

**LIN241**

# **Introduction to Semantics**

**Lecture 9**

Evidentiality

# Evidentiality

- Indicates the source of evidence for a statement.
- In English, mostly expressed with lexical items:
  - adverbs, verbs, ...

(1) Reportedly, Jess quit her job.

(2) I heard that Jess quit her job.

(3) It looks like we're out of milk.

# Evidentiality

- In some languages, evidentiality is grammaticalized:
  - Expressed through affixes or particles.
- Example from Cusco Quechua (Faller 2002):

(4) Para-sha-n-si.  
rain-PROG-3-si

‘It’s raining.’

- ▶ Prejacent proposition: It’s raining.
- ▶ Evidential proposition: I heard that it’s raining.

# Evidentiality

- Markers of tense, aspect and modality can take on evidential value in some languages.
- English epistemic *must* has been argued to have an evidential value:  
(5) It must be raining.
- The Turkish perfect *muş* is evidential (Bowler & Ozkan 2017):  
(6) Usain Bolt dün koş-muş-Ø.  
Usain Bolt yesterday run-PERF-3SG  
'[I have indirect evidence that] Usain Bolt ran yesterday.'

# Questions about Evidentials

- At what level is evidential meaning encoded?
  - At-issue propositional content of utterances.
  - Semantic presupposition.
  - Modification of the illocutionary force of a speech act.

Evidentials as illocutionary modifiers

# Cusco Quechua evidentials

- Cusco Quechua:
  - Quechuan, spoken in Peru.
  - Over 1.5 million speakers (1989).
  - All data in these slides from Faller (2002, 2006).
- Three evidentials:
  - Best Possible Grounds (Direct): *-mi* (allomorph *-n*)
  - Conjectural: *-chá*
  - Reportative: *-si* (allomorphs *-s*, *-sis*)



## Cusco Quechua evidentials

- (7) Subrina-y-wan-mi tiya-sha-n.  
niece-1-COM-BPG live-PROG-3

p = 'He is living with my niece.'

EV: speaker saw that he is living with her niece.

- (8) Wañu-pu-n-ña-chá.  
die-BEN-3-DISC-CONJ

p = 'He will have died already.'

EV: speaker conjectures that he died already

(based on the fact that he was already very old when she knew him as a child.)

- (9) Congresista-manta-s haykuy-ta muna-n.  
congressman-ABL-REP enter-ACC want-3

p = 'He wants to be a Congressman.'

EV: speaker was told that p

## Reportative *-si* as an illocutionary modifier

- No commitment to the truth of the prejacent proposition:
  - An utterance of [ p *-si* ] is felicitous even if the speaker believes that p is false:

(10) Para-sha-n-si, ichaqa mana crei-ni-chu.  
rain-PROG-3-si but not believe-1-NEG  
p = 'It is raining, but I don't believe it.'  
EV = speaker is/was told that it is raining

## Reportative *-si* as an illocutionary modifier

- The evidential proposition is not at-issue:
  - An utterance of [ p *-si* ] cannot be challenged based on rejection of the source of evidence:

(11) Ines-qa qaynunchay ñaña-n-ta-s watuku-sqa.

Inés-TOP yesterday sister-3-ACC-si visit-PST2

p = 'Inés visited her sister yesterday.'

EV = Speaker was told that p

a. Mana-n chiqaq-chu.

not-mi true-NEG

'That's not true.'

Manta-n-ta-lla-n watuku-rqa-n.

mother-3-ACC-LIM-mi visit-PST1-3

'She only visited her mother.'

## Reportative *-si* as an illocutionary modifier

- The evidential proposition is not at-issue:
  - An utterance of [ p *-si* ] cannot be challenged based on rejection of the source of evidence:

(11) Ines-qa qaynunchay ñaña-n-ta-s watuku-sqa.  
Inés-TOP yesterday sister-3-ACC-si visit-PST2

p = 'Inés visited her sister yesterday.'

EV = Speaker was told that p

b. Mana-n chiqaq-chu.

not-mi true-NEG

'That's not true.'

#Mana-n chay-ta willa-rqa-sunki-chu.

not-mi this-ACC tell-PST1-3S2O-NEG

'You were not told this.'

## Reportative *-si* as an illocutionary modifier

- Unembeddability of evidential proposition:
  - The evidential proposition cannot be interpreted in the scope of a verb of saying:

(12) Marya ni-wa-rqa-n      Pilar-(\*si) chayamu-sqa-n-ta-s  
Marya say-1O-PST1-3 Pilar      arrive-PP-3-ACC-si  
p = 'Marya told me that Pilar arrived.'

Evidence:

- i Speaker was told by someone else that Marya told the speaker that Pilar arrived.
- ii Speaker was told by Marya that Pilar arrived.
- iii #Marya was told that Pilar arrived.

## Reportative *-si* as an illocutionary modifier

- Projection from below negation:

- The evidential proposition projects from below negation:

(13) Ines-qa    mana-s    qaynunchaw    ñaña-n-ta-chu    watuku-sqa.  
Inés-TOP not-REP yesterday    sister-3-ACC-NEG visit-PST2  
p='Inés didn't visit her sister yesterday.'

Evidence:

- i Speaker has reportative evidence that Inés did not visit her sister.
- ii #Speaker does not have reportative evidence that Inés visited her sister yesterday

## Reportative *-si* as an illocutionary modifier

- Faller analyzes *-si* as an operator that modifies speech acts.
- Speech acts have several components.
- Consider an assertion of “It is raining.”
  - Propositional content: the proposition that it is raining.
  - Illocutionary force: Assertion.
  - Illocutionary point: make the addressee believe that the propositional content is true.
  - Sincerity conditions: speaker believes that it is raining.
  - Other felicity conditions...

## Reportative *-si* as an illocutionary modifier

- *-si* turns an assertion into a speech act of *presentation*,
- this affects the illocutionary point and sincerity conditions:

(14) Para-sha-n-si.

rain-PROG-3-si

p = 'It is raining.'

EV = speaker is/was told that it is raining

- Illocutionary point:
  - the speaker 'just offers him- or herself as a channel for the original speaker, without wanting to make his or her own illocutionary point.'
- Sincerity conditions:
  - someone else told the speaker that it's raining.



## Reportative *-si* as an illocutionary modifier

- How does this explain the properties of *-si*?
- Sincerity conditions:
  - the speaker is not committed to the truth of the prejacent proposition.
- The evidential component is not part of the propositional content of the speech act:
  - The evidential proposition projects over negation.
  - The evidential proposition cannot be challenged.
  - The evidential proposition cannot be embedded.

Evidentials as epistemic modals

# St'at'imcets

- Alternate name: Lillooet.
- Salishan language, spoken in British Columbia.
- 316 native speakers (2016), ethnic population of 6,670 people (2014).
- All data in these slides from Matthewson (2007).
- Three evidentials (second position clitics):
  - *ku7*: reportative
  - *k'a*: inferential
  - *-an'*: perceived evidence

## St'at'imcets evidentials

- (15) wa7 ku7 ku sts'éts'qwaz' l-ta stswáw'cw-a  
be REPORT DET trout in-DET creek-DET  
'[I heard] There are trout in the creek.'
- (16) plan k'a tu7 wa7 tsu7c na máq7-a  
already INFER then IMPF melt(INCH) DET snow-DET  
'The snow must have melted already.'
- (17) pel'p-s-ácw-an' nelh neklíh-sw-a  
lost-CAUS-2SG.CONJ-PERC.EVID DET.PL key-2SG.POSS-DET  
'It looks like you've lost your keys.'

# Reportative *ku7* as an epistemic modal

- Commitment to the truth of the prejacent proposition:
  - A utterance of [ *p ku7* ] is not felicitous if the speaker believes that *p* is false:

(18) Context: You had done some work for a company and they said they put your pay, \$200, in your bank account. but actually, they didn't pay you at all.

um'-en-tsal-itás                      ku7              i              án'was-a xetspqíqen'kst  
give-DIR-1SG.OBJ-3PL.ERG REPORT DET.PL two-DET hundred  
táola,  
dollar

'They gave me \$200 [I was told],'

#t'u7 aoz kw s-7um'-en-tsál-itas                      ku    stam'  
but NEG DET NOM-give-DIR-1S.OBJ-3P.ERG DET what  
'but they didn't give me anything.'

# Reportative *ku7* as an epistemic modal

- The evidential proposition is at-issue:
    - A utterance of [ *p ku7* ] can challenged based on rejection of the source of evidence:
- (19) Context: Josie is a liar; she always lies and never tells the truth. You never believe what she says. Yesterday, you heard Josie telling me that Roger was elected chief. Then today, you hear me telling someone else:

Me: aw-an-ém                      ku7              k      Roger ku      cuz'      kúkwpi7  
choose-DIR-1PL.ERG REPORT DET Roger DET going.to chief  
'[I was told] We chose Roger to be the chief.'

You: kánem s-tsút.-su áti7?              kakez7-úlh k      Josie  
why    DEIC    lie-always DET              Josie NOM-say-2SG.POSS  
'Why do you say that? Josie is a liar.'

# Reportative *ku7* as an epistemic modal

- The evidential proposition can be embedded:
- The evidential proposition can be interpreted in the scope of a verb of saying:

tsut kw s-Lémya7 kw s-melyíh ku7 ta  
say DET NOM-L. DET NOM-marry REPORT DET  
í7mats-s-a s-Rose  
grandchild-3POSS-DET NOM-R.

'Lémya7 said that [she was told that] Rose's grandchild got married.'

Consultant's comment: "Lémya7 was saying that and she wasn't there either."

## Reportative *ku7* as an epistemic modal

- Projection from below negation:
  - The evidential proposition projects from below negation:

(20) cw7aoz ku7        séna7        ku    qu7    láti7  
NEG   REPORT COUNTER DET water DEIC  
'[I was told] There was no water there.'

Cannot mean: 'I was not told that there was water there.'



# Reportative *ku7* as an epistemic modal

- Matthewson's analysis of *ku7* (simplified):

- *ku7* is a universal epistemic modal (like *must*)

- *ku7* imposes a presupposition on the epistemic modal base:

the modal base of *ku7* is a contextual salient subset of the normal epistemic modal base, in which there are only worlds that are compatible with the evidence reported to the speaker in the actual world.

- (21) wa7 ku7            ku   sts'éts'qwaz' l-ta       stswáw'cw-a  
be   REPORT DET trout                      in-DET creek-DET  
'[I heard] There are trout in the creek.'

Assertion: Every world that is compatible with the information available to the speaker is a world in which there are trout in the creek.

Presupposition: The information that is available to the speaker in this context is based only what the speaker was told.

# Reportative *ku7* as an epistemic modal

- How does this explain the properties of *ku7*?
- The prejacent proposition follows from information the speaker believes in:
  - the speaker is committed to the truth of the prejacent proposition.
- The epistemic modality is part of the asserted proposition:
  - The epistemic necessity can be challenged.
  - The epistemic necessity can be embedded.
- The evidential operator is a necessity epistemic modal:
  - Necessity epistemic modals tend to have high scope over negation in many languages:

(22) Jess must not be at home. ( $\forall \neg$ ;  $*\neg \forall$ )