

Universität Tübingen

Abt. für Indologie

DfG Projekt

Evidentiality, epistemic modality, and speaker attitude in Ladakhi - Modality and the interface for semantics, pragmatics, and grammar

Workshop on Ego-Evidentiality and the right(s) to know (better)

Evidentiality is commonly described as the marking of *source* of information (firsthand vs. non-firsthand) or also as the discrimination between direct knowledge through sense perception, on the one hand, and indirect knowledge, namely hearsay *and* inference, on the other.

The modern Tibetic languages are known to have developed quite a particular type of ‘evidential’ marking. The basic principles have been described for quite a few of the Tibetic languages, see here the volume *Evidential Systems of Tibetan Languages*, ed. by Lauren Gawne and Nathan W. Hill. (TiLSM 302, Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton, 2017) as well as the earlier collection in *Person and evidence in Himalayan languages*, ed. by Balthasar Bickel. (*Linguistics of the Tibeto-Burman Area*, 23.1-2, 2000). One of the key features is the subjective involvement of the epistemic *origo* (the speaker in statements and the addressee in questions plus the original speaker in reported speech) in the events reported. The ‘system’ is thus also known under the key terms of ‘egophoricity’ and ‘conjunct/disjunct’, both concepts often mistaken for a somewhat weird syntactic person category (ego vs. non-ego).

However, at a closer look, the ‘system’ is extremely flexible, allowing, in principle, most if not all forms for all persons, albeit in different frequencies and for different motivations. It further does not only deal with the source of information (firsthand vs. second-hand/hearsay) or the access channels (self-centred knowledge, perception, and inferences), but also or even predominantly with the subjective assessment of the situation and/or the socio-pragmatic situation. The pragmatic factors appear to be related to a speaker’s rights to treat a particular piece of knowledge as belonging to his or her ‘territory of information’, this also means that speaker-hearer (a)symmetries may play a crucial role. Apart from epistemic rights, other key words may be ‘empathy hierarchy’ and ‘engagement’.

Another key term, used for languages outside the realm of the Tibetic languages (and those languages under their immediate influence), is participatory knowledge. Nothing, has been yet said about how flexible such systems are in the languages so described.

The workshop aims at discussing the ‘unsystematic’ aspects of ‘ego’-evidentiality or participatory knowledge marking. The main questions are:

- What are the various motivations for using the ‘egophoric’ marker(s) for a person other than the epistemic *origo*.
- What are the various motivations for using any other than the ‘egophoric’ markers for the epistemic *origo*, and are there differences between the three types of epistemic *origo*?
- How common, predictable, or even regular are such ‘deviations’ from, or ‘transgressions’ of, the underlying paradigm?
- Are the speakers merely ‘playing’ with the system, ‘manipulating’ it for their subjective needs or is exactly this subjectivity or the speaker’s attitude towards the communicated content and towards the addressee part of, or underlying, the grammaticalised system?
- Which role does the so-called factual marker of the Tibetic languages play with respect to the question of a speaker’s attitudes and/ or rights. Does it, as often has been stated, present the respective information in a way that the addressee simply has to accept it, that is, in quite an authoritative manner? Or could its usage, by contrast, be described as a strategy for downgrading one’s authority?

- How helpful is the notion of territory of information for explaining at least part of the observable flexibility.

Call for abstracts:

Last date of submission: 31.10.2023.

We invite papers for presentations of 30min plus 15min discussion. The presentations should specifically address some of the above questions. Expressive abstracts may be up to 4 pages including examples and references (A4, Times Roman 12pt, overall margins 2.5 cm). Presentations about languages outside the realm of the Tibetic languages, inclusively languages where evidential strategies are not grammaticalised, are very welcome. Abstracts that do not address any of the above questions will not be considered. Exceptions can be made for first descriptions of threatened languages, if the paradigm described shows some interesting features related to the main topic. In such cases, presenters will have a standard time slot of 20min plus 10 min discussion.

The workshop will be hold in physical presence.

Invited speakers:

Ilana Mushin, Professor of Linguistics, Deputy Head of School, Linguistics Major Convener, School of Languages and Cultures, University of Queensland, Australia.

Nicolas Tournadre, Professor emeritus, Department of Linguistics and Aix-Marseille University and CNRS, France.