

(De-)constructing evidentiality

Rose-Marie Déchaine^{a,*}, Clare Cook^b, Jeffrey Muehlbauer^c,
Ryan Waldie^c

^a *Department of Linguistics, University of British Columbia, 2613 West Mall, Vancouver, BC, Canada V6T 1Z4*

^b *Northern Ontario School of Medicine, Canada*

^c *Verbulous, Inc., Canada*

Received 12 December 2013; received in revised form 19 September 2016; accepted 1 October 2016

Available online 6 December 2016



Abstract

Extending [Faller \(2002\)](#), we analyze clauses with evidential marking as presenting, but not asserting, a proposition p . Crucial to this analysis is the distinction between common ground and origo ground. The common ground regulates p 's to which interlocutors have made a commitment and is subject to the logic of contradiction: p and NOT- p cannot hold at the same time. The origo ground regulates p 's that depend on a perspective-holder's experience and is subject to the logic of faultless disagreement: p and NOT- p can hold concurrently, as long as they live in two distinct origo grounds. This has two consequences. First, languages differ in default illocutionary force: assertion versus presentation. Second, languages differ in how they code presentational force: lexically (English), morphologically (Nuu-chah-nulth), or syntactically (Plains Cree).

© 2016 Published by Elsevier B.V.

Keywords: Evidential; Assertion; Presentation; English; Plains Cree; Nuu-chah-nulth

1. Introduction

Recent treatments of evidentials focus on the question of whether they are best analyzed as illocutionary operators or epistemic modals.¹ In line with [Murray \(2010\)](#), we argue that the tension between these two approaches dissolves if one acknowledges that propositions introduced by evidentials may, but need not, update the common ground. This is best illustrated with an example. Speakers use evidentials to flag information they have access to, as distinct from other

* Corresponding author.

E-mail addresses: dechaine@mail.ubc.ca (R.-M. Déchaine), clare.e.cook@gmail.com (C. Cook), jtmuehlbauer@gmail.com (J. Muehlbauer), rwaldie@alumni.ubc.ca (R. Waldie).

¹ This work has had a long maturational process. Thanks to audiences at the University of Alberta (WSCLA 6), University of British Columbia (WSCLA 11), University of Ottawa (NELS xx), Leiden University (The Nature of Evidentiality Workshop), University of Arizona (WSCLA 20), as well as to E. Blain, S. Burton, T. Cardinal, [†]B. Crane, J. Crippen, H. Davis, J. Deschamps, D. Gerds, J. Guéron, H. Harley, D. James, [‡]D. Lightning, M. Keewatin, M. MacKenzie, L. Matthewson, A. Osa-Gomez, M.A. Palmer, D. Pentland, H. Rullmann, M. Rochemont, J.R. Ross, M. Speas, J. Tonhauser, M. Wiltschko, and H.C. Wolfart.

commitments. An example of how evidentials achieve this is given in (1), which reports an exchange between a linguist and a Plains Cree language consultant.²

- (1) **Linguist:** *How do you say “John saw Mary”?*
Consultant: *John ês ê-wâpamât Mary-wa*
 Linguist parses sentence and is unable to identify ês:
 a. *John ês ê-wâpam-â-t Mary-wa*
 John ?? C-see.VTA-DIR-3>3' Mary-OBV
Linguist: *Can you say “John ê-wâpamât Mary-wa”?*
 b. *John ê-wâpam-â-t Mary-wa*
 John C-see.VTA-DIR-3>3' Mary-OBV
Consultant: *Well [YOU_{FOCUS}] could*
 Linguist is puzzled, and turns to other matters; later finds out that ês is the Plains Cree REPORTATIVE evidential.
 c. *John ês ê-wâpam-â-t Mary-wa*
 John REPORT C-see.VTA-DIR-3>3' Mary-OBV
 ‘Reportedly/supposedly/apparently, John saw Mary’

In (1), the linguist requests a translation of an English declarative sentence, and the consultant volunteers a sentence that has a reportative evidential. The inclusion of an evidential is appropriate, as the speaker does not have first-hand knowledge of the veracity of the proposition. The only felicitous update is one where the speaker indicates how they acquired the propositional content, here via hearsay. (1) highlights that speakers deploy evidentials to indicate how they acquire knowledge of *p*, as distinct from truth-claims about *p*. This is a defining feature of evidentials: they present, but need not assert, *p* (cf. Fallor, 2002). Our presentative analysis, which claims that evidentials constitute a distinct presentative clause-type, makes the following contributions:

- It models how participants present *p* without committing to the truth of *p* by distinguishing the common ground from the origo ground (Section 2). The common ground — which regulates *p*'s to which participants have made a public discourse commitment — is subject to the logic of contradiction: *p* and NOT-*p* cannot hold at the same time. The origo ground (*og*) — which regulates *p*'s that depend on participants' experiential knowledge — is subject to the logic of faultless disagreement: *p* and NOT-*p* can hold concurrently, as long as they inhabit distinct origo grounds, with *p* in *og_A*, and NOT-*p* in *og_B*.
- It enriches the set of form-force pairings: in addition to requiring, asking, and asserting, speakers also present. We argue in Section 3 that while presenting *p* updates the origo ground, asserting *p* updates the common ground.
- It establishes that, in some languages, the basic clause type is presentative. Languages differ according to whether they mark presentational force lexically (Section 4), morphologically (Section 5), or structurally (Section 6).
- It contributes to research on the syntax–pragmatics interface relative to how participants' commitments are integrated into discourse contexts (Section 7).

2. The problem

Direct evidentials present propositions that are based on evidence directly accessible to the speaker through sensory modalities such as vision, hearing, and smell. Indirect evidentials present propositions based on evidence indirectly accessible to the speaker via inference, hearsay or quotation. Aikhenvald's (2004) survey of evidentials identifies one locus of variation as being the number of terms that code direct versus indirect information sources. To see this, consider (1), adapted from Aikhenvald (2004:65). In some languages, e.g. Cherokee, there is a two-way contrast between DIRECT

² Abbreviations used: 0 = 3rd person inanimate, 1 = 1st person, 2 = 2nd person, 3 = 3rd person, 3' = 3rd person obviative, A = addressee, AGR = agreement, ANIM = animate, AUD = auditory, C = complementizer, *cg* = common ground, CONJ = conjunct mode, CONJR = conjunctural, CONN = connective, CONT = continuative, DEM = demonstrative, DUBIT = dubitative, DIR = direct.evidence, EMPH = emphatic, EV = evidential force, EVID = evidential, FUT = future, ILL = illocutionary force, IMP = imperative, IND = indicative, INDF = indefinite, INDEP = independent mode, INDIR = indirect inter = interrogative, INV = inverse, LOC = locative, MOM = momentary, NA = noun animate, NEG = negation, NON.AFFIRM = non-affirmative, NUM = number, *o* = origo, *og* = origo ground, *p* = at-issue proposition, *°p* = not-at-issue proposition, *P* = property, PERS = person, PL = plural, POSS = possessive, PROG = progressive, PROX = proximate, *ps* = presented set (Portner); *ps* = projected set (Farkas & Bruce), *q* = set of propositions, *Q* = interrogative marker, QS = question set, QUOT = quotative, REL = relative clause, REPORT = reportative RESUM = resumptive, *S_D* = declarative sentence, SG = singular, *S_I* = interrogative sentence, SINC = sincerity condition, *S_P* = presentative sentence, TDL = to-do-list, TOP = topic, OBV = obviative, SAP = speech act participant (1st or 2nd person), SG = singular, SUB = subject, VAI = verb intransitive animate, VII = verb intransitive inanimate, VIS = visual, VTA = transitive verb animate VTI = transitive verb inanimate.

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/5043053>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/5043053>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)