

Blocking between the imperative and the German modal “sollen”

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We argue that the imperative competes with, and blocks, the use of the German root modal “sollen” when it is the finite verb of a main clause. We analyze the imperative as origo-anchored and addressee-related (the sentence subject is the addressee). “Sollen” is not inherently tied to origo or addressee, though it allows origo-anchored uses and addressee-related uses. We argue that the competition with the imperative leaves a gap in the distribution of “sollen”-uses that eliminates uses that are simultaneously origo-anchored and addressee-related.

We analyze this in terms of competition between two bouletic operators in C, drawing on Bech (1949) and later literature for “sollen” and Condoravdi & Lauer (2012) and Oikonomou (2016) for the imperative.