

Rethinking Evidentiality

Workshop proposal SLE 2017.

Convenors: Martine Bruil (CNRS, Paris), Bert Cornillie (KU Leuven) and Manuel Widmer (Zürich)

Description: Ever since evidentiality became a topic of interest in mainstream linguistics in the early nineteen eighties, a vast number of cross-linguistic and language-specific studies have considerably enhanced our understanding of the phenomenon. They have given rise to the widely accepted standard definition of evidentiality as the grammatical category that specifies the information source on which a statement is based (Aikhenvald 2004). At the same time, lexical evidentiality has gained terrain in studies concerned with European languages (cf. Squartini 2007 and the contributions therein). Both lines of research have led to new questions about the relation of the evidential category with other related ones.

One of the most fundamental issues that remains unresolved is the question of how we can diagnose and identify an evidential as such. Anderson's (1986) four influential criteria show up in many definitions. Yet, in both typological and descriptive studies, morphemes and words are sometimes referred to as "evidentials" without reflecting on whether this is the most adequate functional characterization. In many accounts, evidential readings are intertwined with other semantic and pragmatic dimensions.

In the former decade, a lot of attention was paid to the difference between evidentiality and epistemic modality (see De Haan 1999, Nuyts 2001, Cornillie 2007, 2009) and the question whether specific expressions belonged to one of the categories. This issue has recently been broadened so as to consider evidentiality and epistemic modality as subcategories of the conceptual domain of 'epistemicity' (rather in its etymologically primary sense of epistemologically relevant notions); under this heading epistemic (properly modal) meanings refer to 'epistemic support', while evidential meanings cover the region of 'epistemic justification' (Boye 2012). More recently, further steps have been taken so as to question the analysis of certain bona fide "evidential" subcategories as true evidentials. For example, Bruil (2014, 2015) has argued that reportative markers do not primarily mark information source, but rather signal a shift in epistemic authority. In the same vein, Widmer (2016, forthcoming) has argued that egophoricity (a.k.a. "participatory evidence"), does not specify one's source of information but the quality of one's knowledge as "exclusive / personal" or "non-exclusive / impersonal". Moreover, evidentiality has been interpreted as a category that is also involved in stance-taking and mitigation, as well as assessments of speaker and hearer commitment, with special attention to the knowledge differential between speech participants (cf. Nuckolls & Michael 2012). All this has important implications for the typological classification of evidentiality (see Plungian 2010; San Roque & Loughnane 2012; Hengeveld & Dall'Aglio Hattner 2015 for some recent proposals).

The issue of diagnosing evidential semantics and pragmatics is directly linked to the question of which methodology should best be used to study and evidential categories (cf. Cornillie, Marín-Arrese and Wiemer 2015). Within functional linguistics scholars have argued for the use of natural discourse including conversations (Aikhenvald 2004, Nuckolls & Michael 2012) and the use of techniques from discourse analysis (Gipper 2011). Within formal semantics and pragmatics, scholars have argued for elaborate elicitation methods that help to determine the felicity of the use of evidentials in specific contexts (see Faller 2002; Matthewson et al. 2007; Waldie et al. 2009; Peterson 2010; Murray 2010; Déchaine 2012, Korta & Zubeldia 2012).

In this workshop, we would like to bring together scholars working on evidentiality from empirical, methodological, and/or theoretical perspectives. In particular, we would like to bring together scholars working in the typological-linguistic tradition focussing on languages with grammatical evidentiality and scholars working on European languages which lack grammatical evidentials *stricto sensu*. Our common aim is to discuss the question of how evidentials can be identified and classified and how these different approaches can feed each other in our understanding of evidentiality. We are especially interested in the following questions (but potential contributors should not feel restricted by them):

- (1) What diagnostics / tests can we use to identify and study evidentials in the languages of the world?
- (2) Which cross-linguistic criteria can we define for evidentiality so as to bridge the gap between accounts that are concerned with grammatical evidentiality and studies focussing on the use of lexical evidentials in discourse?
- (3) Is it possible to describe evidential distinctions by reference to other semantic concepts, e.g. "event situation" vs. "learning time" (Klose 2014)?
- (4) Are there other notions that are necessary to adequately describe complex evidentiality systems, e.g. "epistemic authority" (Bruil 2014, 2015), "perspective" (Bergqvist in press), "knowledge differential" (Heritage & Raymond 2005; Sidnell 2012)?
- (5) Are there morphosyntactic and /or semantic criteria that allow us to group evidentials into cross-linguistically coherent subsystems, e.g. "representational" vs. "interpersonal" (Hengeveld & Dall'Aglio Hattner 2015)?
- (6) Is it justified to think of evidentiality as a network of independent epistemological categories that all gravitate towards the notion of "information source"? Can other notions, such as "mode of access" (Izquierdo 2016, Zemp 2016) be an alternative?
- (7) Can evidentiality in written discourse be compared with evidentiality in spoken discourse? Should typologies take into account differences inherent to communicative settings?

References

- Anderson, Lloyd B. 1986. Evidentials, Paths of Change, and Mental Maps: Typologically Regular symmetries. In *Evidentiality: The Linguistic Coding of Epistemology*, ed. by Wallace Chafe and Johanna Nichols, 273-312. Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishers.
- Aikhenvald, Alexandra. 2004. *Evidentiality*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Bergqvist, Henrik. In press. The role of 'perspective' in epistemic marking. *Lingua*.
- Boye, Kasper. 2012. *Epistemic meaning. A crosslinguistic and functional-cognitive study*. Berlin - New York: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Bruil, Martine. 2014. *Clause-typing and evidentiality in Ecuadorian Siona*. Leiden: Leiden University dissertation.
- Bruil, Martine. 2015. When evidentials are not evidentials: The case of the Ecuadorian Siona reportative. *Linguistic Typology* 19(3), 385–423.
- Cornillie, Bert. 2007. *Epistemic Modality and Evidentiality in Spanish (semi-) auxiliaries. A cognitive-functional Approach*. Berlin - New York: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Cornillie, Bert. 2009. Evidentiality and epistemic modality: On the close relationship between two different categories. *Functions of Language* 16 (1): 44-62.
- Cornillie, Bert, Juana Marín-Arrese and Björn Wiemer. 2015. Evidentiality and the semantics –

- pragmatics interface. An introduction. *Belgian Journal of Linguistics* 29: 1-17.
- Déchaine, Rose-Marie. 2012. (De-)constructing evidentiality: what morphology, syntax & semantics reveal. Paper presented at the conference *The Nature of Evidentiality*, Leiden, 14–16 June.
- De Haan, Ferdinand. 1999. Evidentiality and Epistemic Modality: Setting Boundaries. *Southwest Journal of Linguistics* 18: 83-101.
- Faller, Martina T. 2002. *Semantics and Pragmatics of Evidentials in Cuzco Quechua*. Stanford: Stanford University dissertation.
- Gipper, Sonja. 2011. *Evidentiality and intersubjectivity in Yurakaré: An interactional account*. Nijmegen: Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen dissertation.
- Hengeveld, Kees & Marize Mattos Dall’Aglio Hattner. 2015. Four types of evidentiality in the native languages of Brazil. *Linguistics* 53(3), 479–524.
- Heritage, John & Raymond, G. 2005. The terms of agreement: Indexing epistemic authority and subordination in assessment sequences. *Social Psychology Quarterly* 68: 15-38.
- Klose, Claudius. 2014. A temporal evidential in Aymara. *Proceedings of ConSOLE XXII*, 114–131.
- Korta, Kepa and Larraitz Zubeldia. 2014. “The contribution of evidentials to utterance content: Evidence from the Basque reportative particle *omen*.” *Language* 90 (2): 389-423.
- Matthewson, Lisa, Henri Davis & Hotze Rullmann. 2007. Evidentials as Epistemic Modals: Evidence from St’at’imcets. *Linguistic Variation Yearbook* 7, 201-254.
- Murray, Sarah E. 2010. *Evidentiality and the Structure of Speech Acts*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University dissertation.
- Nuckolls, Janis and Lev Michael. (eds) 2012. *Evidentiality in interaction*. Special issue of *Pragmatics and Society* 3 (2).
- Nuyts, Jan. 2001. *Epistemic Modality. Language, and Conceptualization: A Cognitive-Pragmatic Perspective*. Amsterdam - Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Peterson, Tyler R.G. 2010. *Epistemic Modality and Evidentiality in Gitksan at the Semantics-Pragmatics Interface*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia dissertation.
- Plungian, Vladimir. 2010. Types of verbal evidentiality marking: An overview. In Gabriele Diewald & Elena Smirnova (eds.), *Linguistic realization of evidentiality in European languages*, 15–58. Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton.
- San Roque, Lila & Robyn Loughnane. 2012. The New Guinea Highlands evidentiality area. *Linguistic Typology* 16, 111–167.
- Sidnell, J. 2012. “Who knows best?”: Evidentiality and epistemic asymmetry in conversation. *Pragmatics and Society* 3(2): 294-320.
- Squartini, Mario. 2007. Investigating a grammatical category and its lexical correlates. In *Evidentiality between lexicon and grammar*, ed. by Mario Squartini, 1-6. *Rivista di Linguistica* 19 (1).
- Waldie, Ryan, J. Tyler, R.G. Peterson, Hotze Rullmann & Scott Mackie. 2009. Evidentials as Epistemic Modals or Speech Act Operators: Testing the Tests. Paper presented at the *The Workshop on Structure and Constituency in the Languages of the Americas* 13, Purdue University.
- Widmer, Manuel. 2016. Same same but different. The relationship between egophoricity and evidentiality. Paper presented at the *Symposium on evidentiality, egophoricity, and engagement: descriptive and typological perspectives*, Stockholm, 17–18 March.
- Widmer, Manuel. Forthcoming. *A grammar of Bunan* (Mouton Grammar Library). Berlin: de Gruyter Mouton.