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# A CONTEXT-SENSITIVE AND FUNCTIONAL APPROACH TO EVIDENTIALITY IN SPANISH OR WHY EVIDENTIALITY NEEDS A SUPERORDINATE CATEGORY



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EDITION

# 1 Introduction

Evidentiality is not a linguistic category grammatically inherent in the language system of Contemporary Spanish as it does not have real evidentials like the languages Kashaya (Oswalt 1986), Fasu (Foley 1986: 165) or Quechua Wanka (Floyd 1997), for instance.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, it can be expressed by lexical and grammatical<sup>2</sup> forms. Famous studies like the ones by Boas (1947), Barnes (1984), Willett (1988), Aikhenvald (2003a, 2004) etc., in which evidentials are described from a semasiological perspective, were the basis for research in languages that do not possess real evidentials. That means, once having determined the meanings of evidentials, one can search for linguistic devices showing the same or similar function(s) (cf. Volkmann 2005: 84). The following examples show linguistic devices encoding evidentiality, while (1), (2) and (3) contain a lexical form (a modal adverb, a modal verb and a verb of cognitive attitude, respectively), (4) and (5) contain a grammatical one (conditional and synthetic future):

(1) Una adolescente de 15 años originaria de Nigeria es la séptima menor liberada de una red de prostitución en Cataluña en el último mes. Tres proxenetas de Ghana y Nigeria explotaban, **supuestamente**, a la víctima, según informó ayer el Cuerpo Nacional de Policía (CNP). La joven ha pasado a disposición de la Fiscalía de Menores y, previsiblemente, acabará bajo la tutela de la Generalitat.<sup>3</sup> (*El País* 17/07/2010)

(2) “No era un puerto tan duro para soltarlo, se podía ir cómodo a rueda”, dijo el español “Contador **debe de** estar frustrado, no ha podido ponerse líder”, opinó el luxemburgués. Ganó el francés Riblon, otro hombre de velódromo disfrutando de las montañas ¡Sacrilegio!, ¡sacrilegio!, volverían a gritar al ver a dos pipiols [...]. (*El País* 21/07/2010)

(3) [...] da pena ver cómo, por ejemplo, Inglaterra sale del Mundial con un gol legal no concedido o cómo después de expulsar a Zidane hace cuatro años a través del visionado de la jugada en vídeo no se hace lo propio con De Jong tras cargarse a Xabi Alonso. **Pienso que ayudaría** en jugadas determinantes y la polémica seguiría

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- 1 This is thus another study from a scholar of a Romance language who regards “having a way of saying ‘apparently’ or ‘I do not believe’ [...] a good enough pretext to put ‘evidentiality’ in the title of [her] paper” (Aikhenvald 2004: 5).
  - 2 ‘Grammatical’ is here used in the sense of belonging to grammar “as opposed to, e.g., what belongs to the lexicon” (Lehmann 2002: 8).
  - 3 In the present study, the linguistic device that is the subject under discussion will always be highlighted in bold. Contextually provided information which helps to determine the use of the linguistic means will be underlined.

dando vida a los forofos, porque fútbol y polémica siempre irán de la mano, con tecnología o sin ella. (*El País* 21/07/2010)

(4) Sin embargo, la Policía ha asegurado que la situación “está bajo control” y que otros paquetes sospechosos recibidos en las embajadas de Dinamarca y Venezuela son “una falsa alarma”. El sobre recibido en la sede diplomática de Venezuela **será** tan sólo una felicitación navideña. (*El Mundo* 29/12/2010)

(5) “[...] llamaron a las tres de la mañana dos periodistas que, teóricamente, tenían hotel en Nantes: ‘Nin, estamos tirados en Mónaco; búscanos una cama y una ducha’, me dijeron”. Media hora después tenían cama, ducha y una botella de champán como bienvenida. **Será** por eso que asegura: “Lo más divertido de mi trabajo es superar retos”. No hay uno que se le resista. (*El País* 05/07/2010)

Example (6) represents a further subcategory of evidentiality, viz. (direct) quotation, which will only marginally be dealt with in the context of the present study:

(6) “Los padres pueden mandar a los niños al colegio con una manzana y que luego ellos se compren en el cole una palmera de chocolate, una bolsa de patatas, un refresco... Lo que hay que hacer es educar al niño para que tenga conciencia de lo que come”, **dice Susana Monereo**, jefa de Endocrinología del Hospital de Getafe, **quien pone un ejemplo del problema**: “Si no, no comerán golosinas en el colegio, algo que está muy bien, pero estarán deseando salir para comerlas. [...]” (*El País* 24/07/2010)

As examples (1)-(6) indicate, this highly context-sensitive study will concentrate on data from daily newspapers because newspapers, such as *El País* and *El Mundo*, combine direct quotes that are oral in character as well as the journalist’s written consideration of a certain state of affairs ([p]<sup>4</sup>). The data are consequently retrieved from journalistic discourse which is said to be characterised by succinct transmission of information (cf. Cappon 2005: 11) which, in turn, is said to be enriched and made more ‘alive’ by quotes (cf. Cappon 2005: 121).<sup>5</sup> So the newspaper writing style can be divided into two text types: the journalist’s part represents written discourse, while direct quoted speech can be oral in char-

4 In the present study ‘[p]’ stands for ‘state of affairs’ as well as for ‘proposition’ (cf. chapter 3.12 for Boye’s (2010b) contrary line of argumentation).

5 Haßler (2003) describes quotes – or at least the reference to statements of other speakers – as one peculiarity of newspaper writing style:

Gegenüber anderen Verwendungsweisen der Sprache weist die Nachrichtensprache eine kommunikative Eigenart auf, die man als durchgängige Mehrstufigkeit der Referenzebenen bezeichnen könnte. Das Referieren auf Aussagen anderer, die Metaaussage ist die Aussageform der Nachricht schlechthin. Der Produzent der Nachricht macht eine Aussage über die Aussage von Offiziellen und Gewährspersonen (Haßler 2003: 116).

acter, even though they clearly cannot be compared with ‘real’ spoken data. The third text type that is included in this study also represents written discourse but is characterised not only by orality but also colloquialism: a few examples were found in the chat forums of *El País* and *El Mundo*, where readers comment on newspaper articles and discuss certain issues. In these chat forums, most users write in the same way as they speak so that this text type is considered even ‘more oral’ than direct quoted speech. Nevertheless, intonation and paralinguistic devices cannot be considered here due to the text type(s) that is worked with.

In summary, the text type(s) considered here are characterised by ‘medial writtenness’ and ‘conceptual orality’ (cf. Koch/Oesterreicher 1994: 587). Insofar as the utterances<sup>6</sup> that are the subject under discussion are not uttered by a journalist, in which medial writtenness combines with conceptual writtenness, the utterances are marked by conceptual orality. If a formerly interviewed person is interviewed and then quoted, the direct quoted speech is oral in character and if in chat forums the users write in the same way as they speak, this text type is considered even ‘more oral’. Hence, in these two cases, medial writtenness combines with conceptual orality. As with regard to the conception of an utterance, the terms ‘oral’ and ‘written’ denote the endpoints of a continuum (cf. Koch/Oesterreicher 1994: 587), the speech in chat forums can be (conceptually) considered ‘more oral’ than direct quoted speech.

Because of the context-sensitiveness, I will have to go beyond the sentence as “logical [...] relations which are expressed within the sentence in one case may indeed be expressed between sentences in other cases” (Simon-Vandenberg/Aijmer 2007: 82).

Linguists like Haßler (1997, 1998, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2010a, 2010d), Volkmann (1997, 2005), Große (2011), Cornillie (2007a, 2007b, 2009, 2010a, 2010b), Cappelli (2007), Simon-Vandenberg/Aijmer (2007), Wachtmeister Bermúdez (2004, 2005), Squartini (2001, 2004), Dendale/Tasmowski (1994) and Reyes (1996, 2002), who treat evidentiality in Spanish from an onomasiological perspective, understand this linguistic domain as a semantic-functional category. Semantically, the linguistic device under discussion must indicate the source for (a) certain proposition(s). In other words, the linguistic device must convey the meaning ‘source of information’. Evidentiality is also a functional category as it is expressed by linguistic means that fulfil the function of indicating the source of information for the transmitted content of (a) certain proposi-

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6 For an explanation of the reasons why I treat the statements analysed in the present study as *utterances*, see chapter 4.4. However, I will deal with *sentences*, if I speak, for instance, about the fact that a sentence adverb has scope over a sentence or if I distinguish between *modus* and *dictum* at the sentence level (cf. chapter 4.2).

tion(s). And in order to capture that “evidential meanings range from lexical to grammatical functions” it should be spoken of a semantic-functional domain (Diewald/Smirnova 2010b: 1). This semantic-functional understanding of evidentiality is necessary if dealing with evidentiality in Spanish because the starting point for figuring out evidential meanings in a language that does not possess real evidentials is the function rather than the form. Nevertheless, in this study the semasiological and the onomasiological approach are combined as for certain linguistic expressions (in Spanish itself or other Romance languages) an evidential use was already shown, and it is one aim of this study to underpin those uses/functions for certain forms by means of language data<sup>7</sup>. This study is partly semasiological in character as the language data illustrate that the linguistic expressions under discussion may have different meanings, or rather may serve different functions, which depends on the context.

Evidentiality is expressed by any (linguistic) form serving the function of indicating the source of information for the transmitted information. Thus any linguistic device – be it a grammatical form or a lexical expression – that encodes the source of information is treated as an *evidential expression*, *evidentially used expression* or rather an *expression with evidential meaning*. They will not be called evidentials as the term is applied to obligatorily used morphemes/affixes/particles, as for instance in Tariana (7) or in Tuyuca<sup>8</sup> (8):

(7) *Juse ifida di-manika-ka*.

‘José has played football (**we saw it**)’

*Juse ifida di-manika-mahka*.

‘José has played football (**we heard it**)’

*Juse ifida di-manika-nihka*.

‘José has played football (**we infer it from visual evidence**)’

*Juse ifida di-manika-sika*.

‘José has played football (**we assume this on the basis of what we already know**)’

*Juse ifida di-manika-pidaka*.

7 I call them ‘language data’ because I do not work with (real) speech data from a (real) oral corpus. Even though they are not real speech data, my data can be said to be oral in character since interviewed persons are quoted directly or utterances found in forums are written as the persons would have spoken. That is why I call them language data. Language data comprise language use in what way soever.

8 “Practically every paper on [evidentiality] makes at least some reference to the evidentiality system in the language of the Tuyuca [...]” (Haßler 2010d: 95). And so do I.

‘José has played football (**we were told**)’ (Aikhenvald 2004: 2-3).<sup>9</sup>

(8) *dliiga apé-wi*

‘He played soccer (**I saw him play**)’

*dliiga apé-ti*

‘He played soccer (**I heard the game and him**)’

*dliiga apé-yi*

‘He played soccer (**I have seen evidence that he played**)’

*dliiga apé-yigi*

‘He played soccer (**I obtained the information from someone else**)’

*dliiga apé-hīyi*

‘He played soccer (**It is reasonable to assume that he played**)’ (Barnes 1984: 257).

To summarise the part on the notional background, in this study only obligatorily used morphemes attached to the verb, as in the examples quoted above, are termed evidentials. The notion of *evidential expression*, in contrast, will be used here in the same sense as Diewald/Smirnova do in *Evidentiality in German*:

The term *evidential expression* is a neutral label (a hypernym) used to denote any kind of linguistic string with evidential meaning in a particular context, regardless of its linguistic structure and degree of grammaticalization<sup>10</sup> (Diewald/Smirnova 2010a: 41).

9 In *A Grammar of Tariana, from Northwest Amazonia* Aikhenvald gives another example to illustrate the use of evidentials. For describing the state of affairs ‘The jaguar killed a man’, each kind of information source requires the use of the corresponding evidential:

For instance, in describing an event such as ‘The jaguar killed a man’, use of the visual evidential would imply that the speaker saw this event happening. The non-visual evidential would be used if the speaker heard the noise of a man fighting the jaguar (or smelt the blood). The reported evidential would be used if someone told the speaker of the event, while the inferred evidential might be employed if the speaker had encountered a jaguar covered with human blood (Aikhenvald 2003b: 4).

10 The use of the term ‘grammaticalised’ or ‘grammaticalisation’ will be avoided with regard to the analysis of the linguistic means considered in the present study. If I use the term ‘grammaticalised’ or ‘grammaticalisation’ in certain text passages, it is used in the sense which is meant by the linguists whose studies are reviewed or referred to. For a detailed overview of the heterogeneously used – and consequently problematic – term ‘grammaticalisation’ and the meaning of grammaticalisation see Lehmann’s *Thoughts on grammaticalization* (2002: 8-14). Lehmann, in line with Kuryłowicz (1965), defines

Describing the linguistic realisation of evidentiality in German as well as regularities in grammaticalisation of certain linguistic forms and constructions, Diewald/Smirnova (2010a) reserve the term ‘evidential’ to denote grammaticalised forms in German. In the present study, in contrast, it will be completely avoided using the notion of evidential to describe linguistic means – even though having evidential meaning – in Spanish. It would not be correct to term the synthetic future, for instance, an evidential. Hopper/Traugott

define grammaticalization as the change whereby lexical items and constructions come in certain linguistic contexts to serve grammatical functions and, once grammaticalized, continue to develop new grammatical functions (Hopper/Traugott 2003: xv).

So the reason for avoiding using the notion ‘evidential’ concerning the Spanish synthetic future *será(n)* – to give an example – is that it is *often* used to express inference. However, it is to challenge whether it is (by now) its *primary meaning*, which would be the condition to enter the grammatical system of evidentiality (cf. Aikhenvald 2004: 1). While the morphemes in Tariana and Tuyuca are used to express evidential meanings only, the Spanish synthetic future form *may* be used to do so. Therefore, the term ‘evidentials’ is reserved for the ‘real ones’ in languages like Tariana, and *evidential expression*, *evidentially used expression* and *expression with evidential meaning* represent the notions which are worked with in the present study in order to refer to Spanish expressions or particular *uses* of Spanish expressions.

The present study’s aim is *not* to show *that* some linguistic devices in Spanish can be used as an expression with evidential meaning, or rather, that evidentiality represents a meaning aspect which is semantically inherent in some linguistic means. This was already shown for Spanish (semi-)auxiliaries (Cornillie 2007a), adverbs (Haßler 2004, Cornillie 2010a, 2010b, Reyes 1996), future and

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grammaticalisation as a process “in which something becomes or is made more grammatical” (Lehmann 2002: 8). Kuryłowicz explains:

Grammaticalization consists in the increase of the range of a morpheme advancing from a lexical to a grammatical or from a less grammatical to a more grammatical status, e.g. from a derivative formant to an inflectional one (1965: 52; quoted in Lehmann 2002: 6).

The bibliographical reference of Kuryłowicz’s paper is: Kuryłowicz, Jerzy (1965): “The evolution of grammatical categories”. In: *Diogenes* 51, 55-71. Bybee et al. (1994: 4) explain that “[s]ince the [...] revival of interest in [grammaticalisation] theory in the early 1970s, two terms – grammaticalization and grammaticization – have been used, usually interchangeably” (cf. also Lehmann 2002: 8-9). Bybee et al. (1994: 4) decided to use the shorter term as it is the “more elegant” notion.

conditional forms (Squartini 2001, 2004), verbs of cognitive attitude (Volkman 2005) and quotation (Reyes 1996, 2002). The present study, on the one hand, seeks to tie in with the research of Squartini (2001, 2004), Haßler (1997, 2002, 2004, 2010a, 2010b, 2010d), Volkman (2005), Wachtmeister Bermúdez (2004, 2005) and Cornillie (2007a, 2010a, 2010b), who examined the epistemic/evidential use of certain linguistic means in Spanish. On the other hand, it aims to tie in with the studies by Simon-Vandenberg/Aijmer (2007) and Cappelli (2007), who examined the epistemic/evidential use of English adverbs of certainty and English verbs of cognitive attitude, respectively.

In detail, the present study has different goals:

1. It aims to fortify that Contemporary Spanish provides different means to encode epistemic and/or evidential meaning(s) with the help of lexical and grammatical means. In other words, what Dendale/Tasmowski (1994) have claimed for certain linguistic devices in French will be shown here for the Spanish language:

Si le français ne dispose pas d'un système d'évidentiels aussi élaboré que le tuyuca, il n'en reste pas moins que les locuteurs français sont amenés dans certaines circonstances à marquer plus ou moins clairement la provenance de leur information. Le français dispose pour ce faire d'une série d'expressions (principalement lexicales, et en moindre mesure morphologiques, voire typographiques) permettant d'exprimer les principales catégories évidentielles. On peut accorder cette fonction à certains adverbess de phrase, tels que *apparemment*, *visiblement* (constatation), *certainement*, *sûrement* (inférence, supposition), à des constructions impersonnelles telles que *il semble que*, *il paraît que* (ouï-dire), aux verbes modaux *devoir*, *pouvoir* dans leur acception épistémique, à des verbes pleins tels que *voir*, *entendre*, *sentir*, aux verbes de déclaration, aux prépositions *d'après*, *selon*, *pour*, aux morphèmes du futur conjectural et du conditionnel d'ouï-dire, aux guillemets de citation (Dendale/Tasmowski 1994: 5).<sup>11</sup>

2. The study aims to analyse the evidential use of verbs of cognitive attitude and modal adverbs in Spanish and will reveal that the analysis of these linguistic means must be a context-sensitive one as the meaning of a particular item in a particular context depends on contextual factors. So what Cappelli (2007) and Simon-Vandenberg/Aijmer (2007) have shown for the use of verbs of cognitive attitude and adverbs of certainty still remains open to study for their Spanish equivalents, even though some little studies for the use of modal adverbs in Spanish (Haßler 2004, Cornillie 2010a, 2010b) already contribute to this field of research.

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11 In the present study, the part of a quote where I want to put special emphasis on will be underlined.



3. The present study will be concerned with the context-sensitive analysis of the synthetic future and the conditional form and their reportive and inferential use. On the one hand, with the help of the work with language data it is to find out whether the Spanish conditional form *alone* cannot only be used to express inference but also be termed a linguistic device to indicate reported speech, as Wachtmeister Bermúdez illustrates by the following journalistic example: “El presidente *renunciaría* en las próximas horas” (2004: 7). On the other hand, this study aims to show that it is not always possible to differentiate between a quotative use and an inferential one (cf. Guentchéva 1994).

Squartini (2001: 321) has found out that the Spanish synthetic future form is used to express inference, whereas the conditional form is used to express inference as well as it may be used to indicate reported speech. Squartini supposes for the quotative use that

[...] the intrusion of the reportive value seems to be a new disrupting factor introducing a non-uniform feature, possibly producing a new development in the Spanish evidential system (Squartini 2001: 322)<sup>12</sup>,

while Wachtmeister Bermúdez (2004) takes the fact that the *condicional* is used to express both inference and quoted words for granted:

En el uso periodístico el valor evidencial del condicional es doble. En el uso periodístico el condicional señala evidencia indirecta transmitida o mediada. [...] El otro valor del condicional expresa evidencia indirecta inferida [...] (Wachtmeister Bermúdez 2004: 7).

According to Gévaudan (2009: 118), the synthetic future may also be used to indicate reported speech. So both constructions *según X* + future and *según X* + conditional are to be found in journalistic discourse. That is why it is one sub-goal to have a closer and comparative look at the quotative use of the future and the quotative use of the conditional.

Because of the fact that the reportive use of the conditional is a prominent linguistic device in journalistic discourse, I adopt the translated notion of *conditionnel journalistique* (cf., for instance, Kronning 2002, 2004 or Sullet-Nylander 2006) and predominantly use the term ‘journalistic conditional’ to refer to this use. Nevertheless, it seems reasonable to assume that the journalistic conditional is no longer only a journalistic phenomenon: if a linguistic phenomenon is frequently found in news articles which are consumed on a daily basis by a large readership, it is highly likely that the reportive use of the conditional could also be found in oral speech data.

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12 In a paper from 2004, Squartini explains: “In French, Italian and Spanish the Conditional is a consistent temporal (as future in the past), hypothetical and reportive marker” (Squartini 2004: 890).