

Evidentiality in Dena'ina Athabaskan

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Abstract. Dena'ina evidentials are enclitics with a complex paradigmatic morphology. Their first component varies with person, while the second component varies with animacy and number, thus marking source and nature of knowledge. Although evidentiality in Dena'ina is not coded as an obligatory inflectional category on the verb, it is also not scattered throughout the grammar. The existence of an incipient inflectional evidential system demonstrates the ability of Athabaskan languages to innovate morphological structures outside the verb. The uniqueness of the Dena'ina system demonstrates the heterogeneity of Athabaskan grammar beyond the verb word.

1. Introduction. Dena'ina and other Athabaskan languages are justifiably famous for their elaborate systems of templatic verbal morphology. As noted by Sapir, in Athabaskan "a single word expresses either a simple concept or a combination of concepts so interrelated as to form a psychological unity" (1921:82). Though this observation is often assumed to be characteristic of Athabaskan (and other polysynthetic languages), even a cursory examination of connected discourse reveals a preponderance of analytic sentence forms employing small—often monomorphemic—particles.¹ In this article, we describe the structure and function of one such class of particles in Dena'ina, an Athabaskan language spoken by approximately sixty people in the Cook Inlet region of Alaska.

Uniquely among the Athabaskan languages, Dena'ina exhibits a coherent subsystem of evidential enclitics that themselves exhibit inflectional properties. These evidentials are bound morphemes that generally occur in phrase-final position, usually following the verb.² (The morphological properties of Dena'ina evidential enclitics are discussed more fully in section 2.) In particular, they are not part of the core verb word and do not participate in the verbal inflection system. However, the evidential forms are themselves morphologically complex, consisting of two components indicating the source and nature of knowledge. This morphological complexity is one of the most striking features of the Dena'ina evidentials, and it is this complexity that sets Dena'ina evidentials apart from evidentials reported in other Athabaskan languages. The evidentials are composed of two components, each of which varies paradigmatically. The first component varies according to person, showing striking morphological similarity to the object pronouns. In (1)–(3), the forms *shit*, *dit*, and *yit* contain

the first components *sh-*, *d-*, and *y-*, referring to first, second, and third person, respectively.³

- (1) *Shi dach'u shq'ula chi'el'ish shit.*⁴
 1.SG thus marmot I.kill EVID
 'This is how I kill marmots.' (Pete 1990:12 ["Shq'ula Tsukdu"])
- (2) *Yada t'en'an dit?*
 what you.do EVID
 'What are you doing?' (Stephan 2005:5)
- (3) *Nuntghesht'ih yit.*
 I.will.see.you.again EVID
 'I'll see you again; see you later.' (Balluta and Evanoff 2005:10)

As we argue below, these enclitics vary paradigmatically to yield a complex system of evidential marking indicating source of knowledge. The first person form *shit* could be translated as 'according to me' or 'in my way'. In other words, someone else may do it differently; the speaker is just telling how she does it. The speaker is the source of knowledge. The second person form *dit* could be translated as 'according to you' and hence is often found in interrogative forms. The hearer is the source of knowledge. The third person form could be translated as 'it will be'. That is, the outcome is a given, dependent on neither the speaker or hearer as the source of knowledge.

The second component of these Dena'ina enclitics is also paradigmatic, varying according to the animacy and number of the referent. This becomes particularly obvious when looking at presentational sentences such as (4)–(7).

- (4) *Ginidi chashga shi.*
 this.here cup EVID
 'This is a cup.' (Stephan 2005:14)
- (5) *Gladys eshlan shit.*
 Gladys I.am EVID
 'I am Gladys.' (Balluta and Evanoff 2005:3)
- (6) *Gunhti ch'anigen ggwa shin.*
 this.person child small EVID
 'This is a baby.' (Stephan 2005:3)
- (7) *Qilna gheli shina.*
 bad.people really EVID
 'They are really bad people.' (Tenenbaum 2006:208 ["Kela Nuch'iitan Sukdu'a" by Antone Evan])

The morphological source of the second component is less obvious than that of the first component. However, we argue below that the second component is related to the relativizing or nominalizing verbal suffixes *-e* (thing), *-t* (areal), *-n* (human singular), and *-na* (human plural). The second component thus expresses morphological agreement with the referent about which the source of knowledge is being asserted. The evidential *shi* agrees with the inanimate object *chashga* 'cup'; the evidential *shin* agrees with the animate singular referent *ch'anigen ggwa* 'baby'; and the evidential *shina* agrees with the animate plural referent *qilna* 'bad people.' The function of the evidential *shit* (or its variant forms *shida*, *shit'i*) is more difficult to relate directly to the areal relativizer. However, as we show in this article, *-t* is by far the most commonly occurring second component in Dena'ina evidentials and tends to be used when a speaker is making assertions about herself.

To our knowledge, evidentials with a paradigmatic component have not been previously reported in other Athabaskan languages. As noted above, those particles reported as evidentials in other Athabaskan languages do not form a neat inflectional category, but rather serve to optionally indicate various different possible sources of knowledge. As shown in (8)–(10), inferential evidential particles can be found in languages from all three major branches of the Athabaskan family.⁵

(8) Hupa, Pacific Coast Athabaskan

te:na'nila:-xola:n
he.built.fire-EVID

'He built a fire (inferred from remains of fire)' (Goddard 1905:322–26; cited in DeLancey 1990:152)⁶

(9) Western Apache, Apachean

Chaghashé doo ákū nádabini' da golnīi.
children NEG there they.want.to.go.back NEG EVID

'I don't think the children want to go back.' (de Reuse 2003:81)⁷

(10) Koyukon, Northern Athabaskan

Go heide yoogh don heide uhdehot'EEK ts'ednee
this then long.ago then they.used.to.do EVID

'That is what they used to do long ago.' (Attla 1990:6)

Like these other Athabaskan languages, Dena'ina also makes use of a hearsay inferential evidential particle, namely, *tu*, as seen in the text excerpt in (11a)–(11d) (Tenenbaum 2006:90 ["Chulyin Sukdu'a" by Alexie Even]).

(11a) *Chulyin gun tu nutihna tu ve'uqa qilan tu.*
raven this EVID two.people EVID his.wives there.were EVID

'There was Raven, and he had two wives.'

- (11b) *Qet zdu.*
with.them he.lived
'He lived with them.'
- (11c) *Qayeh hqil'un tu q'u Chulyin gun tu*
village they.had EVID now raven that EVID
'They had a village, and that Raven,'
- (11d) *hdalts'i.*
they.lived
'they lived there.'

Like the other evidential enclitics, *tu* is phrase-final. In traditional narratives, *tu* is very common, especially in conjunction with reported speech, as in the text excerpt (12a)–(12b) (Tenenbaum 2006:90 ["Chulyin Sukdu'a" by Alexie Even]).

- (12a) *T'qeytni tu,*
they spoke thus to him EVID
'They said to him,'
- (12b) "*Chulyin nen-hdi n'u du ghishin dit?*"
Raven 2.SG-TOP your.wife Q she.is.pretty EVID
qeytni tu.
they.said.to.him EVID
'"You, Raven, how come you have such a pretty wife?" they said.'

About half of the occurrences of *tu* are in this context. Frequently, speakers transcribing another's narrative will even insert *yetni tu* 'she said to him' or similar forms following direct speech. Using *tu* signals that the information has been passed down to the speaker (and is hence particularly reliable).

However, this particle is morphologically opaque (at least synchronically) and does not participate in any larger paradigm. Indeed, as de Reuse acknowledges regarding Western Apache, "evidentiality is more of a strategy than a category" (2003:79). Although this statement may serve to characterize Dena'ina evidentials as well, we wish to distinguish here between such noncategorical, strategic evidentials, as found across Athabaskan languages, and the apparently unique paradigmatic set of evidentials under discussion here. In particular, we make only passing reference to other nonparadigmatic evidential particles in Dena'ina, choosing to focus here instead on the description of the form and discourse function of the Dena'ina evidential enclitics that make up this grammaticized subsystem.

Before proceeding with the main exposition, some remarks regarding our Dena'ina corpus are in order.

One of the challenges to describing Dena'ina evidentials—and perhaps the reason that these morphemes have not received attention in the previous literature—is the quality and nature of the available data. Though evidentials are a ubiquitous feature of Dena'ina conversation, very little Dena'ina conversation has been recorded. Thus, we have relied largely on narrative conversation gleaned from Dena'ina narrative texts recorded during the 1970s. However, textual data also present difficulties for the study of evidentials. In many cases evidentials are omitted by transcribers or editors as extra words with no meaning. In some cases, the evidential enclitics may not have been heard clearly by the transcriber. Since evidentials often occur clause-finally, they are frequently truncated or phonologically reduced, complicating the transcription process. Thus, in order to study the distribution of evidentials, it is necessary to revisit published transcriptions using archival audio recordings from which the original transcriptions were made. Fortunately, in most cases these recordings are readily available at the Alaska Native Language Archive.

Because of the dearth of available data, we have attempted to retranscribe every available Dena'ina text, including those found in Tenenbaum (2006), Kari and Fall (2003), Shem Pete (1975, 1977, 1989), and Katherine Nicolie (1976). These data are supplemented by more recent recordings by Dena'ina speaker Mary Hobson (2006). These texts are all primarily traditional narratives and folktales. As a source of nonnarrative data, we rely on recently published conversational pedagogical materials, including Balluta and Evanoff (2005) and Stephan (2005). These pedagogical materials do not represent natural discourse, as they were created with a fair amount of English prompting, but they do include snippets of naturalistic conversation. We have also supplemented these textual sources with information gleaned from the unpublished Dena'ina lexical file (Kari n.d.), dissertations on Dena'ina grammar by Tenenbaum (1978) and Lovick (2006), and data from our own field notes. All examples without an explicit source stem from Lovick's field notes (2005–2006).

Finally, a note regarding dialects. Our corpus represents equally two of the four Dena'ina dialects: Upper Inlet (spoken in the Susitna River drainage and upper Cook Inlet), and Inland (spoken in the Lake Clark region and the upper Stony River). No evidence of these evidential enclitics have been found in the other Dena'ina dialects. This may be due to the fact that the materials in those dialects are primarily written and that Dena'ina writers tend to leave such enclitics out. (Even in the Upper Inlet and Inland dialects the density of evidentials is much lower in written texts as compared to oral ones.) Peter Kalifornsky, the most prolific author in an Alaska Native language, used no evidential enclitics in his writings (see Kari and Boraas 1991). Literacy in Dena'ina is not widespread, and authors such as Kalifornsky are notably rare. It may well be that the medium of writing is heavily influenced by English, a language that lacks a grammaticized evidential system. In any case, as both the Outer Inlet and Iliamna dialects are now nearly extinct, with no strong speaker of Outer

Inlet and only one strong speaker of Iliamna, the extent to which an evidential system was once present in these dialects cannot be easily determined. We restrict our attention and our conclusions to the Upper Inlet and Inland dialects.

2. General structure. Each of the evidential enclitics consists minimally of two components: a first component referring to person, and a second component indicating animacy or number. All of the forms contain a high front vowel. The high front vowel is also found in many Dena'ina independent pronouns, e.g., *shi* 'I', *nhin* 'you all', *yin* 'he, she', and *yina* 'they'. Hence, this vowel may actually belong to the first component, indicating person. Whatever its source, the vowel of the evidential enclitic has no synchronic function. For the purposes of this article, we treat the vowel as an empty morpheme that serves as a formative to hold the first and second components, as illustrated in (13).

(13) Form of evidential enclitics

FIRST.COMPONENT-*i*-SECOND.COMPONENT

Although the first component is consistently realized across dialects, there is considerable dialectal and idiolectal variation in the realization of the second component. Thus, *shit*, *shida*, and *shit'i* are all variants of the evidential enclitic with first component *sh-* and second component *-t*. The first and second components are discussed in sections 3 and 4, respectively.

We treat Dena'ina evidentials as enclitics in the sense of Zwicky (1985:286–89). In particular, Dena'ina evidentials exhibit at least four properties of clitics proposed by Zwicky. First, Dena'ina evidentials are bound forms; they cannot occur in isolation. Second, evidentials attach to possibly **multiword phrases** or even clauses rather than single words. In (14), the evidential follows a nominal predicate, which shows that evidentials are not strictly postverbal but rather are postpredicate. Where other elements such as adverbs follow the verb, evidentials may occur following those elements, occupying the rightmost edge of the phrase. In (15), the evidential follows the postverbal adverbial *q'u*.

(14) *Ey ki qil n'itda nlana vintiq'a shida.*

there also poor.people waterhole EVID

'This is the poor people's waterhole.' (Tenenbaum 2006:122 ["Chulyin Sukdu'a" by Antone Evan])

(15) *B-et dnayi ghila q'u shida.*

3.SG-with related it.was maybe EVID

'Maybe it was one of his relatives' (Pete 2003a:187 ["Beł Dink'udlaghen"])

Third, evidentials have a fixed distribution, namely, following a clause or (rarely) following an emphatic independent pronoun. Finally, Dena'ina evidentials are accentually dependent on the phrase to which they attach (see the following paragraph). Haspelmath (2002:152) also points out that clitics may be mor-

phonologically complex, a property of Dena'ina evidentials demonstrated in sections 3 and 4 below.

The phonological attachment of the evidential enclitics to the (verb) phrase is evidenced by their effect on phrasal stress. Dena'ina is a verb-final language, and verbs usually occur phrase-finally with phrasal stress falling on the penultimate, or pre-stem, syllable, as in (16a). However, when a verb is followed by an evidential enclitic, stress shifts to the stem (i.e., final) syllable of the verb, as in (16b).

(16a) *Nitduch'hdéldih.*

'We're teaching each other.'

(16b) *Nitduch'hdeldih shit.*

'We're teaching each other.'

In the remainder of this article we discuss the form and discourse function of the enclitic sets described above, paying special attention to their compositionality. The first component of the evidentials are discussed in section 3, the second in section 4. Their status within Dena'ina grammar is discussed in section 5.

3. The first component. The first component of the evidential enclitics consists of either *sh-*, *d-*, or *y-*. We will refer to enclitics whose first component is *sh-*, *d-*, or *y-* as *sh-* enclitics, *d-* enclitics, and *y-* enclitics, respectively. That is, we use the term *sh-* enclitic to refer to the forms *shi*, *shida/shit/shit'i*, *shin*, and *shina*; we use the term *d-* enclitic to refer to forms *di*, *dida/dit*, *din*, and *dina*; and we use the term *y-* enclitic to refer to forms *yi*, *yida/yit*, *yin*, and *yina*. The second component of the evidential enclitics is discussed in section 4.

3.1. Speaker source: *sh-*. The *sh-* component expresses speaker point of view and indicates that the speaker is the source of the evidence for the assertion. In conversation, *shit/shida/shit'i* is often used to indicate information for which the speaker does not have direct evidence beyond his or her own feelings.

(17) *V-el dudensgis shida.*

3.SG-with I.joke EVID

'I am [just] joking with her.'

In narrative, *shit* is often used to mark evaluative speaker commentary, off-line from the main action. The text excerpt (18a)–(18l) (Pete 1996:9 ["Quch' Nushjun"]) describes the character Quch' Nushjun (lit., 'the man who backtracked himself') hunting for bears. Lines (18a)–(18h) describe the process of the hunt, but then, in lines (18i)–(18j), the speaker makes a comment about the strength of the hunter Quch' Nushjun, noting with a sense of amazement that even though Quch' Nushjun was an old man he was still strong enough to kill

the bear. This off-line commentary is marked by the evidential *shida*, prior to the speaker returning to the main storyline in (18l).

- (18a) *Be-jil'u qughettl'et hnuq'u*
 3.SG-ears they.came.out when
 'When its ears came out.'
- (18b) *He know brown bear chit'ish-en quht'ana ghila ch'u*
 kill.PL-REL.HUM man was and
 'it knew that this was a man that kills brown bears.'
- (18c) *ggagga chich'el'ish-i quht'ana ghila.*
 brown.bear kill.PL-REL man was
 'he was a bear killer.'
- (18d) *q'u y-et tsadalnen.*
 now 4-with hit.it
 'He then clubbed that one with it [tomahawk].'⁸
- (18e) *Yet ye-lugh y-et qitel ch'u*
 there 4-end 4-with jumped and
 'That bear jumped over it and'
- (18f) *dutsi ye-qala dedulnen.*
 on.top 4-dirt.pile fell
 'it fell down over its pile of dirt.'
- (18g) *Kiq'u yethdi nitsinitsey*
 again then head.stuck.out
 'Then another one stuck its head out.'
- (18h) *Q'u lach' gheli q'u be-jil'u q'u haghitt'it yuq'u tsaytnases.*
 now true really now 3.SG-ears now they.came.out then he.head.struck.it
 'Just when its ears came out, he struck its head as hard as he could.'
- (18i) *Ch'adach' daghittey ghu shida.*
 thus was.strong then EVID
 'He was still that strong.'
- (18j) *Q'u kisht'a gheli en'ushen eydlan*
 now really really old.man was
 'And he was a really old man.'
- (18k) *nch'uk'a be-laq'a ch'aydinghel.*
 not 3.SG-hand did.not.drop.out.of.it
 'but it (spear) did not drop out of his hand.'

- (18l) *Ch'u ye-ghech' dudiyu.*
 and 4-to came.down
 'He came down the hill to them.'

Sh- enclitics may also be used to mark information as uncertain, in cases where the speaker is hazarding a guess. In this case, *sh-* indicates that the speaker is the source of the information. By using *shit* in the following excerpt, (19a)–(19c), from the same text (Pete 1996:1 ["Quch' Nushjun"]), the speaker acknowledges that the information is not only off the main storyline but also, perhaps because of that, originating in the speaker as the source. By extension this information is less certain than that in the main story. In this particular excerpt, the narrator does not know how old the story is and gives an estimate, which is clearly marked by *shit* as "I guess, but this is not necessarily true."

- (19a) *Q'u gu qenaga ghin nch'u qughila shit.*
 now here language that not was EVID
 'This language might have been a short time ago.'

- (19b) *Nch'u qit'aneshyen.*
 NEG I.know
 'I don't know.'

- (19c) *Maybe 200 years gudi qenaga qughila shit.*
 here language was EVID
 'This language might have been two hundred years ago.'

The passage (19a)–(19c) also demonstrates that *sh-* enclitics can occur with referents that are third person rather than first person. It is also possible for *sh-* enclitics to occur with second person referents. In (20), *shit* indicates that the utterance is a personal comment asserted by the speaker about the hearer.

- (20) *Iqech' q'u nt'an da ki n-chutl'a ghetidighiltex shit.*
 that now you.do if again 2.SG-stomach you.will.cut.it EVID
 'If you keep doing that you will wear a hole in your stomach.' (Kari n.d.)

In this case, *shit* carries the connotation 'in my opinion'. However, in most cases *sh-* enclitics occur with verbs indexing first person. To summarize, *sh-* enclitics indicate that the speaker is the source of information, or that the sentence represents a speaker evaluation or judgment.

3.2. Hearer source: *d-*. The *d-* enclitics may also express uncertainty on the part of the speaker. However, they differ from *sh-* enclitics in that they indicate speaker acknowledgment that first-hand evidence is lacking. Rather, they mark the hearer as the source or potential source of information. They predominantly occur in sentences with second person subject referents.

- (21) *Sh-egh ninyu dit.*
 1.SG-to you.came EVID
 '[I guess] you came to me.' (Balluta and Evanoff 2005:9)
- (22) *Liq'a nlqat dit.*
 fish you.eat EVID
 '[I guess] you are eating fish.' (Balluta and Evanoff 2005:19)

D- enclitics may also be used to express that the speaker believes that the hearer might be more certain; hence, they frequently occur in questions, indicating that the speaker solicits hearer input.

- (23) *Q'u lach' dini dit?*
 now true you.say EVID
 'Are you kidding?' ('Is what you say true?') (Balluta and Evanoff 2005:12)
- (24) *Qadashdinix dit?*
 you.understand.me EVID
 'Do you understand me?' (Balluta and Evanoff 2005:15)

D- enclitics can have functions beyond marking evidentiality. One common pattern consists of a question-answer pair in which the question is marked with a *d-* enclitic while the reply is marked with a *sh-* enclitic, as in (25a)–(25b) (Hobson 2006:6 ["*Dlin'a Sukdu'a*"]).

- (25a) "*Nda eht'a dida?*"
 what you.PL.are.thus EVID
 "What's wrong with you guys?"
- (25b) "*K'undet ch'it'a shida.*"
 starvation we.are.thus EVID
 "We're starving."

The *d-* enclitics also sometimes have a mirative function in addition to their evidential function. The passage in (26a)–(26c) (Pete1989:3) forms the opening paragraph from the story "The Hunting Dog," in which a famine is ended because a pair of brothers behave in an appropriate way towards an animal. In the second line the narrator speculates on possible reasons for the famine in exactly the way that the question "what happened" would be asked of a hearer.

- (26a) *Nichit ghu k'unde qub-et nituhdinlnen.*
 subterranean.house there famine 3.PL-for struck.them
 'Famine struck the people [living] in a subterranean house.'
- (26b) *Ch'atqijuq dit?*
 what happened EVID
 '[I wonder] what had happened?'

- (26c) *El'ekna qube-ch' ch'inighet'an k'ashi.*
 shaman 3.PL-toward had.wished.bad.luck maybe
 'Maybe some medicine man wished them bad luck.'

The narrator expresses a sense of surprise, asking himself what might have happened. As with the examples of *d-* enclitics above, this usage also represents commentary off the main storyline. Rhetorical questions for which the hearer presumably knows the answer are usually formed by use of *dit*, *dida*, *din*, or *dina*. See (23) above, here repeated as (27).

- (27) *Q'u lach' dini dit?*
 now true you.say EVID
 'Are you kidding?' ('Is what you say true?') (Balluta and Evanoff 2005:12)

This usage of *d-* enclitics, usually addressing the hearer of the story, is broader than just evidential, and provides a mechanism for the narrator to engage and interact with the listener.

3.3. Source other than speaker or hearer: *y-* The *y-* enclitics indicate a source other than speaker or hearer, and by extension often express certainty. They are the least common of the evidentials in both narrative and conversation. Kari (n.d) glosses the *y-* enclitic as 'to be sure', but as the textual examples in (28)–(31) demonstrate, the meaning of *y-* might be better captured by saying that it indicates that neither the speaker nor the hearer has control over the event. In that sense, *y-* evidentials are comparable to English *God willing* in that the outcome is taken out of both the speaker's and the hearer's hands. Example (28) thus can be translated as 'I will see you again, God willing'. That is, the speaker expects the event to occur, but acknowledges that it is beyond the control of either speaker or hearer.

- (28) *Nu-n-t-ghe-sh-t-'ih yida.*
 ITER-2.SG-INCEP-FUT-1.SG-CL-see EVID
 'I'll see you again.' (Balluta and Evanoff 2005:10)
- (29) *N-egh t-gh-esh-dul yida.*
 2.SG-with INCEP-FUT-1.SG-stay EVID
 'I will visit you.' (Kari n.d.)
- (30) *Tagh'i et q'u nu-ch'-t-i-gh-u-nix yida.*
 oars with now ITER-1.PL-INCEP-CON-QUAL-FUT-go.by.boat EVID
 'We will use oars to go across (river, bay).' (Kari n.d.)
- (31) *N-tutda nih q'u t'inlugg-i da k'i yagheli yida.*
 2.SG-father say now you.did.thus-REL when also good EVID
 'You did whatever your father did, and it's all right.' (Kari n.d.)

Examples (28)–(31) also illustrate an observed tendency for *y-* evidentials to cooccur with the future tense (marked by a combination of the two prefixes *t-* and *gh-*). Examples (28), (29), and (30) are explicitly marked as future in this way. Example (31) is not so marked, but the main clause in this example consists of an adjectival predicate *yagheli*, which cannot be marked with verbal tense-aspect prefixes (*yagheli yida* is a formulaic expression translating as ‘it’s going to be all right’). Nearly half of the occurrences of *y-* enclitics occur in the phrase *yagheli yida*.

Apart from formulaic expressions such as *yagheli yida* ‘it’s going to be all right’ and *nuntghesht’ih yida* ‘see you later’, the *y-* enclitics are very rare in narrative texts. They are slightly more frequent in conversations and in conversational narratives, such as the direct quote in (32a)–(32b) (Tenenbaum 2006: 152 [“Nunigi Deghk’isen Sukdu’a” by Antone Evan]).

- (32a) *Iqech’ ch’q’u n-k’u nutayeshdu da yan shughu*
 thus and 2.SG-from I.start.again if only in.my.opinion
yagheli da,” yetni tu.
 good EMPH told.him HEARSAY

“This is the way it is: only if I leave you will it get better,” she said to him.’

- (32b) *Eygu q’u nh-el yeshdu it da ki nch’u yagheli nh-a*
 here now 2.PL-with I.stay if also not good 2.PL-to
htutagh yida.”
 it.will.be EVID

“As long as I stay here with you people, the weather will not be good for you.”

The *y-* enclitics contrast with *sh-* enclitics in an interesting way. In the text passage in (33a)–(33j) (Tenenbaum 2006:100 [“Chulyin Sukdu’a” by Alexie Evan]), an assessment of the situation by the main character in a story is marked by *shida* in (33a). This character then explains his plans for the future, and his wife agrees to them, using a *y-* enclitic. With this *y-* enclitic, the wife indicates that she agrees to her husband’s plans and that she expects that they will come true.

- (33a) *Ch’eshdyex shida,” yetni tu.*
 we.achieve EVID told.her HEARSAY

“We made it,” he told her.’

- (33b) *Da q’u nuttu shugu ch’edyuq hghu,”*
 when now for this we.did that.way

“That was for life or death, what we did,”

- (33c) *iqech’ q’u ch’eshdyex,” yetni tu.*
 thus now we.achieve told.her HEARSAY

“but we made it,” he told her.’

- (33d) *Hhi,* *yetni tu.*
is.that.so told.her HEARSAY
'Is that so?' she said to him.
- (33e) *Yighudahdi q'udi guhdi*
because.of.this now here
'And for that reason,
- (33f) *qighishin sht'a ey guhdi ch'tudul ch'q'uhdi*
be.good just there here we.will.stay and
'here and now we'll live a good life, and'
- (33g) *na-qayeh qitulat,* *yetni tu.*
1.PL-village it.will.be told.her HEARSAY
'"this will be our village," he told her.'
- (33h) *Aa', iqech' t'ech'ut'at yida,* *yetni tu.*
yes thus we.will.be.thus EVID told.her HEARSAY
'"Yes, we will be that way," she told him.'
- (33i) *Q'uyehdi ey hghidu.*
then there they.stayed
'And they stayed there.'
- (33j) *Dach' hdi tu t'qidyuq chulyin sukdu'a.*
thus then HEARSAY happen raven story
'And that's the way it happened, the Raven Story.'

In the following section, we discuss the resemblance between the first component of the evidential enclitic and Dena'ina pronominal forms.

3.4. Comparison with pronouns. We propose that the first component of the evidentiality markers is comparable to the person paradigms: *sh-* for first person, *d-* for second, *y-* for third. Table 1 compares the form of the evidential enclitics with independent pronouns, nominal possessive prefixes, and the verbal direct object prefixes. In the first and third persons, the form of first component of the evidential enclitics is identical to that of the pronouns. In the second person, the form of the first component differs only in manner of articulation. The evidential has a stop, while the pronoun has a nasal. Such a phonetic alternation between alveolar nasal and alveolar stop is not unusual in Athabaskan languages. Indeed, Dena'ina often exhibits dialectal variation between nasal, prenasalized, and stop variants of alveolar consonant. For example, compare the prenasalized form *ndaha* 'where' in the Inland dialect with the stop form *daha* in the Upper Inlet dialect.

Table 1. Comparison of First Component with Pronominal Forms

	EVIDENTIAL ENCLITIC	INDEPENDENT PRONOUN	POSSESSOR PREFIX	OBJECT PREFIX
FIRST	<i>shida</i>	<i>shi</i>	<i>shqa</i> 'my leg'	<i>shghil'an</i> 'she/he/it saw me'
SECOND	<i>dida</i>	<i>nen</i>	<i>nqa</i> 'your leg'	<i>nghil'an</i> 'she/he/it saw you'
THIRD	<i>yida</i>	<i>yin</i>	<i>yeqa</i> 'his/her/its leg'	<i>yeghil'an</i> 'she/he/it saw him/her/it'

The phonetic similarity is not the only reason for suggesting a relation between the two systems. There are also semantic clues that support our analysis.

Sh- and *d-* prefixes are not interchangeable. Speakers accepted sentences where the expected *sh-* evidential was replaced by a *y-* evidential, but consistently refused sentences where the replacement was a *d-* evidential. Asked for a reason, one speaker explains that *d-* "makes a sentence into a question." With a verb having a first person subject, such as *yeshdu* 'I am sitting', a *sh-* enclitic is entirely acceptable, as shown in (34a); a *y-* enclitic is marginally acceptable, as shown in (34b); and *d-* enclitics are unacceptable, as shown in (34c).

(34a) *Yeshdu shida.*
I.sit EVID
'I am sitting.'

(34b) ?*Yeshdu yida.*
I.sit EVID

(34c) **Yeshdu dida.*
I.sit EVID

Sh- enclitics occur when the speaker either talks about herself or when she offers a personal comment about a third person referent. In either case, there is a clear first person component to the use of *sh-* enclitics, expressing a first person source of information.

D- enclitics occur when the speaker solicits an opinion or information from the hearer (the second person), thus showing both functional and formal similarity to the second person pronominals. This explains why (34c) is unacceptable. The use of a *d-* enclitic with a first person subject would imply that the hearer had more information about whether the speaker is sitting—a logically possible but highly improbable situation. There is no reason to solicit hearer input. There are, however, cases where a first person referent and a *d-* evidential are pragmatically acceptable, as in (35).

- (35) *Nda'ih du chitdgheshnil dida?*
 why Q I.will.die EVID
 'Why should I die?' (Kari n.d.)

Although examples of *d-* enclitics with first person referents are rare, *d-* enclitics occur freely with both second and third person referents, as in (36a) and (36b).

- (36a) *Zidu dit?*
 you.sit EVID
 'Are you sitting?'

- (36b) *Zdu dit?*
 sit EVID
 'Is she sitting?'

Since hearer input is often solicited by asking questions, it is not surprising that *d-* enclitics often occur in questions. However, they differ from standard interrogative markers such as *du*. Compare the following elicited sentences. Example (37a) employs the standard yes-no interrogative marker *du*, while (37b) employs an evidential enclitic *dit*.

- (37a) *Dinchin du?*
 you.are.hungry Q
 'Are you hungry?'

- (37b) *Dinchin dit?*
 you.are.hungry EVID
 'Are you hungry?'

Although both sentences above are given identical translations, they do not have the same pragmatic function. Rather, they ask for different things. The intention of (37a) is to find out whether the hearer is hungry or not. When not accompanied by an interrogative pronoun, *du* is a pure yes-no question marker. In (37b), the focus is on the hearer: is she hungry, as opposed to somebody else, or as opposed to being thirsty. Questions marked by *d-* evidentials are more open-ended than questions marked by *du*. The reason that *d-* evidentials predominantly occur in questions is due to the fact that they solicit hearer input, and that is pragmatically achieved by asking a question.

However, though *d-* enclitics may indeed have a question-marking function, they differ from *du* in that the latter does not carry an evidential function. Moreover, there is an additional distributional difference in that *du* may occur together with an interrogative pronoun to form a content question marker (see (35) above, here repeated as (38)).

(38) *Nda'ih du chitdgheshnit dida?*

why Q I.will.die EVID

'Why should I die?' (Kari n.d.)

In this context *du* occurs immediately to the right of the interrogative pronoun rather than at the end of the clause. In fact, *du* may cooccur with a *d-* evidential in the same interrogative sentence. In this case, *du* follows the question word, while the *d-* enclitic occurs phrase-finally. The *d-* evidentials may indeed serve a question-marking function, but the differences between *du* and *dit* illustrated in the preceding examples show that *d-* evidentials are not strictly question markers.

Y- enclitics do not occur to mark the point of view of a particular third person, that is, of a referent that has been introduced into the discourse or narrative. Rather, *y-* enclitics mark a point of view that is neither speaker nor hearer. They are thus similar to third person pronominals in the sense of being neither first nor second person. Therefore, sentence (34b), repeated here as (39), is marginally acceptable.

(39) ?*Yeshdu yida.*

I.sit EVID

'I am sitting.'

This example would imply that the speaker is providing independent (non-first person) evidence for something that he or she directly experiences. Since pragmatically there is no need to do this, the sentence is odd.⁹

The evidentials are not the only Dena'ina particles to show a relation to pronominals. The epistemic particles *shughu* 'in my opinion, according to me' and *dughu* 'in your opinion, according to you' also contain first components *sh-* and *d-*, referring to speaker and hearer, respectively. While these epistemic particles also have evidential function, they differ structurally from the evidential enclitics in that they lack the second component of the form $-\emptyset$, $-t$, $-n$, or $-na$, and in that there is no *y-* form (i.e., no *yughu*).

The particle *shughu* is somewhat weaker in assertion than the *sh-* evidential; it indicates that the speaker is not at all certain about the truth of that utterance and is merely offering an opinion. In (40), the speaker uses two means to indicate that he is not sure of the information—by using the particle *shughu* 'in my opinion' as well as the hearsay marker *tu*. In nonfictional texts, such as "Ndalvay Heyenghilyihch" in (40) or the oral essays in Balluta and Kari (2008), the use of *shughu* is pervasive.

(40) *Shughu ndalvay huhdenlyah tu.*

in.my.opinion geese they.raised.for.themselves HEARSAY

'They raised geese for themselves.' (Bobby 1996 ["Ndalvay Heyenghilyihch"])

The particle *shughu* has the tendency to cooccur with some form of the postposition *ghuda*. The resulting compound form *-ghuda shughu* then means roughly 'I suppose this is why'. In this construction, the postposition *ghuda* inflects for person, indexing the cause, whereas the particle *shughu* indexes the speaker, the person asserting the information. This contrast is evident in the text passage (41a)–(41b) below (Nicolie 1976:6 ["Nda! Tsukdu"]). In (41a) the speaker asserts that he is the cause, and the postposition is inflected with *sh-*. However, in (41b) the speaker asserts that something else is the cause, and hence the postposition is uninflected, indexing third person. Yet in both cases the particle is marked with *sh-*, indexing first person source of information.

(41a) *Shi sh-ghuda shughu t'ant'i,* ye*ni.*
 1.SG 1.SG-because I.guess this.is he.said
 "All this is happening because of me!" he said.'

(41b) *Nda! yeh hts'anindat!' ghuda shughu nts'uk'a qit'aniyen.*
 cranes there they.flew because I.guess not he.knew
 'The cranes flew over, but he didn't know the reason.'

Parallel to the use of *shughu* to indicate speaker opinion, *dughu* is used when the speaker is asking for the hearer's opinion on something. In the text passage (42a)–(42c) (Tenenbaum 2006:166 ["Ch'idichuq'a" by Alexie Evan]), the speaker of the quoted speech is soliciting an opinion from the hearers as to the whereabouts of the game.

(42a) *T'etni tu,* "Ugha,
 said.thus HEARSAY EXCL
 'He said to him, "Hey,"'

(42b) *nda'ih du dughu na-t k'qisil da?"*
 why Q in.your.opinion 1.PL-with it.ran.out Q
 "why is there is no more game with us?"'

(42c) *qetni tu.*
 told.them HEARSAY
 'he said to them.'

In this passage, the speaker is not certain that he will get an answer because the hearers may not know the answer to his question. This lack of certainty is indicated by the use of *dughu* rather than an evidential enclitic.

The syntactic properties of the *-ughu* particles (*shughu* and *dughu*) differ from those of the evidential enclitics. These forms have a much freer syntactic distribution and are thus particles rather than clitics. Moreover, whatever the etymological source of the second component *-ughu* (it may be related to the

areal demonstrative *ghu* 'in that place'), it is clearly not related to the relativizer-nominalizer morphemes that provide the historical source of the second components of evidentials. Further, unlike the evidential enclitics, the *-ughu* particles have only a single second component, namely, *-ughu*.

4. The second component. Each of the evidential prefix forms can occur with four types of suffixal second component: $-\emptyset$, *-t*, *-n*, or *-na*. In discussing the second component, we refer to enclitics containing a second component $-\emptyset$, *-t*, *-n*, and *-na* as $-\emptyset$, *-t*, *-n*, and *-na* enclitics, respectively. The second component *-t* has the variant form *-da* (with final stress) in both dialects; both forms occur without any apparent difference in meaning. In the Upper Inlet dialect, *-t*, *-n*, and $-\emptyset$ may occur as *-t'i*, *-n'i*, and *-i*, respectively, again without any difference in meaning.¹⁰

(43) *Yada di?*
 what EVID
 'What is that?' (asking about a hat, a cup, a rabbit)

(44) *Vada din?*
 who EVID
 'Who is that?' (asking about one person)

(45) *Vada dina?*
 who EVID
 'Who are they?' (asking about several people)

(46) *Yada t'ent'an dit?*
 what you.do.thus EVID
 'What are you doing?' (asking about an activity)

As (43)–(46) demonstrate, the second component has an enormous effect on how a sentence is interpreted. Witness the markedly different glosses in the examples above. We discuss each of the second components in turn below.

4.1. Second component $-\emptyset$. The second component of the evidential may be entirely absent, in which case we treat it as a zero morpheme ($-\emptyset$) reflecting the absence of one of the other second components. Although zero is one of the more frequent second components, it is not always easy to identify. When zero combines with the *sh-* and *y-* prefixes, the resulting evidential markers (*shi*, *yi*) are easily confused with the homophonous free personal pronouns. Evidentials with $-\emptyset$ second component can be identified on semantic grounds when there is no first or third person argument present in the clause that could be coreferential with a free pronoun, as, for example, in (47) below. Further, evidentials with $-\emptyset$ second component can be identified on syntactic grounds when they occur in

phrase-final position, as this position is not a typical position for free pronouns, as in (48) and (49). This suffix occurs mainly in sentences with third person nonhuman or inanimate referents, such as *tiq'a* 'fish', *sdul* 'table', *tleg*h 'oil', *ninya* 'animal', etc.

- (47) *Q'u shi tiq'a na-'a k'iydlan shi.*
 now EVID fish 1.PL-with something.is EVID
 'Now the fish have come to us.' (Pete 2003b:242 ["Ch'anqet' and the Mountain People"])
- (48) *Sdul yinhdi bada dalchin di?*
 table that who make EVID
 'Who made the table?'
- (49) *Dihdi tleg*h *y-et dghinih yi.*
 then grease 4-with said EVID
 'Then that guy would say "tlegh ['oil]."' (Pete 2003b:248 ["Ch'anqet' and the Mountain People"])

Replacing \emptyset with one of the other second components is not always possible. In some cases, it may just subtly change the meaning of the sentence. In other cases, it renders the resulting sentence unacceptable, as in (50)–(51).

- (50) **Yada din?*
 what EVID
- (51) **Yada dit?*
 what EVID

Example (50) is unacceptable because of the combination of the interrogative pronoun *yada* specified [-human] with the [+human] evidential *din*. Dena'ina strictly distinguishes between human and nonhuman referents in several parts of the grammar and does not allow mixing of these categories. Example (51) is also unacceptable because the evidential *dit* indicates that the question is about an action, a process, or a state requiring a human participant, while the interrogative *yada* refers to a nonhuman participant.

4.2. Second component -n and -na. We treat these two second components together because of their close semantic relationship. Both indicate that there is a human referent in the sentence. The difference between *-n* and *-na* is number: *-n* indexes singular referents, while *-na* indexes plural ones, as shown in (52) and (53), respectively.

- (52) *Gunhti ch'anigen ggwa shin.*
 that child small EVID
 'That is a baby.' (Stephan 2005)

- (53) *Ghuna k'a yuts'ex htedat-na shina.*
 they also out.there they.will.go-REL EVID
 'They are going out too.'

Even more than the other evidentials, *-n* and *-na* tend to follow relativized verb forms. The subject of these relativized verb forms is almost always a third person referent. Frequently, this referent is encoded by an independent pronoun. It is noteworthy that the presence of third person independent pronouns *yin* in (54a) and *ghuna* in (55a) and (56a) force the use of *-n* and *-na* rather than *-t*. The second component *-t* is not acceptable in this constellation, even if the verb form is not relativized (indicated by the parenthesis in the starred examples (54b), (55b), and (56b)).

- (54a) *Yin k'i zdu-nen shin.*
 3.SG FOC sit-REL EVID
 'He is the one sitting.'

- (54b) **Yin k'i zdu(nen) shit.*

- (55a) *Ghuna hdalts'i-na shina.*
 3.PL they.sit-REL EVID
 'They are sitting.'

- (55b) **Ghuna hdalts'i(na) shit*

- (56a) *Ghuna hdalts'i-na dina?*
 3.PL they.sit-REL EVID
 'Are they sitting?'

- (56b) **Ghuna hdalts'i(na) dit.*

If a sentence begins with a third person independent pronoun, the speaker assumes that the referent of the pronoun or demonstrative is more important than the action, and this is reflected in the use of *-n* or *-na*. In a sentence without pronouns and demonstratives, *-t* is acceptable. We return to the correlation between person and evidentials in section 4.4.

4.3. Second component *-t*. This is the most common second component. It is the one with the largest number of variant forms (*-t*, *-da*, *-t'i*), exemplified here in (57)–(59). It does not highlight any of the referents of the sentence, but rather highlights the event or state described.

- (57) *Q'u yagheli-ch' dini shit.*
 now good-REL you.say EVID
 'It's nice what you say.' (Balluta and Evanoff 2005)

(58) *K'etnu qilan yeh shugu yeshdu shida.*

creek exists down there I.stay EVID

'I live at/by that creek.' (Balluta and Evanoff 2005)

(59) *Chida kuya gu nushiltan shit'i.*

old.lady grandchild here brought.me.back EVID

'That old lady's grandchild brought me back here.' (Nicholie 1976:3 ["Ndat Tsukdu"])

In some cases, second component *-t* is used in lieu of *-n* owing to conflicting pragmatic requirements. Example (60a) uses *-t* even though it highlights a referent rather than the event. In this case, it is not possible to replace *shit* with *shin*, as shown in (60b).

(60a) *Shi k'i yeshdu shit.*

1.SG FOC I.sit EVID

'I am the one sitting.'

(60b) **Shi k'i yeshdu(-nen) shin.*

Example (60b) remains unacceptable regardless of whether or not the verb is relativized with the suffix *-nen*. This is because using *shin* would place too much emphasis on first person, which is already marked by the independent pronoun *shi* and the pronominal prefix *sh-* in the verb form *yeshdu*. The roles of person and animacy in the distribution of the second component are discussed further in the following section.

4.4. Distribution of evidential second component. In the preceding two sections, we have seen clear correlations between the choice of evidential second component and person reference. Table 2 shows the distribution of the second component by person and animacy for 186 tokens of evidentials in a randomly selected subset of the corpus. Especially high numbers of tokens are in bold-face.¹¹

Table 2. Distribution of Evidential Second Component (Suffix) by Person

PERSON	\emptyset	<i>-n/-na</i>	<i>-t</i>	TOTAL
1/2 NONHUMAN			4	4
HUMAN	7	2	73	82
3 ABSTRACT			17	17
NONHUMAN	19		6	25
HUMAN	5	40	11	58
TOTAL	31	42	111	186

There is a strong tendency for first and second person referents to occur with *-t*. As shown in table 2, fully seventy-seven out of eighty-six, or 89.5 percent, of

the tokens of evidentials occurring with verbs having first and second person subject reference occur with *-t*. This clustering is not altogether obvious. First and second person referents are, by default, human and only rarely refer to nonhuman entities. Given the association of $-\emptyset$ with inanimate (nonhuman) referents, the small number of $-\emptyset$ enclitics with first and second person referents is not unexpected. Given the primary function of *-n* or *-na* as a relativizing suffix for human referents, one might expect this second component to occur more often with evidentials on first and second person referents, the majority of which are indeed human. Example (60b) as well as table 2, however, show that this is not the case; in fact, there is strong avoidance of precisely this combination. Only two out of eighty-two human first and second person referents cooccur with a *-n* or *-na* evidential.¹²

We have also seen that if a sentence with first person subject contains an evidential, it is likely to have first component *sh-* corresponding to speaker source (see section 2.1 above), thus emphasizing the speaker. Thus, using a second component *-t* rather than *-n* avoids adding yet more emphasis on the speaker. For example, *Gladys eshlan shida* 'I am Gladys' would be culturally preferable to *Gladys eshlan shina*, which may be seen as emphasizing the speaker through the use of the *-n* second component. The *-t* form is more neutral and more likely to be viewed as self-deprecating, in accordance with norms of Dena'ina culture. The avoidance of *-n* with second person may represent an extension of this effect.

It is with third person referents that the intricacies of this system become most apparent. Third person referents are not human by default. Rather, as shown in table 2, they are distributed across the following three categories: abstract, nonhuman (including both inanimate nonabstract and nonhuman animate referents), and human. Each of these categories has a clear correlation with a particular second component, and the correlations are not at all surprising: nonhuman third person referents cooccur with the nonhuman marker $-\emptyset$ (seventeen out of seventeen tokens in table 2), human third person referents with *-n* or *-na* (forty out of fifty-eight tokens), and abstract third person referents with *-t* (nineteen out of twenty-five tokens).

Thus, we can explain the correlations between person and the second component. If the referent is presupposed to be human, i.e., if the referent is first or second person, then their humanness does not need to be stressed and, indeed, deprecation is preferred. Thus, the neutral *-t* evidentials are the most likely choice in sentences involving a first or second person referent. This is not true for third persons, as they can refer to abstract, nonhuman, or human entities. In such a case, the second component of an evidential enclitic encodes relevant information about the animacy of the referent.

Some occurrences of third person human arguments with *-t* evidentials represent off-storyline commentary asserting the opinion of the narrator.

(61) *B-el dnayi ghila q'u shida.*

3.SG-with relatives was now EVID

'Maybe it was one of the relatives.' (Pete 2003a:187 ["Bel Dink 'udlaghen"])

Other third person human arguments with *-t* are actually more like first person, in that the speaker identifies (but is not identical with) the third person referent(s). The brief narrative passage in (62a)–(62b) (Pete 1975:3 ["Susitnu Htsukdu'a"]) is taken from the Susitna Story, in which a shaman prophesies that the village is going to disappear. The people in the village disagree with him and say:

(62a) *Nch'uk'a naqitustlegh shit'i.*

not we.will.disappear EVID

'We will not disappear!'

(62b) *Quht'ana k'ilan shit'i.*

people are EVID

'There are [lots of] people' or 'we are many.'

As indicated by the gloss of (62b), both first and third person interpretations are possible, and this may explain the use of *-t* with a third person human. In the passage, the people of Susitna are arguing that there are many of them. Implied in (62b) is a first person plural subject, even though the verb form is third person. This may account for the choice of *shit'i* over *shina*.

4.5. Comparison with relative suffixes. We propose that the suffixes *-ø*, *-n*, *-na*, and *-t* are historically related to the relative suffixes shown in table 3.

Table 3. Comparison of Evidential Suffixes with Relative Suffixes

EVIDENTIALS	EVIDENTIAL SUFFIXES	RELATIVE SUFFIXES	MEANING
<i>shi, di, yi</i>	<i>-ø</i>	<i>-i, -ye</i>	'the thing that'
<i>shin, din, yin</i>	<i>-n</i>	<i>-n</i>	'the person that'
<i>shina, dina, yina</i>	<i>-na</i>	<i>-na</i>	'the people that'
<i>shit, dit, yit,</i> <i>shida, dida, yida</i>	<i>-t</i>	<i>-t</i>	'the fact that'

The relative suffixes in table 3 are not only phonetically similar to the corresponding second components of the evidential markers, but also have a similar meaning and function. Dena'ina relative suffixes derive nominal forms from the verb to which they are affixed.¹³ Different relative suffixes are employed depending on the animacy of the head of the relative clause. Examples of each of the four types of relative suffix are given below: nonhuman *-i/-ye* in (63), human singular *-en/-nen* in (64), human plural *-na* in (65), and *-t'i* 'the fact that' in (66a)–(66d) (this last passage is from Pete 1975:11 ["Diqelas Tukda"]).

- (63) *ey'uh nughet'eshi ggagga qe-ye-t dghinih-i*
 game.animal brown.bear 3.PL-4-with say-REL
 'the game animal that they call *ggagga*' (Quch' Nushjun by Pete [1996:2])
- (64) *Diqelas Tukda he-y-i dghinih-en*
 Diqelas Tukda 3.PL-4-with say-REL
 'the one they called *Diqelas Tukda*' (Diqelas Tukda by Pete [1975:1])
- (65) *yada qut'ana dugu n-egh dagheshyuni shetni-na*
 whatever people it.was 2.SG-to I.want.to.go.in say.to.me-REL
 'no matter which person said to me 'let me get in with you', . . .' (Chulyin Sukdu'a by Antone Evan in Tenenbaum [2006:116])
- (66a) *Qeyeqenge dudenēs*
 word hear
 'They had heard of it'
- (66b) *be-nu yelyuq-t'i*
 3.SG-on come-REL
 'when the sign came'
- (66c) *sh-unkda ghun sh-tukda et*
 1.SG-mother that.one 1.SG-father with
 'my mother and father'
- (66d) *Tuqenkaq' sughu qudeghelts'i*
 Alexander.Creek this they.were.staying
 'were staying at Alexander Creek'

The suffix *-t(i)* in (66b) above is very rare in its relativizing function, but occurs more frequently as part of an evidential marker.

Further evidence for a historical relationship between the relative markers and the second component of the evidential enclitics is shown in (67)–(70). If the verb form preceding the evidential is relativized, the relativizer of the verb nearly always has the same form as the second component of the evidential.

- (67) *Datishla q'u yada t'el'an-i di?*
 duck now what do-REL EVID
 'What is the duck doing?' (Stephan 2005)
- (68) *Yada t'el'an-en din?*
 what do-REL EVID
 'What is she doing?' (Stephan 2005)
- (69) *Ghuna k'a yuts'ex htedat-na shina.*
 they too outside PL.go-REL EVID
 'They are going out too.'

(70) *Shi yi shit'i hugh deshni-t'i, Shem Pete.*

I here EVID to them I.talk-REL Shem Pete

'This is me talking to them, Shem Pete.' (Quch' Nushjun by Shem Pete [1996:1])

Of the 186 sentences in our sample corpus, forty-seven contain a relativized verb form. In all but four of these, the evidential suffix matches the relative suffix. It is thus likely that the historical link between the relativizers and the second components of the evidential enclitic is still transparent for present-day speakers.

The evidential markers differ with respect to how frequently they cooccur with relativized verb forms. Although nearly all instances of *-n* and *-na* (thirty out of thirty-four) occur following a relativized verb form, this is true for only about half of the $-\emptyset$ evidentials (sixteen out of twenty-nine). Due to the rarity of the *-t* relativizing suffix, there are only three examples of it in our entire corpus; most occurrences of *-t* evidentials thus occur without a relativized verb form.

Finally, we observe that there is one other Dena'ina enclitic that also follows this paradigm. In the Upper Inlet dialect, the epistemic enclitic *lagi* patterns in a similar way, being able to take either a $-\emptyset$, *-n*, or *-t* suffix, as shown in (71)–(73).

(71) *Nli ghini hnalqeni lagi.*

steambath that is.hot MIR

'[I wonder if] that steambath is hot.' (Kari n.d.)

(72) *Ghunen ki dichin-en lagin.*

that.one still hungry-REL MIR

'I wonder if he's still hungry.' (Stephan 2005:7)

(73) *Lyus lagit.*

it.is.snowing MIR

'I wonder if it's snowing.' (Stephan 2005:7)

The enclitics *lagi*, *lagin*, and *lagit* express that the speaker is not at all certain about the truth value of his sentence. The preceding utterances were elicited, and the speaker, not being able to tell whether they were true or not, marked them all as uncertain by using *lagi*, *lagin*, and *lagit*. This association with uncertainty or surprise explains why *lagi* frequently occurs with questions.

5. Discussion. In the preceding sections we have discussed the form and function of each member of the evidential system, focusing on the morphological distinction between the first and second component of the evidential markers. We have yet to address the function of the system as a whole, that is, the meaning contrast between a sentence containing an evidential and a sentence without an evidential marker. For that it is necessary to identify precisely where evidentials occur in discourse, because, in fact, most Dena'ina sentences do not contain

evidential enclitics. Unfortunately, a full investigation of the distribution of evidentials in discourse remains beyond the scope of this article. However, it can be observed that in narratives, evidentials are restricted primarily to two distinct contexts: direct speech, and speaker commentary off-line from the main action. These contexts may look very different, but they have in common that the sentence containing the evidential enclitic is not part of the main story flow. This removal from the main story is an important secondary functions of Dena'ina evidential enclitics, which helps to explain why speakers have such difficulties translating them. When used together with direct speech within a narrative, Dena'ina evidentials tend to make the speech more lively, suggesting their greater frequency in natural conversation. Indeed, our subjective impression is that evidential enclitics occur more frequently in conversation than in narrative, but we have yet to explore that hypothesis quantitatively. We have noted above that *d-* evidentials frequently occur in questions. Table 4 shows the distribution of *sh-*, *d-*, and *y-* evidentials in speech acts for 185 tokens of evidential markers.

Table 4. Distribution of Evidential First Component (Prefix) by Speech Act

	<i>sh-</i>	<i>d-</i>	<i>y-</i>
DECLARATIVE	98	2	5
INTERROGATIVE	3	67	0

Table 4 demonstrates two things. First, *d-* evidentials do have a very clear tendency to occur in interrogative speech acts rather than declarative. Second, *sh-* and *y-* evidentials have a clear tendency to occur in declarative speech acts rather than interrogative. This explains why *sh-* and *d-* are not freely interchangeable (see (34a)–(34c) above). The overwhelming majority of instances of *d-* occur in questions, and the choice between *sh-* and *d-* helps to indicate speech acts. This modality function tends to override the evidential function of the first component of the evidential. However, there are some exceptions to this rule. As indicated in table 4, a *sh-* evidential can, very occasionally, occur in a question. The use of *shi* in the text passage (74a)–(74f) (Tenenbaum 2006:30 [“Kazhna Idashla Sukdu’a” by Antone Evan]) is particularly revealing.

(74a) *“Jan gu dih ki tu nidnayi tuhnidal’” ye’ni tu.*
 today around.there it.seems humans were.walking.around he.said.to.them
 ‘Today there were human people walking around here.’

(74b) *“Nda t’qit’a qegh ninyu,” yidatqet.*
 what look.like to.the.place you.came he.asked.him
 “‘What did the place you came to look like?’ he asked him.’

(74c) *Y-ghu iti'an.*

4-to ignored.it

'He didn't say anything.'

(74d) *"Nda'ich' sht'a t'qit'a qe-gh ninyu?"*

how just was.thus AREA-to you.came

"What did the place you came to look like?"

(74e) *Dach' ghu ghinyut ch'q'u qut'an dighelts'i qe-gh*

Thus there you.walked and people staying 3.PL-to

ninyu shi?

you.came EVID

"Did you come to a place where people were staying when you were walking?"

(74f) *yetni tu.*

told.him HEARSAY

'he said to him.'

The evidential marker *shi* occurs for the first time in (72e), which is the third time that Wolverine asks a question. At first, Wolverine is merely asking for information, but by the time he asks the third question, he believes that he already knows the answer. The use of *shi* with this question seems to indicate that the speaker knows the answer and merely wants confirmation of his own viewpoint from the hearer. Thus, in a sense, the use of *shi* in (72e) marks this as a rhetorical question.

In this way, the evidentials can be seen to be just one part of the larger modal system in Dena'ina. Apart from the evidentials, Dena'ina has three other modal enclitics: *ni* (optative); *a* (negative imperative); and *ilay* (negative imperative).¹⁴ These enclitics have in common that they, too, change the speech act of the sentence. The enclitic *ni* turns a proposition into a wish, and *a* and *ilay* turn a proposition into a negative command. A crucial difference between the evidentials and the other modal enclitics is that the optative and both negative imperatives require particular aspectual morphology in the verb they attach to, while we have observed no such restrictions with the evidentials.

Dena'ina evidentials have a variety of discourse functions, including the introduction of speaker commentary or assertions and solicitation of hearer input. Hence, it does not make sense to examine the function of Dena'ina evidentials without considering the greater context in which they occur. To the extent that Dena'ina evidentials function to relate one utterance to the larger discourse, they differ from true evidentials in the sense of Aikhenvald (2004).¹⁵ In particular, Dena'ina evidentials cannot be interpreted at the phrase level. Rather than simply indicating source of knowledge for a particular verb phrase, Dena'ina evidentials must be interpreted within their larger discourse context.

In many cases, it is possible to detect clear distributional correlations between evidential enclitics and person and number categories, reflecting an

original source of Dena'ina evidentials in other inflectional categories. To the extent that these Dena'ina evidential enclitics can be described as a grammatical system, they can be said to be paradigmaticized, but not fully grammaticized. That is, although the evidentials form a neat morphological paradigm, the constituent components have yet to completely shed the semantic shadings of their source morphemes. Moreover, Dena'ina evidentials do not form an obligatory inflectional category; their occurrence is governed pragmatically, not grammatically. In that sense, Dena'ina evidentials are no different from the various hearsay markers and inferential markers found in other Athabaskan languages as well as Dena'ina. What distinguishes the Dena'ina evidentials is their synchronic morphological complexity. While evidential particles in other Athabaskan languages can be seen to be morphologically complex from an historical point of view (e.g., Koyukon *ts'ednee* 'it is said', from *ts'e-* 'one', *d-nee* 'say'), they are synchronically frozen and do not inflect in their evidential functions. Uniquely among the Athabaskan languages, Dena'ina exhibits a coherent subsystem of evidentials that themselves exhibit inflectional properties.

Typologically, the evidential system in Dena'ina represents an intermediary system. On the one hand, evidentiality in Dena'ina is not coded as an obligatory inflectional category on the verb. Yet on the other hand, evidentiality is not entirely scattered throughout the grammar, in the sense of Aikhenvald (2004: 80–82). In particular, the Dena'ina system differs from evidentials described for other Athabaskan languages precisely because of its relative systematicity. Rather than being expressed heterogeneously, evidentiality is expressed via a tightly constrained system of postverbal enclitics that vary paradigmatically. Although the system may not be fully grammaticized in the sense of forming an obligatory inflectional category, its intermediate status affords a **unique opportunity** to view the grammaticization of an evidential system in progress.

Though such an occurrence may be of only passing interest in many language families, in Athabaskan this is a remarkable event. The tightly fused structure of the Athabaskan verb complex has, for the most part, restricted morphological innovation within the verb complex. With a very few notable exceptions, the basic templatic structure of the prefix complex is homologous across the family (Rice 2000:1), in spite of a time depth said to exceed three thousand years (Krauss 1973). Yet, Dena'ina has apparently recycled morphological material from two distinct parts of the grammar—pronouns and relative suffixes—to create verbal enclitics with two orthogonal paradigmatic features.

Unfortunately, although the emergence of Dena'ina evidentials may represent a rare instance of grammaticization in Athabaskan, the eventual fate of the Dena'ina evidentials may never be known. Like most of the Athabaskan languages of Alaska, Dena'ina is extremely endangered. Most of the speakers are at least sixty years old and no longer use Dena'ina on a regular basis. In no Dena'ina community does Dena'ina function as the language of daily communication. This fact greatly complicates the study of discourse-based phenomena

such as evidentiality. Moreover, because Dena'ina evidentials are only partly grammaticized, they are also most likely to exhibit effects of erosion and fossilization in modern language use, so that it can be difficult to distinguish the actual function of Dena'ina forms. A possible example of this latter phenomenon has occurred in language revitalization efforts during the past several years. Through various adult language classes the phrase *Dena'ina eshlan shida* 'I am Dena'ina' has become entrenched as a part of a formulaic greeting that students memorize and use to introduce themselves both within the class and in the world beyond the class. While the phrase is clearly grammatically correct, some speakers have remarked that the use of the evidential form *shida* seems out of place. In certain discourse contexts, the use of the evidential is appropriate; however, language students have learned the evidential as a fixed form without the variation. The effects of recent rapid language shift will complicate future investigation of the emergence of the Dena'ina evidential system.

In spite of these difficulties we hope that this preliminary description of evidentials in Dena'ina will inspire further examination of the "little words" in Dena'ina and other Athabaskan languages. Though the verb may be the hallmark of Athabaskan language structure, the existence of an incipient Dena'ina evidential system demonstrates the ability of Athabaskan languages to innovate morphological structures outside the verb word. Moreover, the uniqueness of the Dena'ina system demonstrates the heterogeneity of Athabaskan grammar beyond the verb word. We still have much to learn from Dena'ina and other Athabaskan languages.

Notes

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Abbreviations. The following abbreviations are used in the glosses: 1 = first person; 2 = second person; 3 = third person; 4 = "fourth" person; CL = classifier; CON = conative; EMPH = emphatic particle; EVID = evidential; EXCL = exclamation; FOC = focus; FUT = future; HUM = human; IMP = impersonal subject; INCEP = inceptive; INDEF = indefinite; INF = inferential; ITER = iterative; MIR = mirative; NEG = negative; PL = plural; QUAL = qualifier; Q = interrogative; REL = relativizer; SG = singular.

1. We use the term "particle" here in the loosest sense possible, to mean a free (unbound) word that cannot be inflected.

2. In the Dena'ina practical orthography, evidential enclitics and most (but not all) other enclitics are conventionally written with a preceding word space.

3. One of the main purposes of this article is to demonstrate the complex nature of the evidential enclitics; hence, it would be premature to provide detailed interlineal glosses for these enclitics. Instead, the standard gloss EVID is used for all of the Dena'ina enclitics in the subsystem of evidential enclitics that form the topic of this article. Furthermore, we follow Tenenbaum (1976) in providing word-level rather morpheme-level glosses for verbs in the Dena'ina examples, except where relevant to the discussion at hand. See Tenenbaum (1978) and Lovick (2006) for details of Dena'ina verbal morphology.

4. Throughout the article, evidentials in the example sentences are in bold type.

5. In these examples, we make no distinction between mirative and nonmirative inferentials. See de Reuse (2003) for examples of this distinction.

6. We are grateful to Victor Golla for explaining the Hupa morphology.

7. In the Western Apache practical orthography, the underlined *n* denotes a sound varying between a voiced alveolar nasal [n] and a prenasalized stop [ʔd].

8. The fourth person prefix *y-* contrasts with third person *b-* and denotes a third person referent of different discourse status. The functional ramifications of the alternation between *y-* and *b-* have been discussed widely in the Athabaskanist literature (see Thompson 1996).

9. One reviewer speculated that example (39) might seem more natural if the speaker had been unconscious and was told later that he had been sitting.

10. The factors conditioning this variation are not clear, though we suspect that the choice of a disyllabic or monosyllabic enclitic may be motivated by rhythmic considerations.

11. Given the preliminary nature of this study, we have not attempted to calculate measures of statistical significance for this distribution. A more detailed study of the distribution of Dena'ina evidentials will be the subject of future investigation.

12. There may be cultural constraints on this distribution. First and second person referents are presupposed and tend to be human, and it is thus not necessary to stress their humanness by using a *-n* or *-na* evidential.

13. There is no formal distinction between relativization and nominalization in Dena'ina. Relative suffixes may be equally appropriately referred to as **relativizers** or as **nominalizers**.

14. The two negative imperative enclitics seem to have identical meanings. What differs is their morphological environment: *-ilay* requires the verb to be inflected in the second person singular optative, while *-a* requires the verb to take the human indefinite or first person plural subject prefix *ch'*. See Tenenbaum (1978:114–16) for details.

15. However, they could be considered evidentials in the broader sense of marking speaker attitude toward knowledge (see Chafe 1986).

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