

# TOWARDS A NEW APPROACH TO EVIDENTIALITY: ISSUES AND DIRECTIONS FOR RESEARCH

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Abstract:

Evidentiality is often defined as the grammatical means of expressing information *source*. This paper argues for a broader definition of evidentials, as close work documenting languages has shown that simply saying evidentials mark source of information does not capture all of the actual uses of evidential marking. The paper discusses other aspects that need to be taken account of in any full discussion of the use of evidential marking, in particular the speaker's access to information (not just source), plus the subjective strategy or perspective of the speaker in representing a particular state of affairs. The notion of 'source' in this paper is used in a restricted sense to mean primarily a verbal source of information (reported information) and is distinguished from 'access', which refers to the non-verbal access to information (sensory, inferential, etc., including the sensory access to verbal source) available to the speaker, though marking of source and access may appear together. Given this distinction the paper proposes a new definition of evidential marking: **the representation of source and access to information according to the speaker's perspective and strategy**.

Keywords: Evidential marking, Epistemic marking, Tibetic languages, Tibeto-Burman languages, Sino-Tibetan languages, morphology, cognitive linguistics

## 0. INTRODUCTION

Evidentiality is often defined as the grammatical means of expressing information *source* (e.g. Aikhenvald 2004: xi, 1). In a way every language has lexical and/or grammatical means to mark evidentiality, however only about one quarter of the world's languages have obligatory marking of evidentiality, and the geographic distribution is uneven: complex systems for marking evidentiality are found among Tibeto-Burman, North American, South American, and Caucasian languages, and less complex systems are found in Austronesian, Slavic, Turkic, Indo-Iranian, Australian, and Finno-Ugrian languages, but evidential marking is almost completely absent from Africa.

There is already a body of literature including in-depth descriptions of individual systems and some typological surveys (for the latter see Chafe and Nichols 1986; Guentchéva 1996; *LTBA* 24(1) Special Issue on Person and Evidence in Himalayan Languages; Aikhenvald 2004, 2011; Aikhenvald & LaPolla 2007 and the papers in that special issue (30(2)) of *LTBA* on evidentials); Guentchéva & Landaburu 2007).

We intend to use a broader definition of evidentials than the one given above, as close work documenting languages has shown that simply saying evidentials mark source of information does not capture all of the actual uses of evidential marking. In this paper we will discuss other aspects that need to be taken account of in any full discussion of the use of evidential marking, in particular the speaker's access to information (not just source), plus the subjective strategy or perspective of the speaker in representing a particular state of affairs. The notion of 'source' in this paper is used in a restricted sense to mean primarily a verbal source of information (reported information) and is distinguished from 'access', which refers to the non-verbal access to information (sensory, inferential, etc., including the sensory access to verbal source) available to the speaker, though, as we will see in Section 1, marking of source and access may appear together. Given this distinction and the factors we will discuss below, we would like to propose a new definition of evidential marking: **the representation of source and access to information according to the speaker's perspective and strategy.**

## 1. THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN SOURCE AND ACCESS TO INFORMATION

The basic system of copulas<sup>1</sup> in Standard Tibetan exhibits three categories: *yod* 'egophoric' or 'personal'; *dug* 'sensory'; *yod-red*<sup>2</sup> 'factual'<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Example (1) illustrates the existential copulas; the three categories are also expressed by the equational copulas *yin* 'egophoric', *red-bzhag* 'sensory (inferential) and *red* 'factual'.

<sup>2</sup> *Yod-red* is sometimes written *yog-red* (to render the pronunciation) or *yod-pa-red* (a literary variant), but this latter form is also used in Standard Tibetan with a different meaning (see Tournadre and Dorje 2003).

- 1) a. *mi yod* 'I have somebody (with me)' (egophoric)
- b. *mi 'dug* 'There is somebody' (sensory or testimonial)
- c. *mi yod-red* 'There is somebody' (it's a fact)<sup>4</sup>

In the case of (1b), *'dug* may refer to visual access but also auditory access (I hear people talking behind the door). It can in principle refer to information obtained through other senses (tactile, olfactory, gustative): for example, crawling in the dark and looking for a place to sleep, the speaker could say *mi 'dug* because she has touched a body. Even if this interpretation is not the habitual one, in some situations such as the one described above, it becomes the only correct interpretation (since the speaker has no visual information in the complete darkness).

In much of the literature it is assumed that evidentials simply mark *objective source*. In fact it can be shown that there is a large subjective component, in that what is expressed in the use of particular evidential markers is the speaker's representation of her *access* to the information represented in the utterance (see Michael 2007, 2008; Tournadre 2008). Access plays a fundamental role in the use of evidential marking, but this factor has not received sufficient attention in the literature. The speaker may be the primary source of information in very different ways depending on her access to the relevant information. It may be through the **sensory channels** of the five senses of sight, sound, touch, smell, and taste. But sensory access also includes "**endopathic**"<sup>5</sup> sensations (or inner sensations) such as cold, pain and hunger, as well as emotions such as fear and anger. Endopathic access is normally marked using the same markers as the sensory markers but they are used with 1<sup>st</sup> person rather than 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> person actors and experiencers (cf. exx. (3), (4) and (5) below). Another type of access, which has not received attention until now, is the concept of "**self-awareness**".<sup>6</sup> If a person is sitting on her bed in the dark in the middle of the night and asked by her partner what she is doing, she may answer: 'I am thinking about my project'. The speaker's access is not sensory (since it is in the dark and it is a mental activity) and only possible through the speaker's "self awareness". The

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<sup>3</sup> For the sake of comparison with other Sino-Tibetan languages, the examples are in the reconstructed classical orthography (in Wylie transliteration), which allows us to recover the actual pronunciation through regular derivation, in the same way that Lhasa Tibetan is often presented in the Wylie transliteration. All the examples in Section 1 are in Standard Tibetan. These examples, and those from other Tibetic varieties in Section 2, were collected by Tournadre. For a discussion of Tibetic languages, see Tournadre 2014.

<sup>4</sup> Tibetan does not have grammatical number, so the sentences could also be translated as 'I have people (with me)' or 'There are people'.

<sup>5</sup> A term coined by Tournadre (1996: 226).

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Annie Montaut's proposal in a forthcoming article that the notion of conscious awareness or reflexive intellectual consciousness is important for understanding the grammaticalization of some complex predicates in Hindi.

category of self-awareness is grammaticalised as “**egophoric**”<sup>7</sup> or “personal knowledge” in some Tibetic languages (see Tournadre 2008).

- 2) nga            bsam.blo    btang-gi.yod  
     1sg+ABS    reflexion    V<sup>L</sup>-IMPF+EGO<sup>8</sup>  
     ‘I am thinking (about it)’

The egophoric markers may serve to indicate a type of access (as in (1)) such as “self-awareness”, however, more broadly, the function of the egophoric marker is to indicate personal knowledge.

Some languages distinguish various types of access such as visual, auditory, or inferential, as shown by Aikhenvald (2004). In some cases, the same evidential marker may be used to indicate various types of access to information. This is the case for example in Standard Tibetan, where the sensory marker *'dug* is used to mark information access related to the five senses but also to endopathic sensation. However, the endopathic use appears in a different context. Let us compare (3) with (4) and (5) below:

- 3) mi            'dug  
     person    exist+SENS  
     ‘there is somebody’

The most frequent sensory access is visual, but it may also be auditory (the speaker heard somebody talking behind the door) and less frequently tactile (the speaker felt by touching that there is somebody sleeping in the dark) or even olfactory (a strong smell tells the speaker about a human presence!). In these cases of sensory access, the marker *'dug* normally occurs with 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> person actors/experiencers, as in (3). However in the case of endopathic access, the same marker *'dug* normally only occurs with a 1<sup>st</sup> person experiencer:

- 4) nga            grod.khog    ltogs-kyi.'dug<sup>9</sup>  
     1sg+ABS    stomach    hungry-STAT+ENDO  
     ‘I am hungry.’

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<sup>7</sup> The term “egophoric” was proposed by Hagège (1982) and applied to Tibetan ten years later (Tournadre 1992) with a very different meaning: according to Hagège (1982: 100), “le système de l’égophore [est] une propriété capitale des énoncés linguistiques [qui sont] ancrés sur la situation d’énonciation. Au centre, celui qui les profère, le locuteur : *ego*, qu’il se nomme ou non par un «je» explicite, est le point de référence.”

<sup>8</sup> Abbreviations: EGO: egophoric; HS: hearsay; SG: singular; STAT: stative; ENDO: endopathic; EZF: *ezafe* (refers to the unstressed morpheme in Persian which appears between the head of a phrase and certain modifiers and complements following the head); ); PP: past participle; PST: past; REL: relator; SENS: sensory; V<sup>L</sup>: Light Verb; NMLZ: nominalizer; NVSENS: non-visual sensory.

<sup>9</sup> In the Lhasa variety of Standard Tibetan, the auxiliary *'dug* is sometimes dropped in affirmative assertions but it always appears in negative sentences and questions.

- 5) nga mgo na-gi.'dug  
 1sg+ABS head be.sick-STAT+ENDO  
 'I have a headache'

In cases involving the five senses (non-endopathic observations), the phenomenon may be observed by people other than the speaker who share the same environment, but when the access is through endopathic sensation or self-awareness, the access is specific to the speaker. For example, relative to the statements in (6a) and (7a), anyone watching or tasting can confirm the truth of the observation:

- 6) a. Khongtsho-s pha.gir chang 'thung-gi.'dug.  
 3pl-ERG over.there beer drink-STAT+SENS  
 'They are drinking beer over there' (I see them drinking beer).
- b. khongtsho-s pha.gir chang 'thung-gi.'dug-ga  
 3pl-ERG over.there beer drink-STAT+SENS-TAG  
 'They are drinking beer, aren't they?'
- 7) a. zhim.po 'dug  
 good exist+SENS  
 'It's tasty'
- b. zhim.po 'dug-ga  
 good SENS-TAG  
 'It's tasty, isn't it?'

In the case of endopathic sensation or "self-awareness" with verbs of (inner) sensation or affect, *'dug* refers to the 1<sup>st</sup> person experiencer and her subjective experience. This experience is NOT sharable; the speaker generally would not use a tag to seek the confirmation of the hearer:

- 8) a. nga mgo na-gi.'dug  
 1sg+ABS head be.sick-STAT+ENDO  
 'I have a headache.'
- b. ?? nga mgo na-gi.'dug-ga  
 1sg+ABS head be.sick-STAT+ENDO-TAG  
 'I have a headache, don't I?'

This aspect of access to information is sometimes talked about as "epistemic authority", the right of a speaker, for example, to talk about the internal states of others. Many languages do not allow a speaker to talk directly about the internal states of others. For example, in some languages one can use a direct evidential to say 'I am afraid of the dog' (endopathic sensation) but one cannot use a direct

evidential marker to say ‘He is afraid of the dog’, because the emotion is not directly perceivable to the speaker. One can only use an inferential sensory marker based on the visible consequences of fear such as his body shaking and the look on his face. In Japanese one can use the *-tai* desiderative suffix on a verb (e.g. *nomi-tai* ‘want to drink’) if speaking about one’s own desires, but not in making statements about other people’s desires, as the speaker does not have the epistemic authority to do so. But in asking a question, the speaker can anticipate the answer of the addressee and use the form that the addressee will use in responding to the question (*-tai* in Japanese or an egophoric form in a complex evidential system).

We have seen earlier that some Tibetic languages have grammaticalised the very specific categories of “egophoric” and “endopathic”. Another rare and specific phenomenon related to the evidential systems of the Tibetic family is the so called “anticipation rule”. Although this behaviour is cross-linguistically rare, it tells us a lot about the complex functioning of evidential systems. The anticipation rule states that whenever the speaker asks a direct question of the hearer, she should anticipate the access/source available to the hearer and select the evidential auxiliary/copula accordingly. The hearer will often answer using the same auxiliary/copula as in the question but he is not obliged to. Thus for example when asking the hearer about his intentional or deliberate activity the question should contain the egophoric marker because the speaker has to anticipate that it is the access/source that will be used by the hearer (as in ex. 2):

- 9) khyed.rang-(gis) ga.re byed-kyi.yod  
 2sg-(ERG)<sup>10</sup> what do-IMPF+EGO  
 ‘What are you doing?’

If the speaker asks the question “What am I doing?” when showing the hearer a trick with her hand, the speaker should use the sensory marker *'dug*, as in (10), anticipating that the person watching her trick will draw information from the visual access.

- 10) nga-s ga.re byed-kyi.'dug  
 1sg-ERG what do-IMPF+SENS  
 ‘What am I doing?’<sup>11</sup>

In order to ask a question that would lead to an answer such as (5), “Do you have a headache?”, one should use the endopathic auxiliary *'dug* in the question, because one has to anticipate that the hearer’s access to information about his headache will be a sensory endopathic one. In such evidential systems, asking a

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<sup>10</sup> The ergative marking is optional here and if used creates a contrastive emphasis. See DeLancey 2011.

<sup>11</sup> If the speaker asks the same question to herself, the question #nga-s ga re byed-kyi.'dug would not be acceptable.

question is much more complicated than answering a question (from a grammatical point of view) since the answer can always “copy” the copula/auxiliary used in the question.

The speaker’s access may be “direct” through sensory perceptions (and self-awareness) as mentioned above or “indirect” through various types of inferences (inferences based on sensory perceptions or hearsay). The speaker may also base her statement on her encyclopaedic knowledge or specific “stored experience” directly available to her.

In all these cases, the speaker ( $S^0$ ) remains responsible for the information, and marks the utterance with a form that represents the kind of access. We can represent the speaker’s access to information as “A(x)”. In the case where the speaker bases her statement on a second-hand source, i.e. reported speech or reported information in written form or in sign language, the reported person ( $S^1$ ) is responsible for his statement, and the reported utterance normally will be marked according to the access that  $S^1$  had at the time he made the utterance. In some cases the reported person ( $S^1$ ) may also be quoting someone else and thus refer to a second source ( $S^2$ ), the utterance of whom would also be marked for access. That is, each speaker in the chain may signal a particular type of access to information, and so there is a layering of evidential marking. Let’s us illustrate this with the following example:

- 11) mdang.dgong grongs-song lab-song  
 Yesterday.night die(H)+PST-SENS+PST say+PST-SENS+PST  
 (Jampel Yeshe) died yesterday night, he said (the person who reported  
 the death saw him dying)<sup>12</sup>

The first occurrence of *song* (sensory evidential; the past tense equivalent of ‘*dug*’) is related to the reported speaker  $S^1$ , while the second occurrence indicates the actual speaker’s sensory access to information (she was a witness when the person reported the fact).<sup>13</sup>

We can represent access formulaically as in (12), where “A(x)”, “A(y)”, and “A(z)” represent different types of access to information:<sup>14</sup>

- 12)  $S^0: A(x) < S^1: A(y) < S^2: A(z)$

Thus in the above examples one would have the following representation:

<sup>12</sup> Message on Twitter (March 26, 2012) @chungtse.

<sup>13</sup> In this example *za* (hearsay) could have been used in combination with *song* or *pa.red* (factual), marking source rather than access.

<sup>14</sup> One could integrate the anticipation rule into the formalisation proposed here, e.g. when the actual speaker  $S^0$  is not making a statement but asking (Q) the hearer S about his access to information:  $S^0 Q S^1: A(y) < S^2: A(z)$ . Memory activation, discussed below, can be treated as a case of anticipation, but the speaker proposes to the hearer to select an access to information which triggers one type of memory activation.

Ex. (3): S<sup>o</sup>: A(sensory), and ex. (4, 5): S<sup>o</sup>: A(endopathic)

Ex. (11): S<sup>o</sup>: A(sensory) < S<sup>1</sup>: A(sensory)

Sometimes the source is mentioned but not the access (the access is unspecified). In other cases, like hearsay, the source may not be mentioned but the access can be mentioned, as in the following example:

- 13) rta nyos-**song**-za  
horse buy+PST-SENS+PST-HS  
'I heard that he bought a horse'

The sensory access marker *song* (in this case marking mainly visual access) suffixed<sup>15</sup> to the verb *nyos* 'to buy' [past] is related to the source S<sup>1</sup>: A(sensory), not to the actual speaker, but the source is not mentioned (it is hearsay, marked by *-za*).

In languages such as English, it is the access that would often be absent, as in *John said that the weather was bad*: S<sup>o</sup>: A (unspecified) < S<sup>1</sup>: A(unspecified). Here John corresponds to S<sup>1</sup> but his access to the information is not specified.

Finally, it should be noted that direct access to information is related to the speaker's present or past perceptions. Direct sensory access to an event that occurred many years ago and has been stored in the memory for a long time may be reported with an indirect evidential. Thus there is also a correlation between access to information and memory activation. When mentioning some acquaintance that the speaker and addressee both know, in Standard Tibetan one may use various auxiliaries in combination with a tag which depends on the level of activation in the hearer's memory. For example, if it is a person that one has not seen for some years, one is more likely to use *med-pas*; if it is more recent, one may use *yod-pa*; and if the person is still very accessible in the memory, one can use *'dug-pa*. Compare (14)-(16):

- 14) sgrol.ma zer-mkhan med-pas  
Drölma call-NMLZ exist+EGO+NEG-Q  
'You don't remember somebody called Drölma?'
- 15) sgrol.ma zer-mkhan yod-pa  
Drölma call-NMLZ exist+EGO-TAG  
'You remember (somebody called) Drölma, don't you?'

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<sup>15</sup> From a diachronic point of view, evidential markers in Tibetan are clearly auxiliaries. In the modern Tibetic languages, they behave more like suffixes, although some morphemes may be inserted between the verb stem and the marker. In this paper, we will continue to use the term auxiliary.



- 16) sgrol.ma 'dug-ga  
 Drölma exist+SENS-TAG  
 ‘Drölma, you know (who I mean)?’

Related to cognitive access, the acquisition of evidentials and age-related differences in the use of evidentials are important areas for future research. In particular, we suspect that evidential systems would not be acquired until after the child has acquired Theory of Mind (around age 4), though we do not have sufficient evidence to confirm this yet. (See de Villiers & Garfield 2009 and de Villiers et al. 2009 for some work on this topic.)

Some languages with developed evidential systems clearly make a distinction in their grammars between source and access. This is the case for example in Tibetic languages and many Amerindian languages such as Tucano, Andoke or Cora. Other languages with more simple evidential systems, such as Persian, Bulgarian or Estonian, may mark source and access using the same grammatical devices but use additional lexical means to encode the difference. Thus there is interaction between grammatical evidentials and lexical markers (see Wiemer 2008). Other languages such as Russian and French<sup>16</sup> mainly use lexical means to encode source and access.

The term “mediative” has sometimes been used to describe a type of evidentiality in Persian, Tadjik, Bulgarian and Turkish.<sup>17</sup> These systems differ from the Amerindian or Tibetic evidential systems not only because they are less complex<sup>18</sup> but because they are mainly based on the grammaticalisation of the source (more precisely “indirect source”) and not the access. The mediative markers may also indicate the access as a secondary value. Let’s illustrate both functions in Persian. In Persian the mediative is marked by the past participle plus ‘to be’:

- (17) banâbar goft-e-ye bâmdâd mirzâ habib dar sâl-e 1303  
 according say-PP-EZF Bâmdâd Mirzâ Habib in year-EZF 1303
- hejri-ye qamari tarjome-ye hâji bâbâ râ be  
 hegîr-EZF lunar translation-EZF Haji Bâbâ REL in

<sup>16</sup> The French “conditional” is used to mark the source and indirect access.

<sup>17</sup> Particularly in the literature written in French. The term was proposed by G. Lazard in 1956. See also Hill 2012.

<sup>18</sup> Mediative systems generally only involve a binary opposition. Scott DeLancey declared: “The Lhasa conjunct/disjunct/evidentiality system is the most elaborate that I know of at present” (1992: 57). The complexity of evidential systems in Tibetic languages is related to the number of evidential auxiliaries/suffixes and to their combination with epistemic auxiliary/suffixes. It is also related to the interaction between evidentiality and volitionality as well as to some pragmatic factors such as the anticipation rule.

anjâm resânid-e ast  
complete make.arrive-PP be+3SG

‘According to Bâmdâd, Mirzâ Habib **completed** the translation of Haji Bâbâ in 1303 of the lunar calendar.’ (H. Lessan Pezechki 2013: 76).

In (17), the perfect form *anjâm resânid-e ast* has a mediative meaning and is triggered by the form *banâbar* ‘according to’ which indicates an indirect source, i.e. the actual speaker is not the source of the information: he reports Bâmdâd’s words. The perfect here is opposed to the aorist *anjâm resânid*, which would imply a direct source.

In (18), the imperfective mediative *mizist-e ast* does not indicate an indirect source but inferential visual access, i.e. a type of “indirect access”. The use of the non-mediative imperfective *mi-zist* would not convey an inferential meaning.

(18) dar injâ baqâyâ-ye xorâki râ ke dar qâr bar jâ  
in here leftover-EZF food REL that in cave on spot

mând-e ast mi-yâb-ad va mi-fahm-ad  
left-PP be+3SG IMPF-find+PRES-3SG and INAC-understand+PRES-3SG

ke kasi piš az u dar ân **mi-zist-e** ast  
that sbd before him in that IMPF-live-PP be+3SG

‘[He visited] the cave, found food leftovers and understood that the cave had been **inhabited**.’ (H. Lessan Pezechki 2013: 76).

## 2. EVIDENTIALITY, “MIRATIVE”, AND “CONJUNCT/DISJUNCT” SYSTEMS

Evidentiality in Tibetan has sometimes been described in terms of a “conjunct / disjunct” opposition. The conjunct/disjunct opposition was proposed by Hale (1980: 87) for the description of Newar, describing the characteristics of the system as the following: “If the actor of the quote refers to the same individual as the actor of the quote frame, the verb of the quote is conjunct in form”. Conjunct/disjunct are also related to intentional acts, at least in Hale’s original definition (1980: 98): “finite conjunct forms are appropriate only where the actor of the clause is portrayed as a true instigator, one responsible for an intentional act.” This term was applied to the Tibetan system by DeLancey in a series of articles (1986, 1990, 1992, 1995). The majority of linguists who have worked extensively on Tibetic languages, e.g. Bielmeier (1998b), van Driem (1998), Hill (2012, 2013), Garrett (2001), Haller, (2001, 2004), Häsler (1999), Huber (2005), Sun (1993), Suzuki (2012), Tournadre (1996a, 1996b, 2001, 2008), and Zeisler (2004), though, have not used the term “conjunct/disjunct” in

their descriptions, and DeLancey no longer holds that “conjunct/disjunct” is the most appropriate description of the Tibetan evidential system,<sup>19</sup> and has begun to use terms which reflect an entirely different approach, such as “egophoric” (DeLancey 2012).<sup>20</sup> However, given the influence of DeLancey’s work on the typological literature, his earlier views have had a long lasting influence on some authors’ theories.

This is the case with Aikhenvald’s major contribution on evidentiality. Aikhenvald (2004: 391) proposes a different definition of “conjunct-disjunct”. She says it is “person-marking on the verb whereby first person subject in statements is expressed in the same way as second person in questions, and all other persons are marked in a different way (also used to describe cross clausal co-reference)”. She says, “Conjunct-disjunct person-marking systems are not evidential in nature” (2004: 127), and also “Historically, any evidentiality strategy, *except for demonstratives and conjunct-disjunct person-marking*, can develop into a grammatical evidential” (ibid: 146, italics added).

There are many reasons why “Lhasa Tibetan” does not exhibit a “conjunct-disjunct” system by either definition presented above, but the main argument against a “conjunct-disjunct” analysis boils down to the fact that the Lhasa verbal system does not exhibit a binary syntactic opposition (based on cross clause co-reference patterns), but at least a three-fold opposition based on semantico-cognitive parameters (see Table 1, below).

DeLancey (1997, 2001) has described the use of the sensory marker *'dug* in Lhasa Tibetan as “mirative” marking. Mirative marking indicates “new” or “surprising” information. In Standard Tibetan, *'dug* may have overtones of “mirative” in some contexts, but as we have seen, the core function of *'dug* is to indicate sensory and endopathic *access* to information.<sup>21</sup>

Turning to the relationship between evidential and epistemic marking, we see that the close connection between evidentiality and epistemicity has been noted in a lot of studies, yet some authors (e.g. Aikhenvald 2004, de Haan 1999) insist on maintaining a clear-cut distinction between epistemic and evidential markers. De Haan (1999: 1) further justifies this opinion by stating that “the origins of evidential morphemes differ greatly from the lexical sources of epistemic modals”. However, this is not always the case. Evidential and epistemic markers are sometimes fused together in a particular language or may form a single paradigm historically made up of the same lexical source forms. That is the case in Standard Tibetan (and many other Tibetic languages), where

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<sup>19</sup> However, he has never written an article which explicitly rejects the notion of conjunct/disjunct as applied to Tibetan. In one of his latest articles, DeLancey (2012) uses both “egophoric” and “conjunct” to refer to the same phenomenon.

<sup>20</sup> For detailed presentations of the notion of conjunct/disjunct, see DeLancey 1995, 1986, 1990, 1992; Hargreaves 2005; Tournadre 2008; and Post 2013.

<sup>21</sup> For detailed argumentation against the notions of “conjunct/disjunct” and “mirativity” in Tibetan and more generally in Tibetic languages, see Tournadre 2008 and Hill 2012.

simple evidential copulas and auxiliaries such as *yin* or *red* ‘to be’, *yod* or ‘*dug*’ ‘to be, there is’ (location, existence) may combine together with the help of connectives or nominalizers (such as *sa*, *pa* or *gyi*) to yield compound forms (used as copulas or auxiliaries) which bear either an evidential or an epistemic meaning or both: *yod.kyi.red*, *yin.gyi.red*, *yod.pa.'dra*, *yin.sa.red*, *yod.sa.red* (epistemic), *yod.red*, *yod.pa.red*<sup>22</sup>, *yin.pa.red* (evidential). The simple evidential forms *yin* and *yod* convey an epistemic meaning when they occur in combination with the archaic interrogative marker *a*, as in *a.yin* or *a.yod*. They convey both evidential and epistemic meanings when they occur preceded by the nominalizer *pa*, as in *pa.'dug* (see Tournadre & Dorje 2003, Vokurková 2008).

Aside from this, the use of particular evidentials even in languages that don’t fuse the two types of marking may evoke implicatures of different degrees of certainty about the proposition, and so evidential and epistemic marking may indeed function as a continuum. For example, in Qiang (LaPolla with Huang 2003: 205), when telling traditional stories (distant past narratives), the hearsay evidential marker can be used together with the inferential evidential marker to mark a greater degree of uncertainty (the hearsay marker alone does not mark uncertainty), as in (19):

- 19) qe:˥-qe:˥-tu                      ɦala   kapəʈʂ   kou                      ŋuə-kəi-təu. (T3:1)  
       before-before-LNK    INT    orphan INDEF:one:CL    COP-INF:HS-PART  
       ‘(It is said) in the past there was an orphan.’

### 3. EVIDENTIALITY AND DIALECTAL VARIATION

One issue that has not received sufficient attention in the typological study of evidentiality is dialectal variation. Tibetic languages provide a lot of interesting data on this issue, because although many of the languages and dialects are very closely related<sup>23</sup> and allow some degree of intelligibility, they exhibit significant diversity (both morphological and semantic) in their systems.

Let us compare the Standard Tibetan system introduced in Section 1 with the Western Tibetic language of Himachal Pradesh (India). This language has three closely related dialects: Spiti, Khunu-Töt (upper Kinnaur) and Garzha<sup>24</sup> (hence SKG group of dialects). These dialects are also closely affiliated to the Tö Ngari dialects spoken in the Tibetan Autonomous Region (on the other side of the

<sup>22</sup> In Standard Tibetan *yod.pa.red* has a self-corrective meaning, e.g. *a-las khong-la spu.gu yod.pa.red* ‘Oh I see so he has kids’ (I had thought the contrary) (see Tournadre and Dorje 2003: 338, Vokurková, 2008: 98).

<sup>23</sup> The Tibetic languages are all derived from Old Tibetan, and form a geolinguistic quasi-continuum.

<sup>24</sup> The data are based on Tournadre’s recent field work (June-July 2013) in Lahul & Spiti and Upper Kinnaur. The three dialects allow for a good degree of mutual intelligibility. Khunu-töt is very similar to Spiti, while Garzha is slightly more distant.

border, less than one hundred kilometres away) and to a lesser extent to Ladakhi and Zangskari. There is some intelligibility between Standard Tibetan and the SKG group of dialects. They share the fundamental Tibetic lexicon and have very similar phonological systems, but exhibit some grammatical differences. In SKG, one finds a very similar verbal system to Standard Tibetan, with similar copulas and auxiliaries, but instead of having a threefold opposition, there is a fourfold basic evidential system:

- 20) a. *mi yod* 'I have somebody (with me)  
 b. *mi 'dug* 'There is somebody (visual sensory)  
 c. *mi yod.ka* 'There is somebody (it's a fact)  
 d. *mi grag* 'There is somebody (non-visual sensory).

The main difference between the SKG system and that of Standard Tibetan has to do with the presence of the auxiliary *grag*, realized as /ʈaʔ/ or /raʔ/,<sup>25</sup> which is derived from the verb *grag* 'to sound' in Classical Tibetan. This auxiliary, although absent from Standard Tibetan, is attested in many Tibetic languages and dialects, e.g. Kham, Tö Ngari (see Qu Aitang and Tan Kerang, 1983: 72, 73), Spiti, Garzha, Khunu-Töt, Ladakhi. In most of these dialects, *grag* is used to convey non-visual sensory access to information: auditory, tactile, gustative, olfactory or endopathic. Gesang Jumian and Gesang Yangjing (2002) provide two nice examples of *grag* in the Derge dialect of Kham Tibetan:<sup>26</sup>

- 21) a. *dbang.chen slebs-'ong-grag*  
 Wangchen arrive-thither+PST-NVSENS  
 'Wangchen has arrived' (I heard him walking)  
 b. *khyod-kyi rum nang star.ga yod-grag*  
 2sg-GEN pouch in walnut have-NVSENS  
 'You have (a/some) walnut(s) in your pouch' (tactile evidence)

Here is an example of the endopathic use of *grag* in SKG (cf. the Standard Tibetan example in (4) with a similar meaning):

- 22) *nga-la ltogs.re grag*  
 1sg-DAT hunger exist+NVSENS  
 'I am hungry'

<sup>25</sup> /raʔ/ is an allomorph of /ʈaʔ/ in Spiti and Khunu, but it is the only form in Garzha.

<sup>26</sup> Kham, a Tibetic language, is written *khams* in Classical Tibetan but the final "s" is never pronounced. Not to be confused with the Kham-Magar language of Nepal belonging to the Maha-Kiranti branch. We reproduce here Gesang Jumian's orthography originally in Tibetan script (except for two typos in the second example). According to H. Suzuki (p.c.), *grag* is only used in northern Kham dialects.

The auxiliary *grag* provides interesting information about the pattern of grammaticalisation. Its original meaning was linked to sound (and still is in Literary Tibetan) but in many dialects it eventually came to mean any sensory access to information except for visual access.

Let's come back to the comparison between SKG and Standard Tibetan. For ease of comparison, we combine the examples given in (1) and (20) above in Table 1:

<i>Standard Tibetan</i>	<i>Spiti-Khunu-Garzha</i>	
mi yod	mi yod	'I have somebody (with me)' (egophoric)
mi 'dug	mi 'dug	'There is somebody' (visual sensory)
	mi grag	'There is somebody' (non visual sensory).
mi yod-red	mi yod.ka	'There is somebody' (factual)

Table 1: Comparison of evidential markers in SKG and Standard Tibetan

It is clear that although the auxiliary *'dug* exists in both systems, its grammatical meaning is more restricted in SKG, since it can only apply to visual information, while in Standard Tibetan it is used for any sensory access. Thus, if we consider situations involving auditory, tactile, endopathic, olfactory or gustative access in SKG, only *grag* can be used (not *'dug*). Depending on the situation, *mi grag* 'There is somebody' can be uttered if the speaker heard their voices, or felt a body (in the dark) by touching it. From these examples, we see that the two dialects exhibit parallel development of evidential marking, but in some cases make use of different forms.

All the Tibetic languages<sup>27</sup> have developed an opposition between *sensory* access and other types of access. The sensory form is derived from the verb *'dug*<sup>28</sup> 'to sit' in many central and southern dialects such as Standard Tibetan, Tsang, Sherpa, and Dzongkha (Bhutan), while it is derived from the verb *gda'* in Hor and several northern Kham dialects. Another form, derived from *snang* 'to shine, to appear', is used for the sensory access marker in Phenpo (central Tibet), in the Pari (Hwari) dialect of Amdo, in many Kham dialects such as Bathang, rGyalthang, Dongwang, etc., in some languages of the northeast region such as Thewo, Cone, Drugchu, Sharkhok and Khöpokhok in Gansu and Sichuan (see Suzuki 2012), as well as in the Nubra dialects of Ladakh (Zeisler, forthcoming) and in the Turtuk and Tyakshi dialects of Balti (see Ebihara, 2014). As we have seen above, the form *grag* is used for non visual sensory in Ladakhi, Tö Ngari and some Kham dialects. Another form, \**'gi*, used in the Kham Derge dialect as a sensory evidential, is not attested in Classical nor

<sup>27</sup> Balti is one notable exception (see Bielmeier 2000), however Ebihara (2014) has mentioned the existence of sensory markers in two Balti dialects. See below.

<sup>28</sup> The form *'dug* had already acquired evidential meaning in Classical Tibetan (Hill 2012, Oisel 2013). SONG et THAL

modern literary Tibetan. Thus while the sensory meaning is found in virtually all the Tibetic languages, it is sometimes marked by distinct lexical verbs.

The same is true for some other evidential meanings. While *red* is used to convey factual (or assertive) meaning in Ü, Kham-Hor and Amdo, the same meaning is conveyed by forms such \**sbad* in Sikkim and Tsang or \**'dad* in Tö, whose literary origins are not obvious.

Thus modern evidential markers found in Tibetic languages are generally derived from words that are cognate to Classical Tibetan verbs. However, the modern Tibetic evidential systems *do not directly reflect the system* found in Classical Tibetan, whose existence is now well established (see Oisel 2013, Hill 2013, Zeisler, forthcoming).

The old copulas of Classical Tibetan are *yin* ‘to be’ (equative meaning) and *yod*<sup>29</sup> ‘to exist’ (existential meaning), and these two verbs are found in all the modern Tibetic languages. With the emergence of an evidential system as early as the 12<sup>th</sup> c. (according to Hill 2013), *yin* and *yod* came to convey an ‘assumptive’ or an ‘assertive’ meaning opposed to the markers ‘*dug* or *gda*’ conveying a sensory meaning, as summarised in the chart below :

Chart : Basic copula evidential system in Classical Tibetan

copula\evidential	assumptive	sensory and sensory inferential
Equative copula ‘to be’	<i>yin</i>	<i>yin-par-‘dug</i> (or <i>yin par gda</i> ’)
Existential copula ‘to exist’	<i>yod</i>	<i>‘dug</i> (or <i>yod-par-‘dug</i> ) <i>gda</i> ’ (or <i>yod par gda</i> ’)

In many modern Tibetic languages, the Classical sensory evidential copulas ‘*dug* and *gda*’ correspond to various forms such as *snang*, *grag*, \**'gi*, etc. It follows that the evidential systems of the modern languages are not simply derived from the Classical Tibetan system and constitute parallel developments and show specific innovations that probably influenced each other. This would explain why they share some fundamental morphosyntactic and semantic features.

The comparison between Tibetic languages and dialects provides very useful information about the functioning of evidentiality. However, in the past decade, some typological studies have built theories that do not take into account the close genetic proximity of certain systems. This has resulted in presenting closely related systems in different theoretical frameworks. One clear example of this distortion is the presentation of Ladakhi, another Tibetic language, as a complex evidential system, while Lhasa Tibetan is classified as a *non-evidential* conjunct/disjunct system (see Aikhenvald 2004).

There is no need for such a fundamental different treatment: in fact the Ladakhi evidential system shares a lot of common features with the other

<sup>29</sup> or its archaic form ‘*od*.’

Tibetic evidential systems: it is essentially derived from the copulas *yin*, *yod* and *'dug*. Additionally, Ladakhi has a form *grag* (for non visual evidential). This form is not found in Lhasa or 'Standard Spoken Tibetan' but occurs in some other languages of the family (as we have seen above). Another important distinction with Lhasa Tibetan is the lack of egophoric evidentials in Ladakhi. The existence of an egophoric evidential in Lhasa Tibetan and its very problematic interpretation as 'conjunct' (see Tournadre, 2008) has lead some authors to make a strong distinction between the two systems, thus neglecting the fundamental common properties between the Tibetic evidential systems.

Between varieties we may also find differences in terms of whether there can be double evidential marking (as in (11) and (13); see also Qiang; LaPolla & Huang 2003), or whether evidential marking may occur in subordinate clauses in some languages (see Diewald & Smirnova 2010), and if so, are the evidential oppositions (the possibilities for marking) occurring in subordinate clauses more constrained than the oppositions found in main clauses?

The patterns of grammaticalization is then an important area of research. Evidential marking can be manifested in different ways and have different historical lexical origins, but are there common patterns? We have seen in some language groups (e.g. Tibetic), that there can be parallel development of evidential marking where similar systems are manifested, but using different forms. In some cases this might be seen as a contact or areal feature, but in others as a manifestation of what Sapir (1921, Ch. 8) talked about as "drift".

#### **4. PRAGMATIC FACTORS INVOLVED IN THE USE AND INTERPRETATION OF EVIDENTIAL MARKING**

As always with the interpretation of communicative forms, the interpretation depends on inferences from the overall context of use, the event frame evoked, and other pragmatic factors. In the interpretation of the use of evidential marking, it is clear that there is a strong reciprocal interaction between the interpretation of lexical semantics and that of the evidentials.<sup>30</sup> Although a source may base its statements on various types of access simultaneously, in many cases there is a tendency for the hearer to infer some types of access rather than others depending on the event frame evoked by the lexical items used. Thus, for example, the event 'to rain' is more often related to visual, auditory or tactile sensory access than to taste or smell.

Let us illustrate this issue with the use of the non-visual sensory marker in the Western Tibetic language spoken in Himachal Pradesh (India). The

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<sup>30</sup> Just as there is a strong interaction in the interpretation of aspect between *Aktionsart* (or lexical aspect) and grammatical aspect (or perspective) (see Tournadre 2005). The way that the lexical items and the grammatical marking each constrain the interpretation of the other is also similar to what happens in compounds and clausal noun modifier constructions in Chinese (see LaPolla 2013).



interpretation of the access related to *grag* depends on the predication. In examples (20d) and (23), *grag* functions as an existential predicate:

- 23) chang      zhim.po      grag  
       chang      good            exist+NVSSENS  
       ‘The *chang* (local beer) is good’<sup>31</sup>

This expression implies that the speaker has tasted the *chang*. It is necessarily based on **gustative** access and cannot normally be based on any other sensory access, such as olfactory, tactile or auditory information).<sup>32</sup> However, if we change the topic, the access will change accordingly. The utterance in (24) is necessarily based on **olfactory** information.

- 24) dri.ma      zhim.po      grag  
       smell        good            exist+NVSSENS  
       ‘The smell is good’

In some rare cases, the evidential marker may constrain the interpretation of the lexical items used. For example, the word *dri.ma* is ambiguous in SKG; it may mean ‘smell’ or ‘stain’. If one uses the visual marker, as in *dri.ma 'dug*, the interpretation will be that it refers to a visible stain, while if one uses the non-visual sensory marker *grag*, the interpretation will normally be that it refers to a smell.

The following utterance is normally based on **auditory** information:

- 25) mi            grag  
       person exist+NVSSENS  
       ‘There is somebody’

This utterance could be used, for example, when the speaker hears some voices outside. However, as noted above for *'dug* in Standard Tibetan, in some special situations it can also be based on **tactile** information, such as if the speaker is crawling in the dark and touches a body.

In (26) the utterance may be interpreted as being based simultaneously on **olfactory** information and on other **physical sensations** (burning eyes, coughing, etc.).

- 26) dud.pa      grag  
       smoke        exist+NVSSENS  
       ‘There is smoke’

<sup>31</sup> In Garzha, *zhim.po* has the overtone of ‘strong’ when applied to beverages.

<sup>32</sup> According to my consultants, even if the smell is very good, it is not sufficient evidence to say *chang zhim.po grag*. However, as noted by H. Suzuki (p.c.), in some Kham dialects spoken in Yunnan, the sentence is also acceptable if it is based on olfactory information.

The examples above relate to the kinds of pragmatic constraints on the inferences that the hearer of an evidentially marked statement might make. There is also the issue of the inferences a speaker makes in understanding an event and the choices available in representing that event. Consider the following situations:

- (a) If we see smoke over a forest and say: ‘There is a fire’, is it sensory visual (and/or olfactory) or is it inferential based on seeing smoke (visual)? What we see is actually the smoke not the fire.
- (b) If we look at a map and say: ‘Melbourne is near Sydney’, we might use a visual evidential looking at the map, but the map is not the reality. You need inference and the knowledge of the scale to draw conclusions concerning the distance.
- (c) If we hear a sound on the roof and say ‘It is raining’, is it direct evidence or an inference based on the type of sound made by the rain drops?
- (d) When the speaker sees somebody moving in a particular way and says: ‘He is coming’, it is also an inference based on the perception that the general direction of movement is toward the speaker. It can also be a confirmation that the person is actually coming, that is, the speaker knew somebody was to come and on seeing the person says the utterance as a confirmation, which could involve a different form of evidential marking.

There are many such examples, and in many cases the perception requires various types of senses and inferences so the use of the evidential markers is generally much more complex than can be captured by simply saying, for example, “visual sensory” (see also de Haan, 2001b). Therefore we should take into account the complexity of the cognitive processes in the description of evidential systems.

Another pragmatic aspect of the situation that can influence the use of the evidential markers is the speaker’s strategy in choosing one evidential or another, which is linked to her degree of commitment to a proposition, or to her perspective, or possibly to the intention to lie about her access to the information. As first reported by Hongladarom (1993), various evidential auxiliaries in Tibetan may be used to report the *same* event. Gawne (2013: 202) makes similar remarks about Yolmo: “Once we start looking at interaction though, it becomes apparent that there are many contexts where speakers are presented with the same evidential information but use different copulas to talk about it.”

For example, Gawne (2013: 214), having placed a 10 rupee note into a bag, asked her two informants to tell where the money was. In answering one of the

informants used the form for perceptual evidence, but the other chose to use a non-visual “ego” form<sup>33</sup>.

Grammatical evidentials may serve as a very subtle tool for lying and manipulation (see Aikhenvald, 2004: 98; Tournadre, 2014: 139). In a dialogue or a debate, the use of evidential marking may fluctuate depending on the degree of consensus or disagreement. Politeness considerations may also be involved in choosing the evidential marking to be used. These functions of evidentiality have not been sufficiently studied.

Various genres, such as narratives, dialogues, or procedural texts, may trigger different series of evidential marking. Some languages may also have very complex evidential systems for their spoken language, while the use of evidentiality is much more restricted in the literary language.<sup>34</sup> That is the case for example with Literary Tibetan, whether classical or modern. The correlation between genres and evidential marking is also an area which needs further research.

Different states of consciousness and access may also trigger different evidential series: dreams, altered states of consciousness (e.g. being drunk, being in a trance like a medium or shaman, or having a divine revelation<sup>35</sup>), illusory perceptions (‘taking the rope for a snake’), and remembering (see Tournadre 1996a, Tournadre and Dorje 1998/2003 and Garrett 2001). Cognitive access to referents (degree of identifiability) can also affect the use of evidentials in some languages. Utterances relating non-intentional experiences may also manifest different evidential marking from voluntary experiences (Tournadre 1996a-b, Tournadre and Jiatso 2001). For example, in Qiang (LaPolla with Huang 2003: 199), when the direct visual evidential is used with a 1st person actor, the sense is that the action was unintentional, as in the following example (the context for this utterance was the speaker having hit the person while leaning back and stretching his arms back without looking behind him):

- 27) qa the:-ta de-we-ẓ-u-a.  
1sg 3sg-LOC DIR-hit-CAUS-VIS-1sg  
‘I hit him (accidentally).’

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<sup>33</sup> In Gawne’s terminology.

<sup>34</sup> Of course many languages with complex evidential systems do not have a written language. The Tibetic languages, which have all developed complex evidential systems, are all derived from Classical Tibetan. As mentioned in footnote 28, Classical Tibetan had already developed some evidential oppositions, but the system was less complex than the systems found in modern Tibetic languages.

<sup>35</sup> This fact makes translation of The Bible into languages with this sort of evidential system difficult.

Generally speaking, the pragmatic and discourse interaction aspects of the use of evidential marking have so far been largely neglected in the theory of evidentiality.<sup>36</sup>

## 5. CONCLUSION

Evidentiality is more complex than previous definitions have claimed it to be. Particularly neglected in the literature on evidentiality is the notion of cognitive access and its interaction with the source. We aimed at showing that the various types of cognitive access play an essential role in the functioning of evidentiality. Any accurate description of an evidential system should at least take into account the various parameters we have presented in this paper.

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<sup>36</sup> This is in a way similar to the issue of ergativity in Tibeto-Burman, where the pragmatic environment of natural speech also affects the use of the grammatical forms, as shown by Tournadre (1991).

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