Evidentiality in the Discourse. Setting Boundaries.[1]

La evidencialidad en el discurso. Estableciendo los límites

Les preuves dans le discours. Fixer les limites

As provas no discurso. Estabelecer os limites

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Abstract

Despite the extensive search that has been done on the phenomenon of evidentiality in the discourse, i.e. the coding of the information source, there are still terminological and conceptual discrepancies that need to be laid out. The present paper presents a theoretical framework of evidentiality. It starts with an examination of the scope of evidentiality in terms of grammar and semantics, ending up with a full understanding of the notion as a functional-conceptual domain. The discussion also focuses on the relationship between evidentiality and epistemic modality since this is still an open-ended issue in the field. We support that a thorough study of particular evidential forms, such as reportative evidential, would be needed as a vibrant continuation of this theoretical revision

Keywords: discourse ; source of information ; codification ; linguistiques ; semantics.

Resumen

A pesar de la investigación extensa que se ha hecho sobre el fenómeno de la evidencialidad en el discurso, es decir, la codificación de la fuente de la información, todavía hay discrepancias terminológicas y conceptuales que necesitan ser consideradas. El presente artículo presenta una discusión teórica de la evidencialidad. Comienza con un examen del ámbito de la evidencialidad en cuanto a la gramática y semántica, terminando con una comprensión completa del concepto como un ámbito funcional-conceptual. La discusión también se centra en la relación entre la evidencialidad y la modalidad epistémica, dado que todavía es un tema abierto en el campo. Apoyamos que un estudio exhaustivo de formas evidenciales concretas, tales como los evidenciales reportativos, sería necesario como continuación dinámica de esta revisión bibliográfica.

Palabras clave: discurso, fuente de información, codificación, lingüística, semántica.

Résumé

Malgré les recherches approfondies qui ont été menées sur le phénomène de la preuve dans le discours, c'est-à-dire le codage de la source d'information, il existe encore des divergences terminologiques et conceptuelles qui doivent être prises en compte. Cet article présente une discussion théorique sur la force probante. Elle commence par un examen du domaine de la preuve en termes de grammaire et de sémantique, et se termine par une compréhension complète du concept en tant que domaine fonctionnel-conceptuel. La discussion se concentre également sur la relation entre l'évidence et le mode épistémique, car il s'agit d'une question encore ouverte dans ce domaine. Nous soutenons qu'une étude exhaustive des formes concrètes de preuve, telles que les preuves de signalement, serait nécessaire en tant que continuation dynamique de cette analyse documentaire.

Mots clés : discours, source d'information, codification, linguistique, sémantique.

Resumo

Apesar da extensa investigação que tem sido feita sobre o fenómeno da evidência no discurso, ou seja, a codificação da fonte de informação, ainda existem discrepâncias terminológicas e conceptuais que precisam de ser consideradas. Este artigo apresenta uma discussão teórica de probabilidades. Começa com um exame do campo da evidência em termos gramaticais e semânticos, terminando com uma compreensão completa do

conceito como um domínio funcional-conceptual. A discussão centra-se também na relação entre a evidência e o modo epistémico, uma vez que esta é ainda uma questão em aberto no terreno. Apoiamos que sería necessário um estudo abrangente de formas probatórias concretas, tais como a apresentação de provas, como uma continuação dinâmica desta revisão bibliográfica.

Palavras-chave: discurso, fonte de informação, codificação, lingüística, semântica.

Introduction

Stating the form of acquisition of information is deeply ingrained in everyday speech. In the field of education, for instance, teachers constantly allude to expressions such as 'I *see* that you have done your homework', 'you *must* be tired today, it has been a long exam', or 'I *have heard* that you didn't have time to finish the project', indirectly conveying how the evidence was obtained by the speaker. In the case of science, acknowledging other sources of information is the starting basis for the formulation of the hypothesis. Researchers commonly provide evidence coming from written quotes (*it was claimed that...*), basing their ideas on former reports that in turn are based on previous reports, and so on (Hansson, 2018). Moreover, the relevance of the sources and therefore that of the reported evidence is influenced by the date it was first mentioned, leading both students and research practitioners to call upon the most updated sources.

The present paper is aimed at presenting a comprehensive discussion of evidentiality through the scrutiny of this notion in the field of linguistics. This phenomenon, understood as "the indication of the acquisition of evidence or knowledge" (Mañoso-Pacheco and Juárez-Escribano, 2019, p. 193), lacks agreement in the literature concerning its definition and related notions, and thus, a comprehensive study of evidential is needed for the creation of stronger boundaries (Hirschová, 2013; Tournadre and LaPolla, 2014; Yang, 2014).

The phenomenon of evidentiality has been largely discussed concerning aspects of modality, as well as its grammatical marking, pragmatic and semantic domains. Studies in this field are varied, comprising typological descriptions and cognitive-linguistic investigations (Chafe and Nichols, 1986; Dendale and Tasmowski, 2001; Brugman and Macaulay, 2015; Marín-Arrese et al., 2017, San Roque and Floyd 2017, inter alia). Most investigations have been done on verbs, in languages where the marking of the source of one's knowledge is compulsory, i.e. cases where evidentiality is grammaticalized. Traditional grammars tend to place evidential in the category of (semi)-

auxiliary verbs (Vliegen, 2011, p. 125). Nevertheless, further analyses also applied evidentials to non-verbal markers.

The term 'evidentiality' was presented in linguistics in 1911 by F. Boas in his introduction to *Handbook of American Indian Languages*, a pioneering work dealing with the obligatory marking of the information source, as well as with the works of E. Sapir (1921). Despite their contributions, it took more than four decades till the term came into common usage in general linguistics thanks to the publication of R. Jakobson's *Shifters, Verbal Categories*, and the Russian Verb (1957), with this definition:

Evidential is a tentative label for [the] verbal category which takes into account three events — a narrated event (En), a speech event (Es), and a narrated speech event (Ens). The speaker reports an event based on someone else's report (quotative, i.e. hearsay evidence), of a dream (relative evidence), of a guess (presumptive evidence), or his own previous experience (memory evidence). (1957, p. 391)

French scholars have two terms to refer to the concept of evidentiality in English linguistics: *évidentialité* and *médiatif* (Dendale and Tasmowski, 2001, p. 340). The first word was introduced by C. Vet (1988) into French linguistics; however, it has been rejected by some scholars as the etymology of the English word *'evidence'* has nothing to do with the meaning of the French term evidence that stands for "the information communicated [that] is 'evident'" (Dendale and Tasmowski, 2001, p. 340). Instead, many French references advocates using the term *médiatif,* a concept presented by Lazard in 1956 and revised by Guentchéva with the work *L'Énonciation Médiatisée* (1996). Nonetheless, the domain of 'mediativity' is not completely identical to that of 'evidentiality'. According to Dendale and Tasmowski (2001, p. 341):

The difference is prefigured by the root elements of the respective terms. Instead of focusing on the kind of evidence at the speaker's disposal, the term mediativity focuses on the special character of utterances mediated by references to the evidence, i.e., on distances between speakers and what they say.

This semantic variation has been the origin of latter discussions in linguistic studies on evidentiality. By the early 80s, there was a gradual increase in interest in the analysis of evidentiality in linguistics (Anderson, 1986). The first paramount work that examines evidentiality cross-linguistically is *Evidentiality: The Linguistic Coding of Epistemology, edited by Chafe and Nichols* (1986). It is a seminal collection of papers that covers a selection of American, European, and Asian varieties, such as Tibeto-Burman languages (Sherpa, Akha, or Tibetan) (Ballesteros, 2004, p. 80), with an additional focus on epistemic meanings. From this influential work onwards, the concept of

evidentiality was solidly established in linguistics. According to Chafe, evidentiality does not only imply "the expression of 'evidence' per se" but also "attitudes toward knowledge" (1986, p. 262), comprising various modes of access to the information, which are belief, induction, hearsay, and deduction, deduction being the least reliable form (1986, p. 263). Since this publication, the topic has been approached from a broad range of perspectives.

Another milestone in evidential typological studies is *Mood and Modality*, first published in 1986 by Palmer, who discussed evidentiality applied to an extensive range of languages and analyzed evidentials' connections with epistemic modality (2001, p. 70). In that decade, Willett (1988) proposed a cross-linguistic analysis of evidential marking, though his corpus is limited, and his results may be outdated concerning more recent references.

From the earliest studies onwards, the reference to information source has been related to "attitudes about the epistemic status of information, because the linguistic markers encoding these two semantic domains are often the same" (Dendale and Tasmowski, 2001, p. 340). The exact relation between the two areas is still a recurring theme in this research field, as will be examined below (Van der Auwera and Plungian, 1998; De Haan, 1999; Roseano et al., 2016; Przyjemski, 2017, inter alia).

Within the latest investigations, volume 33 of the *Journal of Pragmatics* (2001) is worth mentioning. It contains significant papers on evidentiality and other topics, for instance, epistemic marking (Fitneva, 2001) or mirativity (DeLancey, 2001), and relevant papers in the area written by Plungian, Donabédian, and Nuyts, amongst others. Plungian suggested a revised typology of evidentials rooted in the idea of 'semantic maps' proposed by Anderson (1986) and Willett's proposal. He divided evidential values into direct and indirect evidence, subclassified in turn into reflected and mediated evidence.

Another somewhat recent collective volume was *Perspectives on Evidentiality and Modality*, edited by J. Marín Arrese (2004). It shows modern researches on evidentiality conducted by various perspectives and is composed of three defined parts, considering aspects such as evidential diachronic perspectives or evidentials in the journalistic discourse, to name but a few.

At that time Aikhenvald published a monograph on evidentiality from a cross-linguistic perspective, entitled *Evidentiality* (2004), and based on an examination of more than five hundred languages taken from various grammars. This author distinguishes six modes of evidential types or forms of access to the information, as follows:
- Visual: information acquired via seeing

- Non-visual sensory: information acquired via other senses
- Inference: information obtained via result, visible or tangible evidence
- Assumption: information obtained via non-visible results, such as reasoning
- Hearsay: information via a report by a non-specific source
- Quotative: information via a report by a specific source.

Her classification of information sources marked by evidential forms has a great influence on many publications on evidentiality. For instance, Boye and Harder (2009) who, in connection with Aikhenvald's line of thought, advocated in the journal *Functions of Language* an interesting overall perspective on the true nature of evidentiality. They defined it as a category on its own, or what they called a 'functional-conceptual domain', including grammar, semantics, and pragmatics. Despite the release of this article, the evidential scope continues to be a source of conflict among scholars concerning evidentiality description.

Later on, K. Boye published *Epistemic Meaning: A Crosslinguistic and Functional Cognitive Study* (2012), in which the author makes a new cross-linguistic descriptive analysis on epistemic modality and evidentiality, and states that evidential meanings are "independent of whether they are situation independent (pragmatic) or conventional (semantic), and whether they are conveyed by means of lexical expressions or by means of grammatical expressions" (2012, p. 19). Following Aikhenvald (2004), Boye claims that evidentiality and epistemic modality are distinct categories, though they belong to the superordinate category of 'epistemicity', a category "defined notionally in terms of justificatory support" (2012, p. 317).

Finally, one of the latest major collections on evidentiality is *Evidentiality and Modality in European Languages* (2017), edited Marín-Arrese et al. As it is stated in the introduction, it is based on "the study of modality and evidentiality from the discourse, corpus, and multilingual perspectives" (2017, p. 10). The volume is not just focused on the study of the domain of evidentiality, but it also analyses epistemic and deontic modality. From a discourse-pragmatic perspective, it examines the variation of evidential expressions and modals embedded in distinct genres and discourse types and applies a corpus methodology.

Notwithstanding all these contributions to the study of evidentiality over the last decades, there is still no consensus concerning its definition and scope. The main obstacle for determining a sole criterion is the variability of evidential expressions across languages. Since the linguistic expression of evidentiality varies drastically depending on the language, the databases that these authors have presented cannot fully coincide to establish a common pattern of the evidential system. Hence, either a re-analysis of the data or the

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introduction of new data to reveal new insights about this category would be required.

Method

The present discussion on the concept of evidentiality in the discourse departs from the need to provide clarity of the exact boundaries surrounding evidential modals, in particular, those concerning their scope and relation with epistemic modality. Research practitioners and linguistics keep on debating about the nature of evidentiality, whether this category belongs to grammar or semantics, or should be regarded as a functional-conceptual notion. Moreover, its connection with epistemic modality is still at the heart of the dispute in the field of linguistics.

All the above-mentioned issues have led to conduct this comprehensive discussion on the linguistic notion of evidentiality. To conduct this theoretical revision, relevant scientific databases, such as *Google Scholar*, and journals with international scope indexed in *Scopus* and the *Web of Science* have been consulted.

Based on the relevance of the sources consulted, this theoretical review is configured. This paper is the result of an exhaustive study and is organized as follows: Section 1 focuses on providing a brief overview of major works on evidentiality. Section 3 continues with the theoretical discussion and is divided into two areas: scope of evidentiality, and evidentiality and epistemic modality. The former discusses the literature on the conceptualization of evidentiality with a focus on its scope. Then, section 3.2 continues analyzing the relationship between evidentiality and epistemic modality, namely the positions of disjunction, overlap, and inclusion. Finally, section 4 is devoted to the conclusions and future lines of research.

Theoretical discussion

Scope of evidentiality

The scope which evidentiality belongs to has been a common source of dispute in discourse analysis. The tendency is to establish a sharp distinction between semantics and pragmatics, and between lexical and grammatical coding when defining evidentials. One of the reasons for setting such boundaries is that the domain evidentiality may be expressed in various ways across languages, so conceptual distinctions are necessary for practical purposes. This section reviews the three main scopes through which evidentiality has been studied in the literature, namely grammar, semantics, and the integrative approach proposed by Boye (2012) that conceptualizes evidentiality as a functional-conceptual category.

Evidentiality as a grammatical category

Evidentials can be found encoded in, for instance, grammatical morphemes, constituting a morphosyntactic category of the language, leading us to think that evidentiality has a grammatical status (Donabédian, 2001; Fetzer and Etsuko, 2014; Aikhenvald 2015, 2018). Following Lazard (2001, p. 360),

The evidential may be said to be grammaticalized in a language when, in the grammatical system of this language, there are specific forms (*significant*) whose semantic-pragmatic content (*signifié*) is a reference to the source of the information conveyed by the discourse.

Thus, the marking of the source of evidence in a statement is at the root of grammatical evidentials' description.

Many authors have focused their studies on exploring the paths of evidential grammaticalization. The marking of this category came into focus with the analysis of Amerindian languages, although "early (pre-20th century) grammatical descriptions show that what we now know to be the marking of such distinctions was often not recognized as such" (Floyd, 1996, p. 72). Remarkable was the contribution done by Anderson (1986) who "provided a useful characterization of archetypal evidential [markers]" (Floyd, 1996, p. 73). According to, evidentials are a special grammatical phenomenon that can be more precisely defined bearing in mind the following four considerations:

[a] Evidentials show the kind of justification for a factual claim which is available to the person making the claim […]
[b] Evidentials are not themselves the main predication of the clause but are rather a specification added to a factual claim about something else.
[c] Evidentials indicate evidence as in (a) as their primary meaning, not only as a pragmatic inference.
[d] Morphologically, evidentials are inflections, clitics, or other free syntactic elements (not compounds or derivational forms). (1986, p. 274-275)

Beginning at the end, condition d) supports that evidentials should be considered grammatical markers as they code secondary meaning. In the following quote, it could be seen how the evidential expression 'they say' codes secondary meaning:

They call for "population-based assessment and biomonitoring" to try to figure out whether it is doing any harm. Food contact materials, they say, "are a significant source of chemical food contamination, although legally they are not considered as contaminants". They are "a new exposure source in the sense that they have received

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little attention so far in studies concerned with human health effects," they say [emphasis added]. (The Guardian, 2014)

However, the distinction between the basic and the derived element(s) or between the one(s) coded as secondary concerning another element is not obvious in all evidential cases (Squartini, 2008, p. 919-920; Boye and Harder, 2009, p. 38). For instance, in the example "they say that he did, but he didn't" (Boye and Harder, 2009, p. 24), there is a contrast between what 'they say' he did and the assertion made by the author in the second part of the proposition, suggesting that the lexical verbal construction 'they say' is what truly expresses the primary information. Thus, although evidentials often constitute secondary information, they can also be primary information, i.e. "the evidence for a proposition, rather than the proposition for which evidence is expressed" (Boye and Harder, 2009, p. 27). Secondaries is then inadequate to justify that evidentiality is a pure grammatical marker since this propertys not consistent in all evidential cases.

In the same volume, *Evidentiality: The Linguistic Coding of Epistemology*, Mithun describes evidentials as markers that "qualify the reliability of information communicated [and] […] specify the source of evidence on which statements are based" (1986, p. 89); though she does not restrict evidentiality to grammatical devices. Aikhenvald (2004, p. 10) also admits that the source of the information may be indicated by elements that are not classified as such; thus, evidentials cannot be regarded as pure grammatical elements.

This is the case of the English language, which does not mark evidentiality grammatically, as its verb system has no morphological evidentials. On the contrary, lexical verbs such as 'allege' or expressions such as 'it is said' can perform evidential functions. Nevertheless, there are certain verb tenses and combinations of verb aspect that may be regarded as a way of coding evidentiality in English. For instance, present perfect ('you have been crying' – when I look at your eyes) or simple past ('you had the exam tomorrow' – based on proofs). In any case, considering that languages just code how the information was acquired or the source of knowledge employing grammar markers is a generalization that just applies to certain languages. Nevertheless, even though there are many instances in the language of non-grammatical forms that perform evidential functions, there are still authors, such as Anderson (1986), who do not consider these forms as proper evidentials. This author maintains that

Moreover, there are grammatical evidentials that have their root in lexical elements, which lead to presume that the boundaries between grammar and semantics concerning evidentiality are blurred. From a diachronic perspective, the utterance verb 'say', for instance, has developed into an adverbial reportative particle (unnia) in Tibeto-Burman languages (Boye and

Harder, 2009). Hence, an adverbial particle that belongs to the grammatical description can be derived from a diachronic source that consists of a lexical element. Evidential expressions can be then grammaticalized in time.

Evidentiality as a semantic category

There is an approach in the field of linguistic analysis that considers evidentiality as a proper semantic category (coded meaning) or a phenomenon about the linguistic code (Boye, 2012, p. 10). In English, for instance, evidentiality has not been grammaticalized and many expressions are defined as evidential, understanding it as a semantic category, such as "it seems", "its appears" or "reportedly" (Lazard, 2001, p. 360). Many other authors support the theory that evidentiality is a meaning, though the connotations attached to it may vary. Donabédian supports that evidentiality relates to the notion of the source of knowledge (2001, p. 439), while other authors such as Mithun (1986) or Mayer (1990) link this category to the concept of 'probability' and 'degree of certainty' (Boye and Harder, 2009, p. 11). Moreover, some authors maintain that evidentiality is "a type of epistemic modality where propositions are asserted that are open to challenge by the hearer, and require justification", which expresses "a speaker's strength of commitment to a proposition in terms of the available evidence" (Crystal, 1991, p. 127).

This perspective has been defined as 'inclusive' in opposition to the disjunction and overlap positions which do not state categorically that evidentiality is a subtype of epistemic modality. To conclude, we may say that the speaker's attitude toward the proposition is the core of the evidential description within the semantic view. In the case of reportative evidentials, they serve to "mark that information comes from someone else's report" (Aikhenvald, 2006, p. 324), which suggests that the speaker/writer of the assertion does not subscribe to the evidence presented unreservedly.

Evidentiality as a functional-conceptual category

Some linguists such as Ifantidou relate evidentiality to the notion of pragmatics or inferred meaning, as "the source of knowledge […] can be pragmatically inferred" (2001, p. 8, 15); and "even in cases where it is not overtly expressed, evidential meaning may be communicatively significant" (Boye and Harder, 2009, p. 13). For instance, if we consider this example provided by Ifantidou: "John is feeling miserable today" (2001), we may conclude that

> The information in [this case] would be understood as having different sources
> if produced by a speaker who had just seen John's miserable expression

(observation), was reporting what John had said (hearsay), had just observed John's behavior (inference), and so on; and such implicit assumptions about the source of the information might play a role in the interpretation of the utterance itself. Such pragmatic inferences about the source and reliability of information are interesting in their own right and may well interact with the linguistic encoding of evidentiality. (2001, p. 18)

Thus, evidentiality can depend on the context. We can think of another case similar to the previous example, as follows: the daughter of a friend of mine usually baked cakes when depressed. One day a sweet smell entered her neighbor's house and she inferred: 'the daughter of my neighbor is depressed' (without knowing the fact beforehand).

After analyzing these three perspectives aimed at describing evidentiality, one can easily deduce that for a full understanding of this category an integrated account is required. From a cognitive-linguistic view, evidentiality should be better understood as a functional-conceptual domain (Boye and Harder, 2009; Carretero and Zamorano-Mansilla, 2015), which means a generic category on its own. This new conception of evidentiality still takes into consideration one of Anderson's conditions, which says "evidentials show the kind of justification for a factual claim which is available to the person making the claim" (1986, p. 274), but considers that, among the four Anderson's conditions, this is the only one that linguistic expressions have to meet in order to be included in the scope of evidentiality. According to this view, considering whether the source of information is certainly a grammatical, semantic, or pragmatic phenomenon or not should be kept apart to provide a complete definition of the concept of evidentiality.

Evidentiality and epistemic modality

Setting boundaries between evidentiality or "the form of acquisition of knowledge" and epistemic modality, i.e. "the resulting degree of certainty" (Barrios, 2017, p. 338), has led to a vigorous debate in the literature and it is still an open-ended issue owing to the lack of consensus regarding the extent to which they cover. According to this author, "the more indirect the former is, the lower the speaker's commitment to the truth of his statement will be" (2017, p. 338). Nevertheless, there is a variety of claims on the value assigned to these cross-linguistic generic categories, as well as the possible criteria for identifying the two conceptualizations. Three relations are found in current studies on the domains of these two categories: disjunction, overlap, and inclusion, which will be further analyzed.

Disjunction

Several scholars (Aikhenvald, 2004; De Haan, 1999; Plungian, 2001; Faller, 2002; Cornillie, Marín-Arrese and Wiemer, 2015) consider evidentiality and epistemic modality as separate semantic and grammatical categories and appeal to the diverse nature of these domains, the so-called non-conflationists. According to Cornillie, "equating the evaluation of the reliability of the evidence with the epistemic evaluation of likelihood [is what] leads to the current confusion between the two categories" (2009, p. 57). He maintains that the epistemic commitment of evidential expressions does not result from the evidential source of information, but it has to do with the interpretation of it on the part of both the speaker and hearer. Cornillie posits that although some scholars attribute different degrees of reliability to a source of information, "they should not automatically be translated into degrees of epistemic speaker commitment" (2009, p. 44).

Semantically the two categories may differ since "evidentials assert the nature of the evidence for the information in the sentence, while epistemic modals evaluate the speaker's commitment for the statement" (De Haan, 1999, p. 83). According to this disjunction view, epistemic modality and evidentiality deal with evidence in a very different way: the former focuses on presenting an utterance based on evidence, while the latter assesses it, assigning a confidence measure to the speaker's statement. For instance, comparing these two sentences: "it must not be a good movie" and "it is said not to be a good movie", the former should be regarded as epistemic and the latter evidential, according to De Haan's perspective. Another reason to consider evidentials as distinct from epistemic markers is that "they are obligatory in some languages, but […] there are no languages with obligatory epistemic necessity and possibility modals" (Speas, 2004, p. 15). Hence, evidentials are inflectional in a manner that epistemic markers are not. Moreover, the origins of evidential morphemes "differ greatly from the lexical sources of epistemic modals" (De Haan, 1999, p. 83).

Overlap

The most common perspective and the one supported in the present discussion is held by conflationists: overlap. They support that the two categories, although different, are closely enough related to cause an overlap cross-linguistically in some languages (González et al., 2017). The functional overlap is acknowledged by various linguists in languages such as Tibetan or Quechua (Faller, 2002).

According to Van der Auwera and Plungian, the interface between the two concepts "is located in the epistemic modal region of 'epistemic necessity' –

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or certainty and a relatively high degree of probability –and the evidential region of inferential evidence, a subregion of indirect evidence"; these two regions being identical (1998, p. 85-86).

On the other hand, Palmer (1990, p. 12) notes that evidentiality critically overlaps with epistemic modality in that the two systems "present speakers with the means of indicating that they do not guarantee the truth of their statements". This overlap is apparent in the case of the modal 'must' in English, which "usually not merely makes a judgment, but also bases that judgment upon the evidence available, and to that extent is evidential". This notion is already present in Coates (1983, p. 41), who notes that the "epistemic must convey the speaker's confidence in the truth of what he is saying, based on a deduction from facts known to him (which may or may not be specified)".

Inclusion

The inclusion perspective supports that one of these categories includes both the information source as well as an assessment of its reliability, that is, "one is regarded as falling within the semantic scope of the other" (Liu, 2016). In some studies, evidentiality is considered as the superordinate domain including part of the subdomain of epistemic modality. Matlock (1989, p. 215) defines evidentials as "linguistic units comprising part of epistemic modality, code a speaker's source of information, and some degree of certainty about that information".

In other studies, evidentiality is considered a subcategory of modality. Palmer maintains that evidentiality together with epistemic modality should be laid out as two subsystems within the domain of modality, evidentiality being part of the epistemic modal system. According to this author, the two categories deal with "the degree of commitment by the speaker to what he says" (2001, p. 51). Moreover, "an indirect evidential, which indicates that the speaker has only indirect knowledge concerning the proposition being asserted, implies that the speaker is not committed to the truth of that proposition and thus implies an epistemic value" (Bybee et al., 1994, p. 180).

Conversely, Chafe (1986) analyses the evidential category from a cross-linguistic perspective and studies evidential markers in conversations and formal writings. Within the semantic scope of evidentiality, he includes "a range of epistemological considerations that are linguistically coded" (1986, p. 262).

Finally, one of the most probably distinct perspectives around the concept of evidentiality is proposed by Boye (2012), who considers that evidentiality and

epistemic modality should be considered neither domains dependent upon each other, nor members of separate categories, but part of a general 'epistemicity' category. According to him, evidentiality or "epistemic justification", which has a connection with information coding, and epistemic modality or "epistemic support", related to the degree of certainty, are fields belonging to the epistemicity category, "a notion which is a generalization over the notions of epistemic justification and epistemic support: the philosophers' notion of justificatory support" (2012, p. 2-3). From his standpoint (Boye, 2012), the above-mentioned discussions about the relationship between the two categories would be suppressed or at least minimized since, as members of the same category. Similarly, the presence of evidential forms related to epistemic samples should be justified, as well as the existence of epistemic markers that differ from evidential expressions.

Conclusion

The present paper has reviewed the domain of evidentiality, examining the focal points of dispute in discourse linguistics. To that aim, the theoretical revision has started from a general overview of the principal works on evidentiality (Chafe and Nichols, 1986; Palmer, 1990; Anderson, 1986; Aikhenvald, 2004; Boye, 2012; Marín-Arrese et al., 2017, inter alia). As stated in the introduction, studies in this field are varied, comprising typological discussions and cognitive-linguistic investigations. Most of these investigations focus on the assessment of verbs in languages with a compulsory marking of evidential nuances, though they are some investigations conducted in non-verbal markers. The paper highlights that the term 'evidentiality' itself poses a conflict in the literature, mostly because French scholars define the concept using two terms: *évidentialité* and *médiatif*; however, none of them are completely equivalent of the term evidentiality, as understood in English linguistics.

The paper continues examining the existing disagreements as regards the scope to which evidentiality belongs. Some authors claim that evidentiality should be considered as a grammatical category since evidential markers code secondary meaning (Anderson, 1986). Nevertheless, this property is not consistent in all evidential cases, as in the English language which has a verb system with no morphological evidentials. The second approach discussed in the paper considers evidentiality as a proper semantic category or coded meaning (Boye, 2012). This perspective defines the evidentiality phenomenon with a focus on the speaker's attitude toward the proposition, which applies to cases such as "it seems" or "reportedly". The core of the dispute, in this case, has to do with the connotations attached to this notion since there is no agreement on whether evidentiality codes epistemic modality, i.e. a degree of certainty or probability.

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After analyzing these two approaches we end up claiming that for a full understanding of this category an integrated account is required. From a cognitive-linguistic view, evidentiality should be better understood as a functional-conceptual domain, which implies a generic category on its own (Boye and Harder, 2009).

Our theoretical review finishes by setting the boundaries between evidentiality, the marking of the information source, and epistemic modality, or the signaling of the speaker's degree of commitment to what is stated. Three relations are found in the literature, namely disjunction, overlap, and inclusion, exemplifying the lack of consensus in this regard. Disjunction position is held by non-conflationists and considers that evidentiality and epistemic modality should be dealt with as separate semantic and grammatical categories, since the former is restricted to present an utterance based on evidence, while the latter assesses it, assigning a confidence measure to the speaker's statement. The overlapping approach, on the contrary, claims that the two categories, though exhibiting certain differences, are closely enough related to cause an overlap cross-linguistically in some languages such as Tibetan. Our position is more inclined towards this view since a certain level of epistemic marking can be found in evidential expressions, such as the modal 'must'. Finally, the inclusion perspective posits that one of these categories may convey both the source of evidence and an estimation of its reliability. Nevertheless, there is no agreement concerning the actual position these categories should occupy within the general domain of modality.

Considering these various perspectives concerning the concept of evidentiality, we have highlighted the ambiguity present in the notion, which is one of the most heterogeneous domains in discourse linguistics. We would suggest a further review of evidentials and the existing conceptual discrepancies in the area by analyzing particular forms of evidentiality, for instance, reportative evidentials. They would be worth analyzing since it is claimed that there is a cline of functions between reportative evidentiality and reported speech (Chojnicka, 2012), a paradigm that lies beyond the scope of the analysis. Clarifying the lines of discussion concerning evidentiality is a core element for further analysis of evidential markers in the field of linguistics.

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