

**LIN241**  
**Winter 2021**  
**Lecture 9 summary**

**1. Evidentiality**

- (1) In the most general sense of the term, evidentiality is the linguistic expression of the type of evidence that supports a statement.
- (2) In some languages, evidentiality is not encoded in grammar. This is the case of English, where evidentiality can be expressed through lexical means and complex phrases, like adverbs, verbs of report and parenthicals:
  - a. Reportedly, Jess quit her job. [reportative adverb]
  - b. I heard that Jess quit her job. [verb of report]
  - c. Jess quit her job, I heard. [reportative parenthetical adverbial phrase]
- (3) In some languages, evidentiality is expressed through grammatical means, such as inflection or clitics. This is the case of Cusco Quechua, in which evidentiality is expressed through a set of clitics:
  - a. Para-sha-n-si.  
Rain-PROG-3-si  
'It's raining.'

We say that the clitic *-si* in (3a) is an evidential marker, or evidential for short.

**2. Prejacent and evidential propositions**

- (4) In constative speech acts like assertions, evidential markers convey that the statement that is declared to be true is supported by a certain type of evidence.

The *prejacent proposition* is the proposition that is presented as supported by the evidence.

The *evidential proposition* is the proposition that describes the evidence.

In (3a), the prejacent proposition is the proposition that it is raining. The evidential proposition is the proposition that the speaker has hearsay evidence that this proposition is true.

### 3. Types of evidentiality

- (5) The evidence that supports a statement can be of different types. The following types are particularly important:
- Direct/perceived evidence: the speaker witnessed the fact described by the prejacent proposition, typically by seeing it.
  - Reportative/hearsay evidence: the speaker was told that the prejacent proposition is true.
  - Inferential evidence: the speaker can infer that the prejacent is true from other propositions.

### 4. Evidentials as illocutionary modifiers: Cusco Quechua *-si*

- (6) In some languages, evidentials can be analyzed as *illocutionary modifiers*.

An illocutionary modifier is an operator that changes some parameters of a speech act.

For instance, in her analysis of Cusco Quechua evidentials, Martina Faller (2002) argues that the reportative evidential *-si* turns speech acts of assertions into speech acts of presentation by changing their sincerity conditions and illocutionary point: the illocutionary point of a speech act of presentation is just to present the propositional content as something that another speaker said, and the sincerity condition is that someone told the propositional content to the speaker.

- (7) By analyzing an evidential marker as an illocutionary modifier, one makes several predictions:
- If the evidential marker operates on parameters of the speech acts other than its propositional content (e.g. the sincerity conditions), the propositional content will not be affected by the presence of the evidential marker.

In particular, we predict that the evidential proposition will not be interpreted in the scope of operators like verbs of saying or negation: it will project above these.

This is illustrated with Cusco Quechua *-si* on slides 12 and 13 of lecture 9.

- If the propositional content is not affected by the presence of the evidential marker, we predict that it will not be possible to target the evidential proposition by expressions of dissent, since expressions of dissent (e.g. “that’s not true!”) will target the propositional content of the speech act.

This is illustrated with Cusco Quechua *-si* on slide 11 of lecture 9.

- Depending on the meaning of the evidential marker, it may change the sincerity conditions of the speech act, so that the speaker is not committed to the truth of the speech act’s propositional content (the prejacent proposition).

This is illustrated with Cusco Quechua *-si* on slide 10 of lecture 9.

## 5. **Evidentials as modal operators: St'at'imcets *ku7***

- (8) In some languages, evidentials can be analyzed as epistemic modal operators.

There is some affinity between epistemic modals and evidential markers.

Remember that the necessity epistemic modal operator *must* conveys that its prejacent proposition follow from the information that is known by the speaker.

In other words, if *N* is a necessity epistemic modal operator, *Np* conveys that the prejacent proposition *p* is supported by the information that is known by the speaker. In order to turn *N* into an evidential operator, we can simply put extra constraints on how this information was learned by the speaker, e.g. visually or by hearsay.

More technically, we can restrict the modal base to propositions that the speaker learned based on the relevant type of evidence.

- (9) Matthewson (2007) argues that the reportative evidential marker *ku7* of St'at'imcets is a modal operator of this sort.

For Matthewson, *ku7* is a necessity modal operator which comes with a presupposition that the propositions in its modal base were learned by hearsay. See slide 24 of lecture 9 for an example.

- (10) This type of modal analysis of evidential markers make the following predictions:

- a. A statement with the evidential marker is a modal proposition, which conveys that the prejacent proposition follows from some information known by the speaker. Therefore, such a statement should convey that the speaker believes that the prejacent proposition is true.

This is illustrated on slide 20 of lecture 9.

- b. Since the modal operator is part of the propositional content of the statement, the idea that the prejacent proposition follows from the information available to the speaker can be targeted by explicit dissent.

This is illustrated on slide 21 of lecture 9.

- c. Since the modal operator is part of the propositional content of the statement, it can be embedded under various operators like verbs of saying.

This is illustrated on slide 22 of lecture 9. In the example on this slide, the speaker says that Lémya7 told her not only that Rose's grandchild got married, but also that she knows this from hearsay.

- d. Across languages, necessity epistemic modal operators in negative sentences tend to be interpreted outside of the scope of negation. Therefore, we expect that the same will be true of evidential markers that are modal operators.

This is illustrated on slide 23 of lecture 9