Interactions between evidential grammemes and lexical markers of epistemicity and evidentiality

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Outline of the talk

- Major viewpoints concerning the relationship between evidentiality and epistemic modality
- The language data used in the study
- Types of semantic interactions between evidential grams and epistemic (or evidential) lexemes.
- The 'concord' phenomenon
- Triggers of the 'concord' phenomenon
- Consequences of general relevance

On the relationship between evidentiality and epistemicity

Three viewpoints:

- **Distinct categories** (e.g. De Haan 1999, Lazard 1999, Nuyts 2001, DeLancey 2001, Aikhenvald 2003, 2004)
- **Partial overlap**; the domain of 'inferentiality' commonly within the intersection (e.g. Kozintseva 1994, Palmer 2001, Dendale & Tasmowski 2001, Plungian 2001)
- **Subsumption** (e.g. Chafe 1986, Kiefer 1994, Ifantidou 2001, Boye 2006)

Their place in the hierachy of sentential modification

• Cinque 1999

[speech act [evaluative [evidential [epistemic [tense [irrealis [deontic [habitual [repetitive [frequentative [volitional [celerative ...

• Nuyts 2008

evidentiality > epistemic modality > deontic modality > time > quantificational aspect (frequency) > phasal aspect > (parts of the) STATES of AFFAIRS

The data

- Source languages: Bulgarian (Slavic, Balkan),
 Estonian (Finno-Ugric, Circum-Baltic).
- Google search for contexts where a grammatical marker of evidentiality co-occurs with a lexical marker of epistemicity (or evidentiality) within the same clause.

Why these languages?

- Both have grammatical evidentiality systems.
- Their evidentiality systems are, however, very different semantically:

Bulgarian:

FIRSTHAND / NON-FIRSTHAND (Aikhenvald 2004)

Non-firsthand encoded by *I*-participle + zero-auxiliary in 3SG and 3PL.

Estonian:

REPORTED / EVERYTHING ELSE (Aikhenvald 2004)

In written language 'reported' encoded by the verbal suffix -vat.

 Studying the combinability of qualificational expressions wich occupy adjacent areas in the semantic space requires native or near-native linguistic intuitions.

In this case: Bulgarian – native, Estonian – near-native.

 The available data allows entering into a novel research area. Cinque's and Nuyts' hierarchies are postulated based on the analysis of the combinability of lexical or grammatical qualificational expressions. This study deals with the combinability of lexical and grammatical qualificational expressions.

Why is this important?

Mushin (2001: 107):

"a much higher degree of conventional mapping between actual source of information and adoption of epistemological stance in languages with grammatical evidentiality than in languages which lack such systems"

Types of interaction: description

- Up to four ways in which the Bulgarian sentence (1) can be accessed:
- (1) Stefan **maj** bil ot Lom.

Stefan probably be-PST.PTCP(=EV) from Lom

- 1a) The speaker has heard that Stefan is perhaps from Lom.[EV [EP [p]]] ('scopal reading')
- 1b) The speaker thinks that he has heard that Stefan is from Lom.[EP [EV [p]]] ('scopal reading')
- 1c) The speaker has heard that Stefan is from Lom and thinks that Stefan is (probably) from Lom.

[EV [p]] & [EP [p]] ('analytic reading')

1d) Stefan seems to be (according to the speaker) from Lom.

[EV-EP [*p*]] ('concord reading') !!!

These alternative interpretations are possible due to:

- ambiguity as to whether the items are in scopal dependency or not, cf. (1a-b) vs. (1c-d)
- scope ambiguity, cf. (1a) vs. (1b)
- ambiguity between free-collocation and more idiomatic reading of the sequence in bold, cf. (1c) vs. (1d)

Concord reading: an example from Bulgarian

(2) Videomasivite na London i Kairo ne sa integrirani na video_surveillance_areas of London and Cairo NEG be.3PL integrated at opredeleno nivo. Posle se okaza, che eksploziv-at mozhe bi certain level then turn_out.AOR.3sG that explosive-DEF maybe imal balkanski proizhod – no dali skladove-te i have.PST.PTCP Balkan origin but Q(yes/no) storehouses-DEF and vaobshte rabota-tas vzrivni materiali u nas naprimer in_general work-DEF with explosive material at us for_example se kontrolira po podhodjasht nachin? monitor.IMPS in adequate way

'The areas with video surveillance in London and Cairo are not integrated at a certain level. It turned out then that the explosives **were maybe** of Balkan origin – but who knows whether here (in Bulgaria, P.K.) for example the storage of the explosive materials and the work with them in general is monitored in an adequate way.'

Concord reading: an example from Estonian

siiski (3) Agasel aastal oli üllatavalt hea. Tavapärane but this year be.PST.3SG however surprisingly good usual saastalaadung loomulikult ka – lood, mis mitte millegagi silma scum load naturally too songs which NEG.ADV anything.ENCL eye.ILL ei paista ja mis pane-vad mõtlema, et kui sellised lood on NEG shine and which put-3PL think.SUP that if such numbers be.3SG saa-nud 10 parema hulka, siis milline see üldine tase get-PST.PTCP 10 best.GEN set.INE then what kind of this common level veel oli, mis ka üllatavalt kõrge **vist** ole-vat ol-nud. again be.PST.3SG which also surprisingly high **perhaps be**-EV **be**-PST.PTCP

'But it was surprisingly good this year. The ordinary crap, too, of course – faceless songs that make you think that if such songs are among the ten best, then what might the general level have been, which is also **supposed to have been** surprisingly high.'

• **NB!** The concord reading of the sequence of grammatical evidential and epistemic word is also possible in Estonian regardless of the fact that Estonian evidential marker conveys only reported evidentiality.

This leads to the conclusion that the intersection of the functions of the evidential and the epistemic item does not comprise only the domain of inferentiality. Intersections of the meaning of the grammatical evidential and the epistemic (or evidential) word



- 1) The collocation cannot receive concord reading.
- 2) The collocation may receive concord reading. In this case reinforcement of the epistemic component.
- 3) Disambiguation: specification of certain evidential meaning

The concord phenomenon is not new to the study of modals!

• Lyons 1977, Coates 1983, Palmer 2001:

'harmonic combination of modals'

• Geurts & Huitink 2006:

'modal concord'

NB! Evidence for 'semantic holism' (Quine 1953)

Triggers of the concord interpretation

- 1) The epistemic word expresses **medium certainty** that the propositional facts obtain.
- 2) The referent of the report (i.e. the particular source of information) is **not specified**.

Trigger 1: The domain of medium certainty/probability

Correlation between the type of interaction and the degree of certainty adduced by the epistemic (or evidential) word in Bulgarian and Estonian.



Trigger 2: Non-specific referent of the report

An example from Bulgarian

pomislih, che sased-a (4) Az pak si Tosho se е but REFL.DAT think.AOR.1SG that neighbour-DEF Tosho REFL be.3SG po gaz. I nishto iztarsil chudno, nali tumble down.PST.PTCP on ass and nothing surprising isn't epitsentar-a bil Mladost ... maj V epicentre-DEF **probably**≈as it seems **be**.PST.PTCP in Mladost

'And I thought that my neighbour Tošho fell on his backside. It doesn't surprise me, wasn't the epicentre **supposed to be** in Mladost (a residential area in Sofia; P.K.).

A general condition for concord reading:

Inferential process is always involved

- The underspecification of the information source and the word expressing medium certainty trigger an inferential reading of the collocation.
- Even if second-hand evidence is involved, this evidence is filtered out through inferential process.

NB! The instantiations of concord reading may still be reduced to the notion of 'inferentiality'.

Regardless of the fact that Estonial grammatical evidential alone encodes only reported evidentiality, contexts with non-specific referent and medium certainty always involve an inferential step.

(witness example 3, slide 12).

Empirical evidence for increased sensitivity of the grammatical evidentials to certain lexical items

 Comparison of the frequencies of the two most common collocations of evidential grammeme and epistemic (or evidential)

| | The most frequent collocation | The second most frequent collocation |
|-----------|----------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| Bulgarian | ev. gram + <i>maj'</i> probably, as it seems' 183 | ev. gram + <i>verojatno</i> 'most likely' 82 |
| Estonian | ev. gram + <i>vist</i> 'perhaps, maybe' 161 | ev. gram + <i>ehk</i> 'maybe, perhaps' 14 |

<u>Conclusion</u>: Bulgarian and Estonian grammatical evidentials show preference toward particular lexical exressions of medium certainty.

Why is this important:

- It may reflect an early stage of conventionalization of a complex expression?
- Boye 2006: In many languages two epistemic items with overlapping meanings co-occur obligatorily in a unified qualificational expression.
- Grammaticalization:

non-obligatory syntagms > obligatory syntagms

Consequences of general relevance

1. <u>Diagnostic potential</u>:

The semantic effects occurring in collocations of items with similar meanings helps to identify the precise functional boundaries of these items.

In this case:

If one wants to determine the array of meanings expressed by a given evidential marker, one should check with which particular lexical markers of epistemicity or evidentiality it forms harmonic combinations with concord readings.

2. <u>Evidentiality as a functional category: a problem with</u> <u>its raison d'être</u>:

The concord phenomenon in collocations of evidential and epistemic markers involves reinforcement of a common meaning component.

Even in languages (such as Bulgarian) which have played a **definitional role** in the formulation of the cross-linguistic category of evidentiality, epistemic modality and evidentiality interfere in a way which cannot be expected for unrelated categories.

A possible way out?

Postulation of a cover-category for evidentiality and epistemic modality from which the reinforced meaning component can be abstracted.

This is already done by Boye (2006): the meaning domain of 'epistemicity'

For more details:

Kehayov, Petar (to appear in 2008): Interactions between grammatical evidentials and lexical markers of epistemicity and evidentiality: a case-study of Bulgarian and Estonian. In Vladimir A. Plungian, Björn Wiemer (eds), *Lexikalische Evidenzialitäts-Marker in slavischen Sprachen*. Wiener Slawistischer Almanach, Sonderband 72, Wien.

Abbreviations

ADV – adverb, AOR – aorist, COM – comitative case, DAT – dative case, DEF – definite article, ENCL – enclitic, EP – epistemic, EV – evidential: a conventional term in, ILL – illative case, IMPF – imperfect (tense), IMPS – impersonal form, INE – inessive case, NEG – negative, *p* – proposition, PL – plural, PRON – pronoun, PST – past tense, PTCP – participle, Q – question marker, REFL – reflexive, SG – singular, SUP – supine, 1 – first person, 2 – second person, 3 – third person