



Speculative Clause in Aguaruna: Evidentiality meets Focus

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Phenomenon

The **speculative clause** in Aguaruna expresses speaker's "lack of certainty" towards preajcent proposition (Overall 2018). It is marked by:

- **evidentiality** suffix **-tai** in modality slot of main verb
- floating enclitic/suffix that marks **focus** of speculation:
 - **=tsu** focuses NP or subordinate clause
 - **-tsa** focuses matrix VP

Problem

Evidentiality morpheme **-tai** operates over the preajcent proposition which may contain a focused constituent: **the domain of quantification interacts with focus**. How do we model this interaction?

Solution (idea)

1. Treat **=tsu/-tsa** as focus feature
2. Analyze preajcent proposition as an *alternative semantics object*, which is a *set* rather than a point (c.f. Rooth 1992)
3. Model evidentiality morpheme **-tai** as operator over this object

Aguaruna characterization

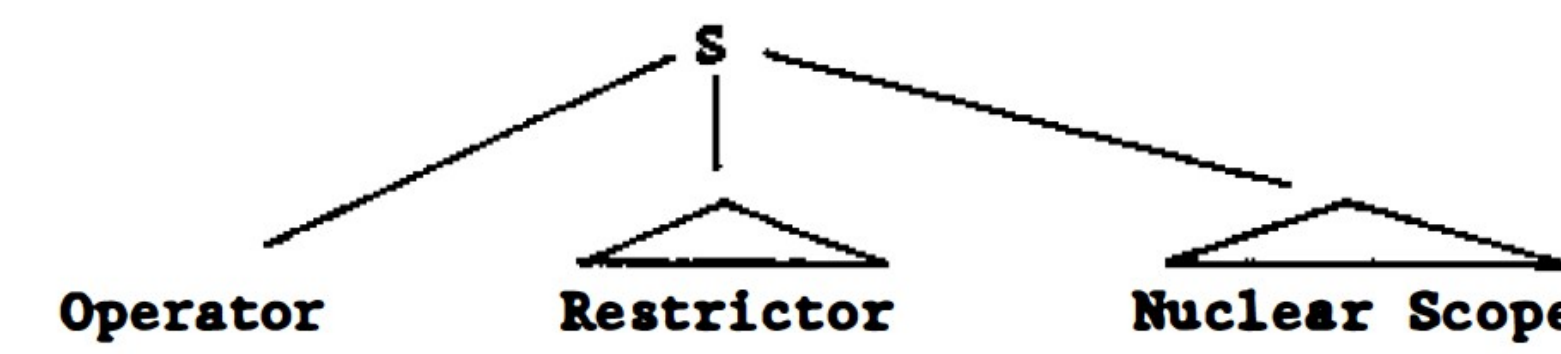
- approx. 55,000 speakers in northern Peru (Marañon river valley)
- Chicham (Jivaroan) family
- SOV, nominative-accusative
- synthetic, agglutinative, suffixing

Template for Aguaruna finite verbal morphology:

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
ROOT	VALENCY	OBJECT	ASPECT	NEGATION	TENSE	SUBJECT	MOOD

Preliminaries

1. Quantification has a **tripartite structure** (Partee 1991):

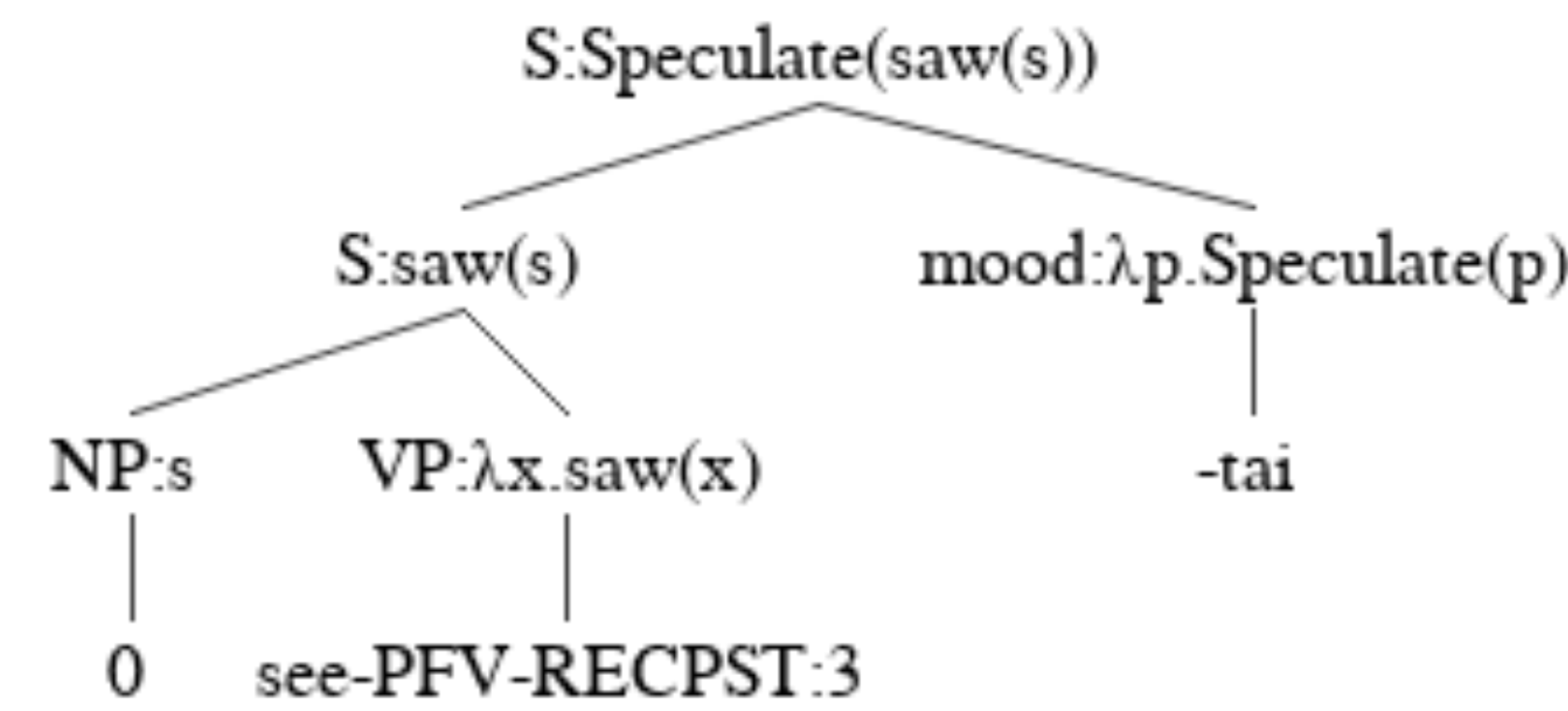


2. Alternative semantics **focus interpretation principle** (Rooth 1992):

In interpreting focus at the level of a phrase α , add a constraint that (*contrasting set*) $\Gamma \subseteq \llbracket \alpha \rrbracket^f$
 Γ is a variable with the type of a set of objects matching α in type

Data & Analysis

- (1) *wainkámatai*
 waina-ka-ma-**-tai**
 see-PFV-RECPST:3-**SPEC**
 's/he probably saw'



- (2) *numín tsupiktan̄satai*
 numi=na tsupi-ka-ta-ha-**-tsa-tai**
 tree=ACC cut-PFV-IFUT-1SG-**F_{SPEC}-SPEC**
 'I might cut wood'

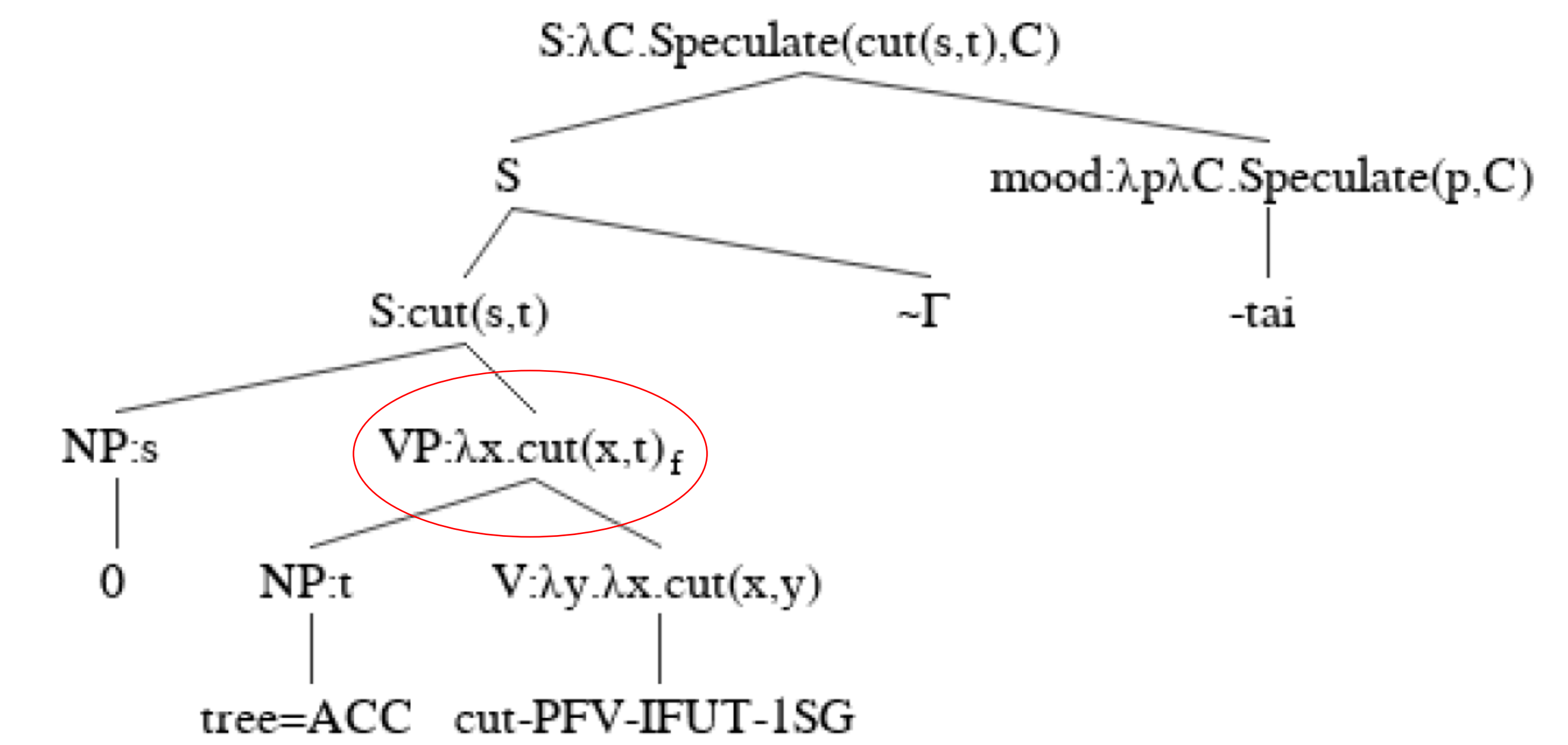
- restrictor = null subject
- nuclear scope = VP
- focus value = {I will R | R predicate}

- (3) *numinás tsupiktan̄tai*
 numi=na=**-tsu** tsupi-ka-ta-ha-**-tai**
 tree=ACC=**F_{SPEC}** cut-PFV-IFUT-1SG-**SPEC**
 'perhaps it's wood that I'll cut'

- restrictor = "I will cut"
- nuclear scope = "wood"
- focus value = {I will cut X | X entity}

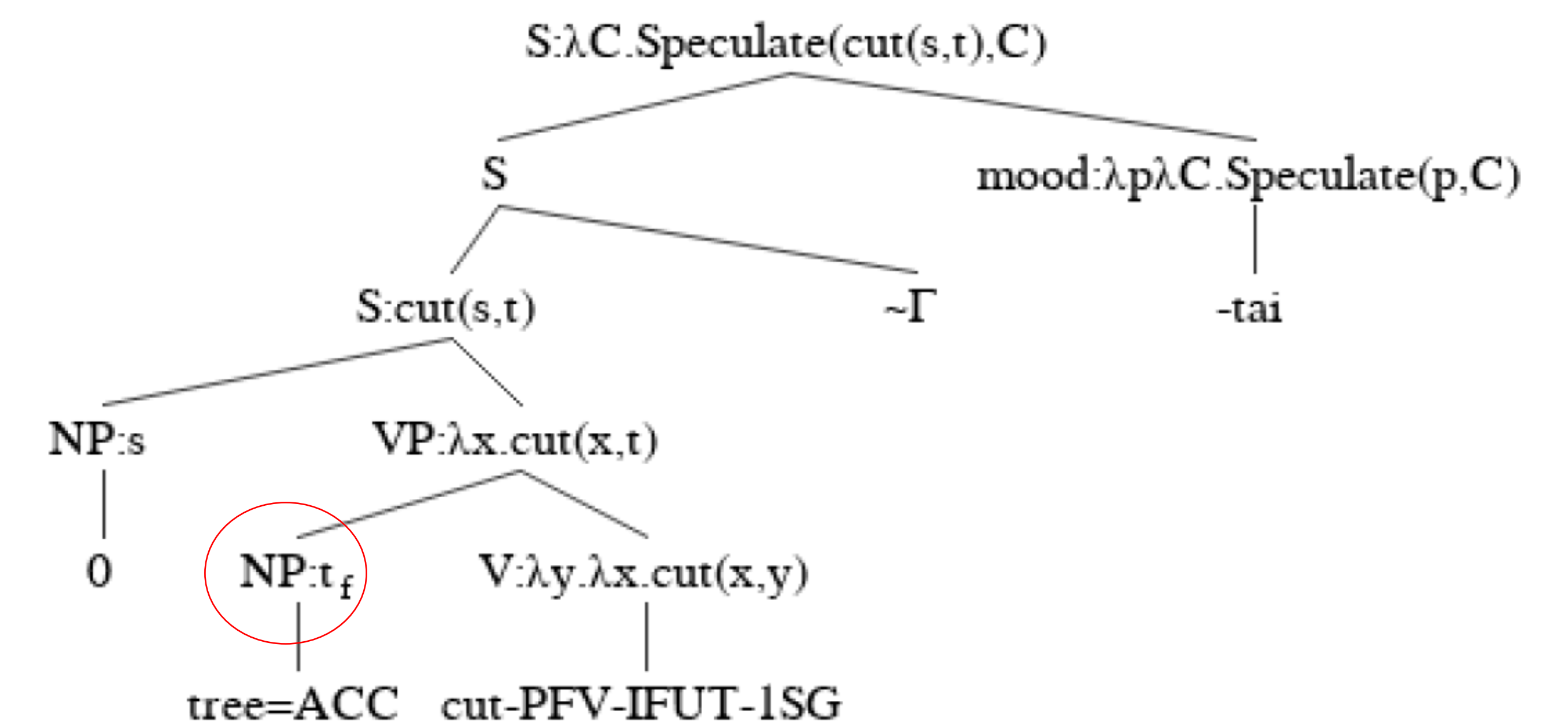
Value of operator: **-tai** = $\lambda p. \lambda C. \text{Speculate}(p, C)$
 (C is an extra-linguistically determined antecedent to focus value of sentence)

Focus-interpreted tree for (2)



Antecedent for $\Gamma \subseteq \{I \text{ will } R \mid R \text{ predicate}\}$

Focus-interpreted tree for (3)



Antecedent for $\Gamma \subseteq \{I \text{ will cut } X \mid X \text{ entity}\}$

Conclusion & Future Work

- Tripartite structure is made overt by speculative **-tai** and **=tsu/-tsa** complex
- What is the illocutionary force of the speculative clause?
- What is the typology of evidentiality-focus interactions?