

How to embed evidentials

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In this paper, I explore the question of (non-)embeddability of evidential markers across languages. Some languages allow evidentials under attitude predicates, e.g. Cheyenne (Murray 2010) or Cuzco Quechua (Faller 2002). Some languages do not, e.g. Bulgraian, German, or Japanese (Sauerland and Schenner 2007).

Current theories of evidentiality attribute the ban on embedding to the illocutionary nature of the respective evidentials, under the assumption that speech acts in general are not embeddable. Such view suggests a one-to-one mapping between illocutionary evidentials and non-embeddable evidentials. However, there seem to be counter-examples to that in the world's languages.

It is not a given that speech acts always correspond to root clauses and there is a theory that puts forth an idea of embedded speech acts (Krifka forthcoming). I propose to implement semantics for evidentials within this theory and to derive non-embeddability from independent syntactic constraints.

This alternative is more versatile than the previous accounts as it allows to maintain the illocutionary vs. propositional distinction in the evidential domain without making unnecessary stipulations. It also makes correct predictions regarding which attitudes allow evidentials in their complements.

References

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