THE EXPRESSION OF EVIDENTIALITY IN SPOKEN AND WRITTEN TEXTS: EMPIRICAL APPROACHES TO ROMANCE LANGUAGES

ANDREU SENTÍ
Universitat de València
andreu.senti@uv.es
ORCID: 0000-0002-4470-0469

INTRODUCTION[1]

Evidentiality is a grammatical category that encodes information source as its primary meaning. The information can be: acquired through direct perception, reported by others (hearsay) or inferred by the speaker upon considering the information that is available. Languages with an evidential grammatical category have morphemes with a primary evidential value (Aikhenvald 2004). Nevertheless, Romance languages, like many other languages, have a tense-modal system and lack an evidential grammatical category, instead of which several lexical units or certain constructions convey information source. This special issue is devoted to some of those items, such as modal adverbs, evidential meanings developed from tenses such as the conditional, and certain (semi)grammaticalized markers using SAY-verbs and SEE-verbs. These *evidential strategies* are good examples of the lexical-grammatical continuum (Cornillie 2007b, Squartini 2008, Pietrandrea 2007, Diewald & Smirnova 2010).

Evidentiality has, over the last few years, been studied in Romance and more information regarding specific markers or lexical units is now available (Dendale 1994, Dendale & Tasmowski 2001, González 2005, Dendale & Van Bogaert 2007, Pietrandrea 2007, Cornillie 2007a, Squartini 2008, Albelda 2015, Oliveira 2015, González Ruiz *et al.* 2016, among many others). It is, however, necessary to revisit certain topics, such as the relationship between epistemic modality and evidentiality, the semantics-pragmatics interface (Cornillie 2009, Boye 2010, Cornillie *et al.* 2015, Wiemer 2018) or the historical perspective of evidentiality and semantic change (Sentí 2015, 2018; Antolí 2015; Martines 2017a, 2017b).

Polysemy and evidential extensions can be found in several domains, such as those of tense, aspect or modality (Squartini 2008). It can be difficult to find the primary meaning of modal items or to determine whether a given modal or

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evidential reading is also part of the core meaning, particularly as regards notions such as reliability, commitment or other epistemic and mirative values. This topic is addressed in all of the papers presented here. In fact, an effort has been made to find contextual configurations linked to a particular semantic interpretation.

From a functional perspective, all the papers collected are empirical approaches to evidentiality, some of which analysing written genres and others the spoken language. The languages studied are French, Italian, Catalan and Spanish. In the first paper, Patrick Dendale describes the semantics of the French modal adverb *certainement* and its adscription to evidentiality or epistemic modality. These notions are, in fact, also discussed in the second and third papers, but in the case of a tense marker, the reportative/epistemic conditional. Each paper deals with the conditional in a different way. Agnès Celles proposes that the French conditional is an epistemic construction with evidential indirect extensions (reportative, inference and mirative uses). Nevertheless, Paolo Greco analyses the Italian reportative conditional and considers that the primary meaning is reportative evidentiality. Despite depicting two different ways in which to disentangle epistemic modality and evidentiality, both authors agree that the reportative/epistemic conditional is a discursive strategy by which to avoid commitment.

After three papers studying written corpora, the last two papers focus on speech data. Jordi Antolí and Andreu Sentí, on the one hand, and Marta Albelda and Maria Estellés, on the other, deal with two emergent evidential forms that originate from SAY-verbs and SEE-verbs, respectively: the Catalan *diu que* and the Spanish *se ve que*. Although their perspective is mainly synchronic, both studies approach the diachronic constructionalization of these sequences.

These papers are presented in greater detail in the following section.

OVERVIEW OF THE SPECIAL ISSUE

The author of the first paper in this special issue is Patrick Dendale, who discusses the semantics of the French sentence modal verb *certainement* ('certainly'). The objective of this contribution, which is entitled "Are 'modal adverbs' automatically modal markers? The case of French *certainement* with its epistemico-modal and its evidential use", is to pave the way towards a careful review of all items that have traditionally been labelled as 'modal' in order to verify whether all their readings are modal or whether some of them could be analysed as evidential. The paper assumes a homonymic treatment of polysemy, since this will allow modal and evidential uses of a single item to be treated differently. Different and independent lexical units could consequently join different inventories of modal or evidential markers, and more systematic in-depth comparisons of markers of the same subtype would, therefore, be permitted, both cross-linguistically and intra-linguistically. The article is

organised into two blocs: sections 1-4 provide a theoretical discussion, while section 5 focuses on the empirical analysis of corpus data in context.

Firstly, the theoretical analysis proposed for both values of *certainement* as two different lexical units is discussed: *certainementₘ* (modal) and *certainementₑ* (evidential). This proposal aims to revisit the polysemy of the modal adverb *certainement* according to the traditional French lexicography: i) a 'strong modal use' that expresses full certainty and ii) a 'weak modal use' that has also been considered as epistemic ('strong probability'). The first use is easily analysed because only one semantic component is identified: it indeed indicates 'total certainty', signifying that it is a strong (epistemico-)modal that qualifies the content in terms of degrees of certainty and is situated in an extreme. It is crucial that the way in which the information has been acquired is not stated, and it is, therefore, by no means an evidential use. However, the second use, which is the most frequent, is analysed here as an evidential value because the inferential component is its primary element (*certainementₑ*).

The paper focuses especially on the reasoning behind why *certainementₑ* is an evidential marker: it indicates a non-deductive and non-monotonic inference. That is to say, the speaker elaborates a plausible conclusion from encyclopaedic knowledge which is also defeasible. In order to demonstrate his hypothesis, two semantic components and a pragmatic element are noted: the inferential primary component and the so-called 'epistemic posture of certainty' and an element of meaning expressed at the level of the utterance: a 'non-certainty' interpretation.

Dendale deals with real examples in section 5. He asks himself how his theoretical proposal can be applied to specific utterances in context. In order to answer the question, the author presents three parameters and some co(n)textual configurations that can be linked to them. These parameters prove to be significant for the interpretation of *certainement* as a modal or an evidential marker in context.

In conclusion, this contributes to this special issue with a theoretical proposal in order to analyse the semantics of *certainement* from a functional point of view. This approach can illustrate other studies of modal adverbs (or modal constructions) in order to clarify whether they are modal or evidential.

In her paper "How evidential is the epistemic conditional?", Agnès Celle deals with the so-called "journalistic conditional". Besides the temporal value (ulteriority) and a modal meaning found in the apodosis of conditional clauses (hypothetical modality), the conditional mood has also an epistemic value that is particularly used in journalistic texts. The paper argues for the epistemic modal affiliation to this value. Although the journalistic conditional is typically found in a reportative context, the author proposes that the evidential component is not, according to Aikenhevald (2004) and Rossari (2009), part of its semantics —unlike that which is stated by Dendale (1993, 2018) or Kronning (2012).

Sections 1 and 2 provide an account of the different positions as regards the nature of the epistemic conditional in literature. Moreover, Celle summarizes the

diachronic development of the construction. According to Rossari (2009), the epistemic conditional developed from the hypothetical use, since the earliest examples with this value are introduced by the sequence "*selon* + NP" ('according to') whose function is to identify a point of view in a hypothetical frame. In fact, the epistemic use is claimed to be a subcategory of the hypothetical use and is not considered to be an evidential. Building on this idea, Celle argues that the epistemic conditional is used to evaluate an information source by signalling that the speaker disclaims responsibility for the content of the proposition.

Section 3 presents the specific proposal of the paper: the epistemic conditional is analysed in terms of epistemic control (Langacker 2017). Since the information is non-factual and considered unreliable, the speaker marks his/her lack of epistemic control by using the conditional. This is what motivates the speaker. The following sections are devoted to discussing why this proposal is justified according to different configurations of the conditional, taking into account several examples in context: a) declarative sentences (section 4), b) reported speech sentences (section 5) and c) conjectural polar questions (section 6).

The reportative interpretation can easily be observed in declarative utterances from journalistic discourse. However, Celle points out that different evidential extensions are found (hearsay or inference), and the (epistemic) conditional may, therefore, have an undifferentiated indirect evidential function. This is argued using certain tests (denying the original reporting event). Moreover, the conditional has a mirative function: surprise contexts, which are unambiguously non-reportative since these utterances provide the speaker's perspective of a proposition drawn from abductive inferences. After considering all these uses regarding the nature of information source, Celle claims that the conditional encodes the speaker's lack of control over a particular situation, as stated by Rossari (2009) and corroborated by her own data.

The same treatment is proposed using examples of reported speech (with verbs of saying) and framing prepositional phrases (*according to…*). In these cases, it is shown how the conditional is used to disclaim responsibility, using a variety of available pieces of evidence. Finally, the epistemic conditional in conjectural polar questions is linked to the inferential declarative sentences in which the conditional is speaker-oriented. In interrogatives, a true reportative is expected to ask about the evidence that the addressee may have (as occurs when using an English adverb: *Is Zidane reportedly poorly paid?*). However, a comparable sentence with the French conditional (such as *Zidane serait-il mal payé?*) does not concern the evidence that the addressee has. The epistemic conditional is crucially anchored to the speaker, who remains the evidence holder in conjectural questions. This construction signals that a conjecture is inferred from controversial or unexpected information. Overall, it is used as a powerful argumentative means to put forward a speaker-oriented assumption without having to make a commitment to that claim.

Paolo Greco resumes the relationship between evidentiality and epistemic modality in his paper entitled "On the political use of the reportative conditional in Italian newspapers". This study focuses on the reportative conditional in Italian journalistic texts.

The reportative conditional, or *condizionale riportivo,* has been analysed as an evidential marker in Italian (Pietrandrea 2005, 2007), since reportativity is its primary meaning, even when it undertakes a role to stress that the speaker is not committed to the truthfulness of the given piece of information (Squartini 2001, 2008).

The study aims to demonstrate that the (experienced) speaker (or journalist) is able to use the reportative conditional (i.e. marking non-first-hand information) as a discursive strategy to allow him/her to downgrade the degree of probability of the state of affairs. This is possible because of a presupposition: the reported information has not been verified and is not, therefore, reliable (or is uncertain or false). This entails the possibility of seeing epistemic overtones in some utterances in context.

After introducing the topic, the hypothesis and a summary of the nature of the conditional according to the Italian linguistics literature (in sections 1 and 2), Greco presents his corpus-based study of journalistic texts (in section 3). The study collects data on the Italian conditional obtained from three newspapers on certain days in June 2018. Firstly, it is observed that the reportative conditional brings together about a half of all tokens of the form *avrebbe* ('would have'). This is a quite frequent use. Secondly, the corpus data indicate that it is especially common in the news and, in second place, in political texts.

Section 4 is devoted to the analysis of significant examples in the corpus that show how the speaker exploits the ambiguity between the reportative meaning and the epistemic overtones as a strategy to implicitly reject the reported information. For instance, in some of the examples, the information reported using the conditional is considered unreliable or not verified, whereas the information from other sources that are in accordance with the journalist's opinion are expressed in indicative —and not conditional. It is of great importance to note that these examples come from texts that are supposedly neutral (news and political texts). The reportative conditional is a useful marker for this purpose, since it shows an appearance of objectivity. This strategy is called a "political" use of conditionals. The section finishes with a diachronic perspective: this political use is found from the beginning of Italian modern journalism in the second half of the 19th century.

In summary, the analysis of the reportative conditional in context shows a pragmatic use with epistemic overtones as a rhetorical strategy undertaken in persuasive discourse. Nevertheless, the reportative value continues to be the primary meaning of the marker.

In their paper "Evidentiality in spoken Catalan. The evidential marker *diu que*", Jordi M. Antolí and Andreu Sentí conduct an analysis of the Catalan

evidential marker *diu que* (lit. 'it says that'), a Romance correlate for the Spanish *dizque* or the Italian *dice che*. It is also a corpus-based study that employs exclusively oral monologues and dialogues collected in an ethnological oral archive (*Museu de la Paraula*) and a spoken and colloquial corpus (*Corpus Parlars*). In fact, *diu que* is an evidential marker that is especially used in the spoken language and informal speech, thus justifying how important it is to study data from spoken corpora.

Section 1 provides a summary of the panorama of evidentiality in Catalan: modal adverbs, modal verbs, the reportative conditional and also some evidential constructions that come from SEEM-verbs, SEE-verbs and, of course, SAY-verbs. The study focuses on one of these (semi)grammaticalized constructions. The introduction presents different markers using the verb *dir* 'say' (reported speech) and, of course, the marker *diu que*, an impersonal construction with a hearsay function.

The state of the art and the methodological issues are introduced in the following sections. Section 2 is dedicated to the counterparts of *diu que* in Romance languages and to summarizing literature, particularly as regards the values expressed by this construction and the degree of grammaticalization that it has achieved in each language. Section 3, in turn, deals with methodological issues, and the spoken corpora are presented.

The analysis of *diu que* and the corpus data with examples in context are presented in section 4. It is argued that *diu que* is a partially grammaticalized construction, including a realization as a parenthetical in which it may be postposed to the proposition. The core of the study focuses on the function of the marker. It is analysed as a reportative marker, mainly intersubjective. It can mark a third-hand (indefinite) source and also an uncertain source (hearsay). Related markers such as *que diu que* (lit. 'that it says that') or the conventional formula employed to begin stories *això diu que era* (lit. 'this it says that') have been attested.

As with the previous studies in this special issue, this paper also deals with the relation of evidentiality with epistemic modality. The authors wonder whether an epistemic component can be found or whether there are any epistemic extensions. An analysis of the corpus data reveals that this is not the case of most of the examples in context. However, a pragmatic inference can be attested owing to the lack of commitment conveyed by *diu que*, and the reported information may be considered uncertain. It is interesting that one of the contextual configurations found here is also identified in the case of the French *certainement*. In his paper, Dendale argues that these "co(n)texts of ignorance" (*I don't know*) reinforce the evidential nature of this kind of markers (cf. § 5.2.3). Finally, a mirative extension can also be found for *diu que*, although crucially, not in the spoken corpora, but rather in attested spontaneous conversations.

Finally, section 5 contains the discussion and a summary of the most important conclusions, particularly as regards the relationship between *diu que* and the other Romance languages. A diachronic approach is also outlined. The

rise of *diu que* is seen as an example of a grammatical constructionalization with a tendency towards more subjective meanings, from a quotative strategy to a reportative evidential marker.

Marta Albelda and Maria Estellés examine the Spanish sequence *se ve que* (lit. 'it sees that') in "The boundaries between perception and evidentiality. Dialectal and diachronic variation in *se ve que*". The polysemy of this sequence is analysed, and particularly the rise of its grammatical evidential value (mainly inferential). This study is corpus-based and a dialectal and diachronic perspective is assumed. This methodology allows a better understanding of the values in context, because it provides specific proof in order to distinguish among certain values in ambiguous cases.

The sequence *se ve que* can convey various meanings derived from the regular meaning of *ver* ('see'): a direct physical perception. In section 1, the values of *se ve que* that are significant for this study are analysed, that is to say, those that introduce a sentence complement: i) indirect perception, ii) cognitive, and iii) evidential values, both inferential and reportative —despite the fact that the reportative use is less frequent than the inferential one.

At the end of section 1, corpus data are presented in order to account for the dialectal variation between European Spanish (Val.Es.Co corpus, PRESEEA, Eslora, Corma…) and American Spanish (Ameresco, PRESEEA). According to corpus data, one relevant conclusion is that the evidential use of the sequence is unknown in American Spanish and that in European Spanish *se ve que* is much more frequent in the east of Spain. It would, therefore, appear evident that there is a language-contact effect with Catalan, since this language has the evidential marker *es veu que*. The eastern area of the Iberian Peninsula comprises the Catalan-speaking area and also a Spanish-speaking area that has historically been highly influenced by Catalan. However, ambiguous perceptual-evidential examples are found throughout all the areas studied, which makes it necessary to explore the characterisation of the evidential value in greater depth and to justify a possible connection between the perceptual and evidential values. Diachronic corpora may, therefore, be decisive. Section 2 is devoted to clarifying this.

From a diachronic point of view, the earliest ambiguous examples attested are from the beginning of the 18th century, while the earliest evidential uses are from the mid-19th century —only in European Spanish. The authors also provide a detailed explanation of the formation process of the evidential use and bring to light that *se ve que* co-appears with explicit elements that show the reasoning process employed to infer the information. In fact, the primitive perceptual-evidential ambiguous examples are accompanied by the bases of the conclusion presented. The sequence *se ve que* gradually becomes more abstract: from the lexical meaning (physical or cognitive vision) to a pragmatic evidential value in some specific contexts, which progressively becomes an encoded grammatical meaning. The evidential value consolidates when the speaker indicates only that

his or her words are the result of a reasoning process, the bases of which may not even be known. Overall, it is a case of the conventionalisation of an invited inference (Traugott & Dasher 2002).

Section 3 provides the characterisation of the perceptual and evidential values in order to shed new light on the ambiguous examples and to explain the dialectal and diachronic variation observed in the previous sections. The authors show the key factor required to distinguish between both values: the cognitive focus is located in a different part of the process in each case. On the one hand, the evidential value is established by the fact that the cognitive focus is on the process of reasoning and not on the arguments used to obtain the conclusion. On the other, the perceptual value focuses on the arguments that lead to the conclusion. In fact, according to diachronic data, the perceptual value is older than the evidential one and, in these examples, the argumentative bases are explicit in the utterances. Another feature shown in context is that the perceptive value can be combined with marks of epistemic certainty, whereas the evidential one co-appears with marks of ignorance or uncertainty. This contextual configuration can also be found in the French *certainement* in Dendale's paper and in the Catalan *diu que* in Antolí & Sentí's paper.

In conclusion, the sequence *se ve que* is an excellent example of the conventionalisation of an invited inference. The lexical value (physical and cognitive perception) leads to the appearance of a pragmatic evidential value in some contexts with an explicit reasoning process, which gradually fades away and gives rise to a pure evidential value. This paper contributes to explaining a case of semantic change from a lexical unit to a grammatical value. The sequence *se ve que*, therefore, indicates its constructionalization as a discourse-marking element with an evidential core meaning.

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