Ádám Nádasdy

Eötvös Loránd University

"English Auxiliary Verbs: Why these and why not others?"

Auxiliary (or "helping") verbs are a traditional category of descriptive grammars of English (and other languages). The category, however, is surprisingly fuzzy: it is hard to find a working definition for it. At one end of the scale there are the modals like *can, will,* etc., which do not behave as verbs (no 3rd person -s, no infinitive, no imperative); at the other end there are full-fledged verbs like *tend*, *expect*, etc. What is the real difference between *Jim will lose his job* and *Jim expects to lose his job*? Like peeling an onion, we will look at modals, central and semi and quasi-auxiliaries, with the broader question: is meaning a classifying factor in linguistic analysis?