Evidentiality

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For Bob with visual and non-visual love

Plea

This book is far from being the last word on evidentiality systems. I welcome reactions, counterexamples, new ideas, and data, to further develop, refine, and improve the generalizations and hypotheses put forward here. Please send them to me at Research Centre for Linguistic Typology, La Trobe University, Bundoora, Victoria 3086, Australia (e-mail: a.aikhenvald@latrobe.edu.au, fax: 61-3-94673053).

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Preface

This book is about the grammatical means of expressing information source, known as evidentials. The linguistic categorization of information source has a direct bearing on human cognition, communication, types of knowledge, and cultural conventions. This is what makes a cross-linguistic study of evidentials important for all scholars dealing with human cognition and communication, including linguists, psychologists, anthropologists, and philosophers.

Languages with large systems of evidentials present a true challenge for the typologist. My first encounter with these unusual systems was through fieldwork on Tariana, a North Arawak language spoken in northwest Amazonia, and Tucano, its neighbour from the East Tucanoan family. The more I worked on the topic, the more exotic and unusual systems I encountered, especially among little-known South American languages. This book came into being as an attempt to integrate these systems into a broad, cross-linguistically based, typological framework.

This study can be used both as a sourcebook for further typological studies, and as a textbook. Its discussion is couched in terms of basic linguistic theory, the typological and functional framework of linguistic analysis in terms of which most grammars are cast, and in terms of which significant typological generalizations are postulated. All the generalizations in this book are inductively based.

The readers and myself share a common set of purposes—to gain an understanding of what evidentials in the languages of the world do, and how they work. For this purpose, I have tried to analyse the facts and to formulate hypotheses and conclusions in the clearest possible way. The complexity of the actual linguistic systems speaks for itself.

Chapter 1 provides an illustration of evidentials, and general background. The final chapter provides a summary of findings throughout the book. In order to get an idea of evidential systems attested in the languages of the world, all readers are advised to study Chapter 2. Those who are interested in how information source can be marked through means other than a dedicated evidentiality system should read Chapter 4. Readers interested in historical and comparative issues and in language contact can hone in on Chapter 9. Scholars whose primary interests lie in the area of discourse should focus on Chapter 10. Those with a particular interest in the area of cognition and communication can refer to Chapter 11. The core of the volume is in Chapters 3 to 8 which detail the grammatical status and ramifications of evidential systems.

For ease of reference, evidential systems have been assigned designations such as A1, B2, or C3. These are fully explained in Chapter 2. The reader may find it helpful to photocopy the summary list of these, from the section on conventions, and keep it by their side while reading the volume.

A note on the materials and sources used is in order. This study is based on the examination of the grammars of over 500 languages representing each major language family and each linguistic area across the globe. Special attention has been paid to data that has recently become available on the languages of South America and New Guinea. All information on Tariana and Baniwa, from the Arawak family, and some data on Tucano, come from my own fieldwork.

Only about a quarter of the languages of the world have grammatical evidentials. At our present stage of knowledge it would have been unwise to restrict the analysis to just a sample of the available set of languages. Instead, I have looked at every language with evidentials on which I could find data. This all-embracing approach allows me to make the typology proposed here as comprehensive as it can be at this time, without imposing artificial limitations dictated by this or that 'sampling strategy'. Due to limitations of space, I could not cite examples of all occurrences of every phenomenon (the book is not intended to be an exhaustive encyclopaedia of evidentiality across the world). I usually provide a particularly illustrative example, and mention others. (Suggestive but somewhat tangential examples are added in footnotes.) If a phenomenon is found in more than half of the languages under consideration I call it 'relatively frequent'. If it is found in a restricted number of languages (one to five), I cite all of them and indicate its rarity. Note, however, that what appears rare to us at the present stage of knowledge may turn out to be more frequent when we start learning more about hitherto little-known languages and areas. This is the reason why I choose not to give any statistical counts at this stage. Five hundred is no more than about one-tenth of all human languages (estimates concerning the overall number of languages vary: 5,000 appears to be a conservative consensus; see Dixon 1997: 116, and the lengthy discussion in Crystal 2000). It thus seems most judicious to follow a qualitative approach at the present time, postponing quantitative analysis until more reliable data is available and can be assessed.

The choice of languages and the sheer number of examples discussed for each language reflect the state of study of each of these, rather than my own preferences. Jarawara, Nganasan, and Desano—for each of which a detailed analysis is available—are quoted much more frequently than, for instance, Kulina, Nenets, or Piratapuya—for each of which there is as yet no good comprehensive grammar. In each case, I refer to the most reliable, firsthand

data based on fieldwork and/or native speaker proficiency of the researchers. Assertions and conclusions that would be cast in visual evidentiality—had they been written in a language with obligatory evidentiality—form the basis for this book. 'Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence' is one of Grice's Maxims of Quality which I have followed throughout the study.

Lists of languages (with genetic affiliation), of language families, and of linguistic areas considered are given in the index. Examples which come from my own work are not followed by the indication of a source. I preserve the language names and the orthography of the source (or use an accepted practical orthography, transcription, or transliteration) unless otherwise indicated. I have also followed the morphemic analysis as given by the source (e.g. Johanson's for Turkish or Floyd's for Wanka Quechua).

A note on the use of gender-differentiated pronouns: I use 'they' for generic reference, without specifying the speaker's gender. The masculine pronoun 'he' always implies that a speaker is a man. In many cultures shamans are typically male—the use of 'he' to refer to a shaman reflects this cultural convention.

A study like this could only be definitive when good and thorough analytic descriptions have been provided for most of the world's languages. At present, we are a long way from this ideal. Nevertheless, I hope that this study will provide a framework within which fieldworkers and typologists will be able to work, and which can be amended and adjusted as new data and new insights emerge.

It is my hope that this book will encourage people to study evidentials, especially in little-known or undescribed languages, going out into the field and documenting languages threatened by extinction (before it is too late to do so).

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Abbreviations

=	clitic boundary
1	first person
2	second person
3	third person
3SP	'space' impersonal third person subject
4	fourth person
A	transitive subject function
ABL	ablative
ABS	absolutive
ABSTR	abstract
ACC	accusative
ACT	active
ACT.PART.NOM	active participle nominative
ADM	admirative
ADV	adverb
ADVM	adverbial marker
AFAR	translocative (at a distance)
AFF	affix
AFFIRM	affirmative
AG	agentive
ALL	allative
ANAPH	anaphoric
ANIM	animate
ANT	anterior
ANTIC	anticipatory
AO	synthetic aorist
AOR	aorist
APPL	applicative
APPR	apprehensive
ART	article
ASP	aspect
ASSERT	assertive
ASSOC	associative
ASSOC.MOT	associated motion
ASSP	asserted past particle

ASSUM	assumed
ATTR	attributive
AUD	auditory
AUG	augmentative
AUX, aux	auxiliary
BEN	benefactive
C.INT	content interrogative mood
CATEG	category
CAUS	causative
CDN	conjunct dubitative neutral
CDP	conjunct dubitative preterite
CIRC	circumstantial
CL	classifier
CM	conjugation marker
CMPL	completive aspect
CNTR	contrast
CO.REF	co-reference
COM	comitative
COMP	comparative
COMPL	completive
COMPL.CL	complement clause marking
COND	conditional
CONF	confirmation
CONFIRM	confirmative particle
CONJ	conjunct person-marking
CONJUN	conjunction
CONT	continuous aspect
CONV	converb
COP	copula
CSM	change of state marker
CUST	customary
DAT	dative
DEB	debitive
DECL	declarative
DEF	definite
DEL	delimiting
DEM	demonstrative

DEP	dependent clause marking
DES	desiderative
DETR	detrimental
DIM	diminutive
DIR	directive
DIR.EV	direct evidential
DIR/INFR	direct/inferred
DISJ	disjunct person-marking
DIST	distal
DIST.IMPV	distal imperative
DISTR	distributive
DN	deverbal noun
DP	discourse particle
DPAST	direct past
DS	different subject
DSTR	distributive
DTRNZ	detransitivizer
du, Du	dual
DUB	dubitative
DUR	durative
DYN	dynamic
EMPH	emphasis
EP	epenthetic
ERG	ergative
EV	evidential
EXC	excessive
excl	exclusive
EXCLAM	exclamatory
EXIST	existential
EXPER	experiential
EXPER.PAST	experienced past
EXT	extent
F	future tense inflection
f, FEM	feminine
FIN	finite
FINAL.PART	final particle
FIRSTH	firsthand
FOC	focus

FP	far past
FR	frustrative
FUT	future
FUT.NOM	nominal future
FUT.PART	future tense particle
GEN	genitive
GER	gerund
HAB	habitual
HS	hearsay
HUM	human
IC	indirective copula
ILL	illative
IM	synthetic imperfect
IMM.PAST, IMM.P	immediate past
IMPARF	imparfait
IMPV	imperative
IMPERS	impersonal
IMPF	imperfective
IMPV.SEC	secondhand imperative
INAN	inanimate
INC	incompletive aspect
INCH	inchoative
incl	inclusive
IND	indicative
INDEF	indefinite
INDIR.COP	indirective copula
INESS	inessive
INF	infinitive
INF.NON.MIR	non-mirative inferential particle
INFR	inferred
INST	instrumental
INT	interjection (filler, pause particle)
INTER	interrogative
INTR	intransitive
INTRATERM.ASP	intraterminal aspect
INTRST	complement of interest
INV	inverse prefix class

IPAST	indirective past
IRR	irrealis
ITER	iterative
L	l-past (aorist and imperfect)
LAT	lative
LIG	ligature
LIM	limitative
LNK	linker
LOC	locative
LOGOPHOR	logophoric
m, MASC, M	masculine
MAN	purpose-manner converb
MIR	mirative
MOD	modal particle
MSD	masdar
N	neuter
NARR	narrative
NCL	noun class
NCM	non-compact matter classificatory verb stem
NEC	necessitative
NEG	negative
NEUT	neutral gender
nf	non-feminine
NF	non-final marker
NFIN	non-finite
NMLZ	nominalizer
NOM	nominative
NOM.PAST	nominal past
NOM.PERF	perfective nominalization
NOMN	nominalization
NON.EXPER	non-experienced
NON.IMM	non-immediate
NONFIRSTH	non-firsthand
NONVIS	non-visual
NP	noun particle
NPOSS	non-possessed
nsg	non-singular
NUM.CL	numeral classifier

NVEXP	non-visual experiential particle
NVOL	non-volitional
O	transitive object function
OBJ, obj	object
OBL	oblique
OBV	obviative
Oc	marker of O-construction type
ONOM	onomatopoeia
OPT	optative
OR	orientation (direction) marker
OV	objective version
p	person
P	past
P.INT	polar interrogative mood
PABS	past absolutive
PART	participle
PART.PRES	present participle
PARTVE	partitive
PASS	passive
PASS.PRES.NOM	present participle nominative
PASS.PRS.NOM.NT	passive participle present nominative neuter
PAST.COMPL	completed past
PAST.REL	past relative
PB	probabilitive
PC	particle of concord
PDR	past deferred realization particle
PDS	previous event, different subject
PEJ	pejorative
PERF	perfect
PERF.CONT	perfect continuous
PINDEF	past indefinite
PINF	physical inferential particle
pl, PL	plural
PLUPERF	pluperfect
POSS	possessive
POST	post-terminal aspect
POT	potential
PP1	incompletive participle
PP2	completive participle

PPAST	post-terminal past
PREF	prefix
PRES	present
PRES.PARTIC.PART.SG	present participle partitive singular
PREV	preverb
PREV.DIR.EV	previous direct evidence
PREV.EVID.EV	previous evidence evidential
PREVEN	preventive
PRIV	privative
PROCOMP	procomplement
PROD	product verbalizer
PROG	progressive
PROHIB	prohibitive
PROL	prolative
PRON	pronominal
PROP	proprietive
PROSP	prospective aspect
PROX	proximate
PROX.IMPV	proximate imperative
PS	passé simple
PSSI	previous event, same subject, intransitive matrix clause
PSST	previous event, same subject, transitive matrix clause
PURP	purposive
Q	question
QUOT	quotative
RA	repeated action
REC	reciprocal
REC.P	recent past
REFL	reflexive
REL	relative
REM.P	remote past
REP	reported
RNR	result nominalizer
S	(intransitive) subject function
SD	sudden discovery tense
SDS	simultaneous event, different subject
SENS.EV	sensory evidential
SEQ	sequence
SF	subject-focus

SFP	sentence final particle
sg, SG	singular
SIM	similarity
sIn	singular action, intransitive
SJ	subject case
SMU	submorphemic unit
SPEC	specific nominalizer and relativizer enclitic
SPEC	specifier
SPECL	speculative
SS	same subject
SSSI	simultaneous event, same subject, intransitive matrix clause
SSST	simultaneous event, same subject, transitive matrix clause
STA	stative prefix type
STAT	stative
SU	subjunctive marker
SUB	subordinating
SUBJ	subjunctive
SUBR	subordinator
SUPP	suppositive, presumptive
SWITCH.REF	switch reference
T	temporal
TAG	tag question particle
TERM	marker of non-subject
TOP	topic
TOP.NON.A/S	topical non-subject case
TR	transitive
TRANSFORM	transformative
TS	tense
VA	verbal adjective
VCL	verb class marker
VCLASS	verb class
VERT	vertical classifier
VIS	visual
VN	verbal noun
VOC	vocative
VOL	volitional
VP	verbal particle
YNQ	yes-no question particle

Conventions

The following conventions have been adopted for the ease of reference to evidentiality systems:

Systems with two choices are referred to with the letter A and a number, as follows:

A1. Firsthand and Non-firsthand

A2. Non-firsthand versus 'everything else'

A3. Reported (or 'hearsay') versus 'everything else'

A4. Sensory evidence and Reported (or 'hearsay')

A5. Auditory (acquired through hearing) versus 'everything else'

Systems with three choices are referred to with the letter B and a number, as follows:

B1. Direct (or Visual), Inferred, Reported

B2. Visual, Non-visual sensory, Inferred

B3. Visual, Non-visual sensory, Reported

B4. Non-visual sensory, Inferred, Reported

B5. Reported, quotative, and 'everything else'

Systems with four choices are referred to with the letter C and a number, as follows:

C1. Visual, Non-visual sensory, Inferred, Reported

C2. Direct (or Visual), Inferred, Assumed, Reported

C3. Direct, Inferred, Reported, Quotative

The only kind of system with five choices found in more than one language is referred to as D1:

D1. Visual, Non-visual sensory, Inferred, Assumed, and Reported

The discussion of each type is found in Chapter 2.

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