

Force and flavor of derived modals: Lessons from an existential construction in Ecuadorian Siona

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Possessive constructions (e.g. 'I *have* a dog') are commonly recruited to express modality (e.g. 'I *have* to go'). Given how common this strategy is, we want a principled way of deriving the link between possession and modality. In this talk, I suggest that we can find inspiration from an existential-possessive construction in Ecuadorian Siona. I provide a unified analysis of the existential and modal uses of this construction as an underlying type-flexible existential quantifier, which gets strengthened to universal readings in certain environments. I furthermore argue that the available flavors are restricted in a principled way by the argument structure of the construction. Finally, I give evidence supporting an extension of this analysis to its counterparts in other languages.