

NEW PERSPECTIVES ON EVIDENTIALS: A VIEW FROM TIBETO-BURMAN

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Evidentiality is a grammatical category which has source of information as its primary meaning — whether the narrator actually saw what is being described, or made inferences about it based on some evidence, or was told about it, and so on. Evidentials are a particularly salient feature of Tibeto-Burman languages. This volume features in-depth studies of evidentiality systems in six languages: Rgyalthang, a Kham Tibetan dialect, by Krisadawan Hongladarom; Yongning Na (Naxi group; believed to be closely related to Lolo-Burmese), by Liberty Lidz; Darma (Almora branch of Western Himalayish), by Christina Willis; nDrapa (Qiangic), by Satoko Shirai; Magar (Himalayish), by Karen Grunow-Hårsta, and Tabo (or Spiti), a Tibetan dialect, by Veronika Hein. Each opens new perspectives on the composition and the semantics of evidential systems, on the marking of more than one information source in one sentence, and on the grammaticalized expression of mirativity.

The new insights on evidentiality and related issues from the Tibeto-Burman area are crucial for understanding evidentials in a cross-linguistic perspective.

Keywords: evidentials, information source, person marking, Tibeto-Burman

1. EVIDENTIALITY AND INFORMATION SOURCE

In about a quarter of the world's languages, every sentence must specify the type of information source on which it is based — whether the speaker saw the event, or heard it happen, or inferred it from indirect

evidence or from common sense, or learnt it from someone else. The grammaticalized marking of information source as a conceptual category is termed ‘evidentiality’. This is akin to the distinction between the category of ‘tense’, as grammaticalized location in time, and the concept of ‘time’. Expressions related to information source are heterogeneous and versatile. While the potential number of distinct information sources — that is the ways in which someone may know things — is open-ended, evidentiality is a closed grammatical system, with a limited number of options¹.

Having to always express information source in one’s language is often viewed as an enviable feature. Speakers of languages without evidentials wish they were compelled to always be so precise. In Palmer’s (1996: 200) words, ‘what a lot of breath and ink this might save us in English if we had evidential suffixes that we could use in the courtroom. Using the Wintun suffix, we might say, for example, “The defendant shoplift-*be* [*be* is a visual evidential: A.Y.A] the compact disc”, thereby eliminating the need to ask the inevitable question: “Did you actually see her take it?”’ And, as Boas (1942: 182) put it, ‘we could read our newspapers with much greater satisfaction if our language would compel them to say whether their reports are based on self-experience, inference, or hearsay!’ Evidentiality is ingrained in speech habits and conventions — whose breach may result in losing face and reputation. And the adoption of new means of acquiring information, such as television or the internet, results in extending the meanings of evidential categories.

Evidentials may or may not have epistemic extensions, to do with probability and speaker’s evaluation of the trustworthiness of information². The grammatical category of evidentiality can be

¹ The history of the term ‘evidential’ is in Jacobsen (1986) and Aikhenvald (2004). A summary of relevant typological parameters is in Aikhenvald (2003, 2004, 2006), based on investigation of several hundred grammars. The ways in which information sources can be expressed by means other than a closed grammatical system are addressed in Aikhenvald (2007).

² The presence of such extensions does not make evidentials into ‘modals’ (contrary to some assumptions). This can be compared to gender systems: in many languages feminine gender is associated with diminutive or endearment, and

expressed through any of the following: affixes, clitics or auxiliary constructions³. An evidential can have a clause, or a clausal constituent, in its scope. And unlike many other verbal categories, more than one information source can be marked in one clause, reflecting several different ‘perceivers’. Only through detailed investigation of languages based on intensive immersion fieldwork (in the sense of Dixon 2007) can we ever expand our general knowledge about the potential of human languages to mark information source in their grammars.

Not every linguistic area or language family is of equal importance for our understanding of evidentiality. Evidentials are relatively poorly represented in familiar European languages (see Squartini forthcoming; Pusch 2007), in the Papuan and the Australian areas, and in most languages from the large Austronesian family. Some genetic groups, such as Semitic, do not have them at all. Evidentials are a prominent feature in many Turkic, Iranian and Uralic languages (see Comrie 2000, and Johanson and Utas 2000).

By far the most complex systems of evidentiality are found in the Tibeto-Burman domain, and also in numerous families in the Americas (such as Wintu mentioned by Palmer 1996: 200; and see Aikhenvald 2004 for a survey of existing types). Tibeto-Burman languages challenge numerous assumptions about evidentials. For instance, contrary to Willett (1988) and others, an evidential may be within the scope of negation. The clearest example comes from Akha, a Tibeto-Burman language (Hansson 2003: 249; Aikhenvald 2004: 256-7).

Tibeto-Burman languages — many of them poorly described — emerge as a crucial area for discovering evidential systems of new sorts, and novel and unusual properties of grammatical evidentiality and related domains. Documenting and analyzing these new systems is the *raison d’être* for this enterprise.

This issue includes discussions of evidentiality systems in six diverse Tibeto-Burman languages: Rgyalthang, by Hongladarom;

masculine gender with augmentative; this however does not mean that gender is a type of diminutive or augmentative category.

³ Linguists should be warned not to take seriously generalizations based on a limited sample such as those in De Haan (2005), which provides a highly inadequate coverage of formal means of marking evidentiality.

Yongning Na, by Lidz; Darma, by Willis; nDrapa, by Shirai; Magar, by Grunow-Hårsta, and Tabo (or Spiti), by Hein. Each of these highly reliable and informative contributions contains a detailed analysis based on extensive firsthand fieldwork. Two papers (by Lidz and by Willis) are accompanied by texts illustrating how evidentials are used.

The papers in this issue lay a foundation for a future typology of evidential distinctions in Tibeto-Burman. Taken together they make a substantial contribution towards improving our understanding of the nature of evidential systems worldwide. In the remainder of this introductory essay, we highlight the most striking features of their evidential systems, and how they relate to an already established conceptual framework.

2. SEMANTIC FEATURES OF EVIDENTIALS

Languages vary in how many information sources have to be marked, and how they are grouped together. Many just mark information reported by someone else; others distinguish firsthand and non-firsthand information sources. In rarer instances, visually obtained data are contrasted with data obtained through hearing and smelling, and through various kinds of inference. Semantic parameters employed in languages with grammatical evidentiality cover physical senses, several types of inference and reported speech. The recurrent terms in the systems are the following:

- I. **VISUAL:** information acquired through seeing.
- II. **SENSORY:** information acquired through hearing; typically extended to smell and taste, and sometimes also to touch.
- III. **INFERENCE:** information acquired through inference based on visible or tangible evidence or results.
- IV. **ASSUMPTION:** information acquired from evidence other than visible results; this may include logical reasoning, assumption or simply general knowledge.
- V. **REPORTED:** reported information with no reference to whom it was reported by.

- VI. QUOTATIVE: reported information with an overt reference to the quoted source.

The maximum number of evidential terms in a system described so far appears to be five. Semantic parameters group together in various ways, depending on the system. The most straightforward grouping is found in three-term systems — where sensory parameters (I and II), inference (III and IV) and reported (V and VI) are grouped together in Qiang (Tibeto-Burman: LaPolla 2003), and also Quechua, Shilluk and Bora (Aikhenvald 2004: 145-6; 159-66). Numerous languages of Eurasia group parameters (II-VI) under a catch-all non-firsthand evidential; these include Abkhaz (Chirikba 2003) and Yukaghir (Maslova 2003). No spoken language has a special evidential to cover smell, taste or feeling (not so in sign languages: Catalan sign language is reported to have a special evidential marking smell: Sherman Wilcox, p.c.).

There may be other groupings: Cora, a Uto-Aztecan language, distinguishes direct (covering I and II), inferred (III and IV), reported (V) and quotative (VI) (see Aikhenvald 2004: 57-8, for further similar systems). Rgyalthang, discussed in this volume, shows a somewhat comparable, and yet different, four-term system. The language distinguishes visual (I), non-visual (covering parameters II and IV), reported (V) and quotative (VI). There is no special term for inference based on results; modal forms are used to express this meaning, as an ‘evidential strategy’. The formal expression of evidentials in Rgyalthang involves — similarly to many Tibetan varieties — a complicated interplay of aspectual auxiliaries and copulas (see §3 of Hongladarom, this volume). In addition, Rgyalthang distinguishes ‘egophoric’ copulas (referring to the speaker), and ‘exophoric’ ones (referring to someone other than the speaker). Evidential contrasts expressed by copulas are optional in the sense that they surface when the information source is emphasized — this is particularly relevant for copulas referring to eyewitness, or visual, source (see examples (5), (6) and (20)).

Along similar lines, the evidential system in Yongning Na has distinct forms for inferred (III), ‘common knowledge’, which is akin to assumed evidential (IV), reported (V), and quotative (VI). Similarly to Rgyalthang, evidentials are not strictly obligatory in every sentence: if a sentence contains no evidential, this may imply a reference to an

evidential ‘in a recent previous sentence in an anaphora-like way’ (in Lidz’s words). That is, the evidential value of a sentence is inferred from the context. But, similarly to numerous other languages, including Qiang (also Tibeto-Burman: LaPolla 2003: 67-70), an evidentially-unmarked verb is not ‘evidentially neutral’: the default reading for a sentence unmarked for evidentiality is visually, or directly, acquired information. This implies that Yongning Na could well be analyzed as having five evidentiality terms. It is not uncommon, across the world’s languages, to have the visual, or direct, evidential as the formally unmarked choice in the system (Aikhenvald 2004: 72-4). A functional explanation for this lies in the basic character of visual perception for humans.

The ‘direct’ evidential is also formally unmarked in nDrapa (Shirai, this volume). The formally marked terms include inferred (covering III and IV) and reported (V). In each case, ‘direct’ extends beyond visual perception: as Shirai shows in her §2.3, an evidentially unmarked verb in nDrapa can serve as an indicator of speaker’s ‘participation in the scene’ — that is, direct source of an unspecified kind (cf. her example (14)). In addition, zero-marked verbs can refer to generally known facts (which is consistent with cross-linguistically attested overtones of visually and/or directly acquired information as being ‘true’ in general). Then, they are accompanied by disjunct person markers — we return to this in §5 below. The inferred evidential has epistemic connotations of uncertainty (§2.1). Not so with the reported evidential, which appears to just state the information source (§2.2).

Evidentials are not obligatory in Magar (Grunow-Hårsta, this volume). The formally marked evidential category covers inferred (subsuming parameters III and IV: §3.3.1) and reported (V: §3.4.1). A speech report construction is used for quotation: that is, just like in numerous languages of the world, a reported evidential does not combine with an overt indication of the authorship of the report. Unlike in nDrapa, the inferred evidential in Magar has no epistemic connotations per se (§3.3.5). It can combine with an epistemic particle, such as *man* meaning ‘truly’, which then adds the meaning of doubt (‘apparently’) to the clause (example (30)).

Statements ‘based on direct, factual and first-hand evidence are unmarked’ — see examples (3) and (4), and so are general statements

about facts known to all (example (5)). But does this imply that Ø-marked forms are evidential in nature? Not necessarily so: morphological marking of evidentials in Magar is optional. Therefore, the absence of an evidential marker is semantically ambiguous: it only tends to *imply* the ‘direct’ information source.

In contrast to Rgyalthang, Yongning Na, nDrapa and Magar, evidentials in Darma do not form one grammatical system. The four evidential values — direct (I), general knowledge (IV), inferred (III) and reported (V, VI) — are expressed in rather different ways. Information obtained directly involves an equational copula with a nominalized verb stem or the equational on its own (§2.1). The general knowledge evidential involves a different existential verb optionally accompanied by a nominalized verb stem, and covers assumption and generally known facts (§2.2). This is somewhat akin to Yongning Na, where the common knowledge evidential comes close to the meaning of assumption, unlike Magar where general statements are unmarked for evidentiality. Inference is expressed through a number of verb forms, each marked with an inferential particle (§2.3). The reported evidential is also used as a quotative, with the author of the reported information overtly stated. This is similar to nDrapa, where a reported evidential can be used as a quotative (example (11), Shirai, this volume) but quite unlike Magar, where a reported evidential is not used in this way. And we can recall that Rgyalthang and Yongning Na have special forms for each of reported and quotative information source.

Similarly to Magar and many other Tibeto-Burman languages, clauses in Darma without an overt marker of information source appear to have what Willis calls ‘a default meaning of “visual”’ (however, this requires further study, and can be especially problematic for Darma since evidentials are not obligatory: §2). This is a typical example of ‘scattered’ expression of evidentiality (Aikhenvald 2004: 80-1; Fortescue 2003).

A further note on the semantic extensions within individual evidential terms is in order. We can recall that the inferred evidential has epistemic overtones in nDrapa, but not in Magar nor in Darma. It may have such extensions in Yongning Na (Lidz, §4.1, §4.6). Reported and quotative meanings are expressed with different markers in both Rgyalthang and Yongning Na. The two evidentials do different jobs —

while the reported marks information acquired through speech report with an unidentified authorship, a quotative marks who the author is. In both languages the reported evidential is a token of the narrative genre (§3.3.2 of Hongladarom; §4.3 of Lidz).

Here, Yongning Na adds an additional dimension. In Lidz's (§4.3) words, 'native speakers contend that the quotative has an epistemic extension of increased certainty that the reported evidential does not have. This is because the quotative must cite a specific referent, while the reported simply cites general oral tradition' (also see her example (12)). A number of languages display a similar 'division of labour' between a reported evidential and a direct speech report construction. If a reported evidential has overtones of information one does not vouch for, a direct speech report is preferred to avoid this, as in Bulgarian (Aikhenvald 2004: 138). But an epistemic extension for just the quotative, and not the reported, term has not so far been attested in any grammar we are aware of.

As tribal people acquire access to new means of communication, the uses of evidentials get extended. Lidz (§4.7) reports that in 1997, the speakers of Yongning Na started getting access to television. Seeing something on television is considered visual evidence. But the information heard on television is considered reported, and so the reported evidential is used when transmitting this to others. This is unlike Qiang (LaPolla 2003: 70), where the reported, but not the visual evidential, is used to talk about the information acquired through watching TV. In contrast, Magar (Grunow-Hårsta, §3.3.4) employs the inferred evidential to recount what one saw on television. This is consistent with how this evidential is employed in narratives: it is a way of casting a description of a picture book. The reported evidential is only used to recount what one has heard. These semantic changes highlight the subtle differences between typologically similar systems in related languages.

3. MULTIPLE MARKING OF INFORMATION SOURCE

Multiple occurrences of different evidentials within one clause are never semantically redundant. Having several evidentiality markers occur together allows speakers to express subtle nuances relating to types of

information source, either interrelated or independent of one another, and also to different ‘perceivers’. Aikhenvald (2004: 88-95) was able to locate just a handful of examples of languages capable of marking multiple information sources in one clause, with only one of them, Qiang, from the Tibeto-Burman family (LaPolla 2003: 69-70)⁴.

Given the wealth and versatility of evidentials in Tibeto-Burman, it should perhaps come as no surprise that three papers in this volume demonstrate an array of ways in which a sentence can contain more than one grammatical marker of information source.

Firstly, the information can be acquired by the author of the statement from different but interconnected sources: E(vidential)1 marks the fact that the information was quoted; E2 marks the source of the quote. Example (12) from Yongning Na (§4.3 of Lidz) comes from oral tradition — hence it is cast in reported evidential, which is an institutionalized way of telling traditional stories. An additional specific source is the Daba traditional scriptures which are quoted. As a result, the quotative evidential is followed by reported (in addition to an epistemic particle which marks certainty). Following the same principle, the reported evidential can occur following the common knowledge evidential marker (example (23)) (but not in the alternative order).

This double marking of information source is reminiscent of the cooccurrence of reported and quotative evidentials in Comanche (Uto-Aztecan: Charney 1993: 188-91), if a quotation happens to occur in a text told in narrative past.

Secondly, the information acquired by the author of the statement may come from two independent sources, one marked by E(vidential)1 and the other by E2. E1 and E2 either confirm or complement each other. In Yongning Na, the inferred and the reported evidentials can occur together in one clause. The meaning and the scope of evidentials is different depending on their surface order. Example (26) (‘it is raining INFERRED REPORTED’) translates as ‘it is said that it seems it’s raining’

⁴ Other languages are Shipibo-Konibo (Panoan), Tsafiki (Barbacoan), Jarawara (Arawá), Xamatauteri (Yanomami), Kamaiurá (Tupí-Guaraní), from South America; and Eastern Pomo (Pomoan), Comanche (Uto-Aztecan) and Western Apache (Athabaskan), from North America. To this we can now add Matses, a Panoan language from Peru (Fleck 2007).

and ‘conveys the meaning of high uncertainty’. In contrast, saying (27) (‘it is raining REPORTED INFERRED’) translates as ‘It seems that it is said that it’s raining’ implies that ‘the speaker did not hear what was said clearly, and is thus qualifying his/her statement’. These two contrasting examples illustrate the scope of evidentials: in (26) the statement ‘it is raining’ is within the scope of inference, and the inference lies within the scope of a report. In (27), the statement itself was reported, and the reported statement is a matter of inference.

The inferred evidential can occur after the quotative: following the same principle, the quote ‘she says: “It’s raining”’ is within the scope of the inferred evidential (in (28)).

The cooccurrence of evidentials in Magar (Grunow-Hårsta, §3.2.5) appears to have a somewhat different effect. In (49) and (50), the inferential and the reportative mark two different ‘perceivers’: one is the speaker, whose information source is the verbal report, and the other one is those ‘who observed the evidence’ and made their inference (‘they say that apparently the frog stiffened and died’: (50))⁵. Having two evidentials in one clause may have a similar effect in Rgyalthang, as shown in (5) (§3.3 of Hongladarom). The example itself comes from quoted speech — that is, the quotative evidential reflects the information source of the author of the statement. In the statement itself, two men are arguing about the colour of the Yangtse river: one saying it is blue, and the other saying it is red. Their assertions are cast in visual evidential (using the visual copula) because both men had seen the river (in addition, the visual evidential adds an overtone of certainty).

Cooccurrence of reported and quotative evidentials in Yongning Na (§4.3 of Lidz, especially example (11)) is of a different nature. The sequence of *pi*³³ (REPORTED) *tsi*¹³ (QUOTATIVE) is ‘codified as an expression’ — this is an idiomatic way of marking the information source as ‘reported’.

In addition, each clause within one sentence can have an evidential value of its own. In Yongning Na (Lidz, example (24)), the main clause can be cast in inferred evidential, and a non-final dependent clause can

⁵ Similar instances have been found in Tsafiki (Barbacoan: Dickinson 2000) and in Bora (Bora-Witoto: Thiesen 1996: 97); but — so far — not anywhere else.

bear a common knowledge marker. This is typologically rather unusual: having a special evidential value for non-main clauses is a rarity.

4. MIRATIVITY

Mirativity is a relatively new arrival on the linguistics scene. Tibeto-Burman languages are well and truly the ‘birthplace’ of mirativity. The category of mirativity, whose gist is ‘unprepared mind, unexpected new information and concomitant surprise’, was put forward (DeLancey 1997), predominantly on the basis of Tibetan. Mirativity is often connected with evidentiality; but the fact that in many languages it constitutes a distinct semantic and grammatical category is now beyond doubt. (Further references and discussion of mirative extensions for indirect, nonvisual and reported evidentials are in Aikhenvald 2004: 195-209.)

Mirative meanings in the languages discussed in this volume are expressed by means other than evidentials. Rgyalthing has a special existential copula with a mirative meaning in paradigmatic contrast with evidential existential copulas (Hongladarom, §3.1.2, especially Table 2). Mirative, or ‘admirative’, meanings in nDrapa (§3.2 of Shirai) are expressed with a special sentence-final particle, different from evidentials (which also belong to the class of sentence-final particles). The major meaning of the mirative particle is ‘unprepared mind’ and speaker’s surprise; interestingly, all the examples of the mirative particle in nDrapa occur with the conjunct person marking.

Mirativity in Magar is independent of evidentiality distinctions. Its expression is markedly different from that of evidentials. A mirative is ‘a complex verbal construction comprised of the verb stem plus nominalizer, *o*, followed by *le*, a grammaticalized copula’ (§4.2 of Grunow-Hårsta). This agrees with a general tendency for Himalayish languages to express mirative meanings through nominalizations. Mirative structures in Magar are found with every person value — that is, they are not restricted to speech act participants. Mirativity tends to be expressed in the non-past imperfective aspect — this is in contrast with evidentials, which have no restrictions on aspects or tenses. In interrogatives, mirative forms have the effect of a rhetorical question (as in (64), in §4.2.2 of Grunow-Hårsta), or of expressing information

which is not exactly new, but startling and hard for the speaker to take in (as in (65)). This is different from the way evidentials are used in questions: they simply presuppose the information source of the addressee (§3.3.3, §3.4.3). Markers of evidentiality and of mirativity can combine in one clause: the mirative consistently refers to the speaker's or character's surprise at the unexpected discovery either by inference, or through verbal report (§5).

The use of mirative forms in narratives (§4.2.3) is manifold. They are manipulated for a variety of stylistic reasons, in order to lend immediacy to the story, and to mark topical discontinuity.

Similarly to many other Tibetan dialects, Tabo (Spiti) has a fascinating system of evidentials (summarized in §2 of Hein's paper in this volume). The system of expressing mirativity is almost equally complex. One mirative marker usually occurs with verbs which express intrinsically non-controlled actions or states (such as 'get mixed up', in (3) of §4.1). The other, termed 'extended mirative' (§5), can be used with verbs of other types, such as 'drink'. The implications of the extended mirative go beyond simple 'surprise': in Hein's words, using a mirative morpheme in a sentence 'A boy drank tea' (cast in inferred evidential) 'adds a certain emphasis to the verb, which implies that the family [...] is not quite happy that the boy drank tea, or that the boy drank tea although he was not allowed to take any'. This highlights another overtone of the extended mirative — that of intentionality with an overtone of contrast and counterexpectation. Since in Tabo the extended mirative often occurs with the inferred evidential, these overtones may be due to the interaction of the two categories — evidentiality and mirativity,

The papers by Grunow-Hårsta and by Hein feature the most detailed discussions of mirativity and its correlations with other categories including evidentiality, tense, aspect and clause type, in the linguistic literature so far. We hope that future scholars in the field will follow their lead.

5. EVIDENTIALS AND OTHER GRAMMATICAL CATEGORIES

Evidentials tend to interrelate, in different ways, with other grammatical categories. Evidentials may develop different overtones depending on the person of the subject: for instance, first person expressions combined with non-visual, inferred or reported evidentials frequently describe actions beyond a speaker's control. The inferred evidential used with the first person in Magar can acquire mirative overtones, and may refer to uncontrolled actions of which the speaker is not fully aware (§3.3.1 of Grunow-Hårsta, and example (13)). Some evidentials cannot occur with all persons. Thus, first and second person statements cannot occur with the reported evidential in Magar; the quotative has to be used instead (§3.4.2).

Conjunct-disjunct person marking — in itself a prominent feature of Tibetic (Bodish) languages — frequently interacts with evidentials (see for instance, DeLancey 2003: 278-80). The existential copulas in Rgyalthing Tibetan can be considered portmanteau forms which combine information on evidentiality, animacy and person of the copula subject (§3.1.2). Yongning Na (Lidz, §6) also displays complex correlations between evidentiality and speech-act versus non-speech-act participants. We can recall that in nDrapa, zero-marked verbs accompanied by disjunct person markers can refer to generally known facts (§2.3). In addition, a sentence with a disjunct marker and no evidential can have a reported connotation (example (16)). That is, the choice of conjunct or disjunct marking can be looked upon as tantamount to an evidentiality strategy in nDrapa. Shirai (§3.1.2) considers the kind of conjunct-disjunct marking attested in nDrapa as an exponent of a larger category, termed 'point-of-view', which goes beyond person marking.

In all the languages discussed in this volume, the choice, and the meaning, of evidentials interacts with verbal semantics — whether verbs refer to volitional actions, or to noncontrolled nonvolitional states (see for instance §6 of Lidz; and §3.2.1 of Hongladarom). The analysis of Magar is particularly rich in discussing the interactions between evidentials, clause types and person values, depending on textual genres.

6. TO CONCLUDE

Any constructive typology of a linguistic category must proceed inductively — relying on facts, rather than arbitrary assumptions. As Bloomfield (1933: 20) put it: ‘The only useful generalisations about language are inductive generalisations. Features which we think ought to be universal may be absent from the very next language that becomes accessible ... The fact that some features are, at any rate, widespread, is worthy of notice and calls for an explanation; when we have adequate data about many languages, we shall have to return to the problem of general grammar and to explain these similarities and divergences, but this study, when it comes, will not be speculative but inductive.’

What is particularly instructive about the evidentiality systems in the languages discussed in this issue? The systems shed new light on the semantics of evidentially unmarked forms, and offer new possibilities in the ways languages grammaticalize recurrent information sources. A further somewhat uncommon feature is the consistent distinction of reported from quotative in some languages (such as Rgyalthang, Yongning Na and Magar), but not in others (e.g. Darma and nDrapa).

Many more issues have been raised in the papers than can be mentioned here. The six case studies, all based on intensive firsthand investigation and incisive analytic work, test the existing framework for investigating grammatical evidentiality, and expand a typological view of possible evidential distinctions world-wide.

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