, in Burmese counterfactual conditions are realised morphosyntactically with the distal deictic *khé*, which means 'distant, far' and indicates that some proposition P is true only in a context evaluated as distant from the actual world (Nichols 2005, 291). In several Western Oceanic languages, the irrealis morpheme *na* etymologically can be traced back to an adverbial particle indicating an event's proximity to or distance from the present (Ross 1988, 374), whereas in Pomak the three deictics (-*s*-, -*t*- and -*n*-), which are employed in noun modifiers such as definite articles and demonstratives, can switch to temporal and modal uses, with the -*t*- article referring to the past and the -*n*- distal article referring to future, habitual or irreal situations (Adamou 2011, 881). Particularly interesting for this study are the epistemic uses of *lá* 'there' in Portuguese, where this distal deictic is employed not only to relax approximation in measurements (Mihatsch 2010), but also in negative assertions without a formal negator as in (23) below, that closely resemble the Polish one with *TAM* (22):

23.

A	*que*	*horas*	*a*	*Maria*	*saiu?*
at	what	hours	has	Maria	left?
Sei	*Lá*				
I-know	there				

[Web]

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At what time did Maria leave?
I don't know

These cases confirm that, by providing distance between the speaker and the reality of an event, distal deixis can be mobilized to convey epistemic meanings.

Finally, the rise of the epistemic uses of the Polish deictic *TAM* seems to add weight to the suggestion of Holger Diessel, who in concluding his cross-linguistic, large-scale survey of demonstratives notes that 'most grammatical markers derive from distal demonstratives, but this needs thorough investigation' (Diessel 1999, 161).

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