Towards shaping the egophoric category in Tibetic languages:
Suggestions from the factual evidential expression emerging in Japanese

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Tibetic languages

- Tibetic: 8 sections consisting of many languages (Tournadre & Suzuki 2023)
- Data sources are mainly from eastern Tibet
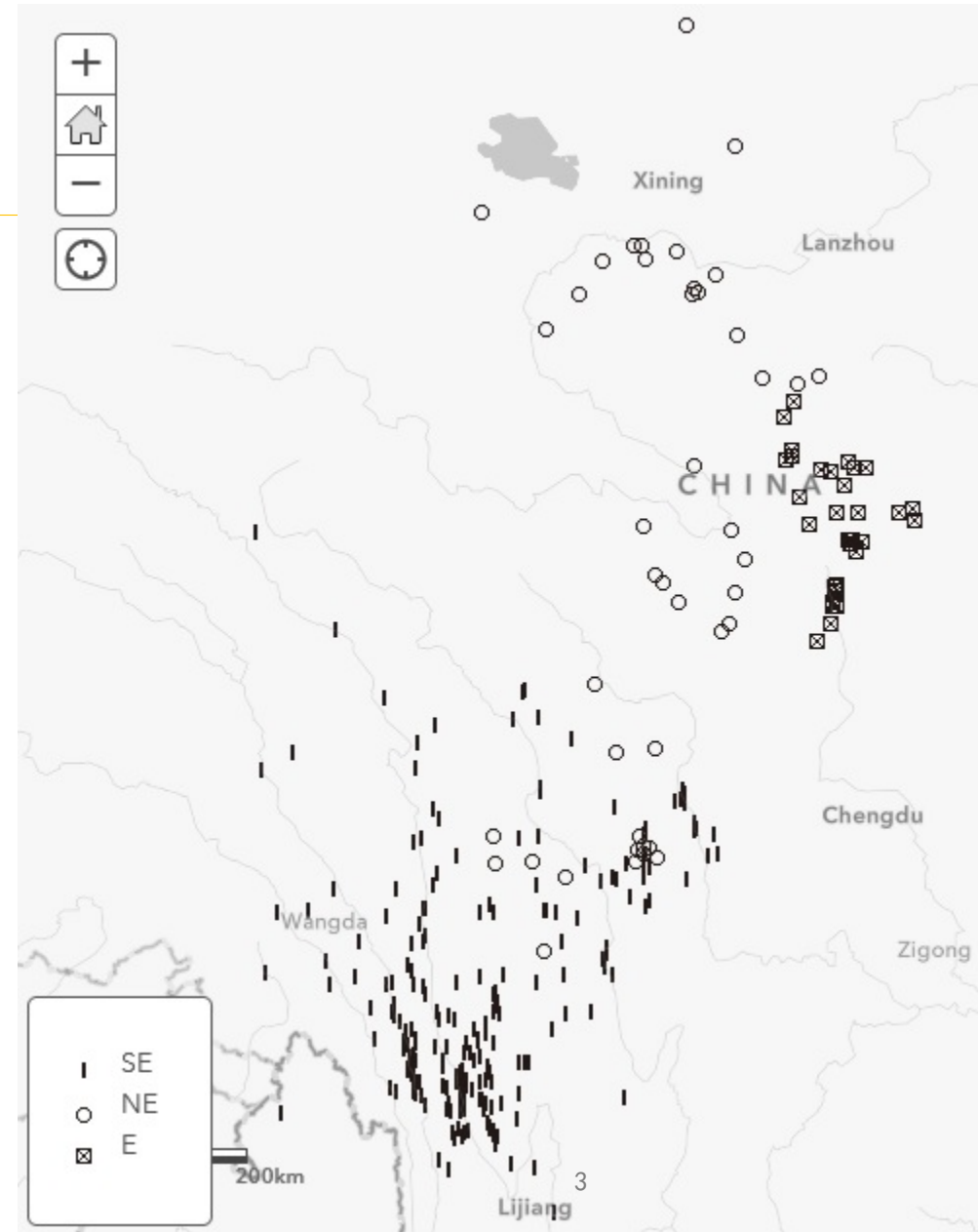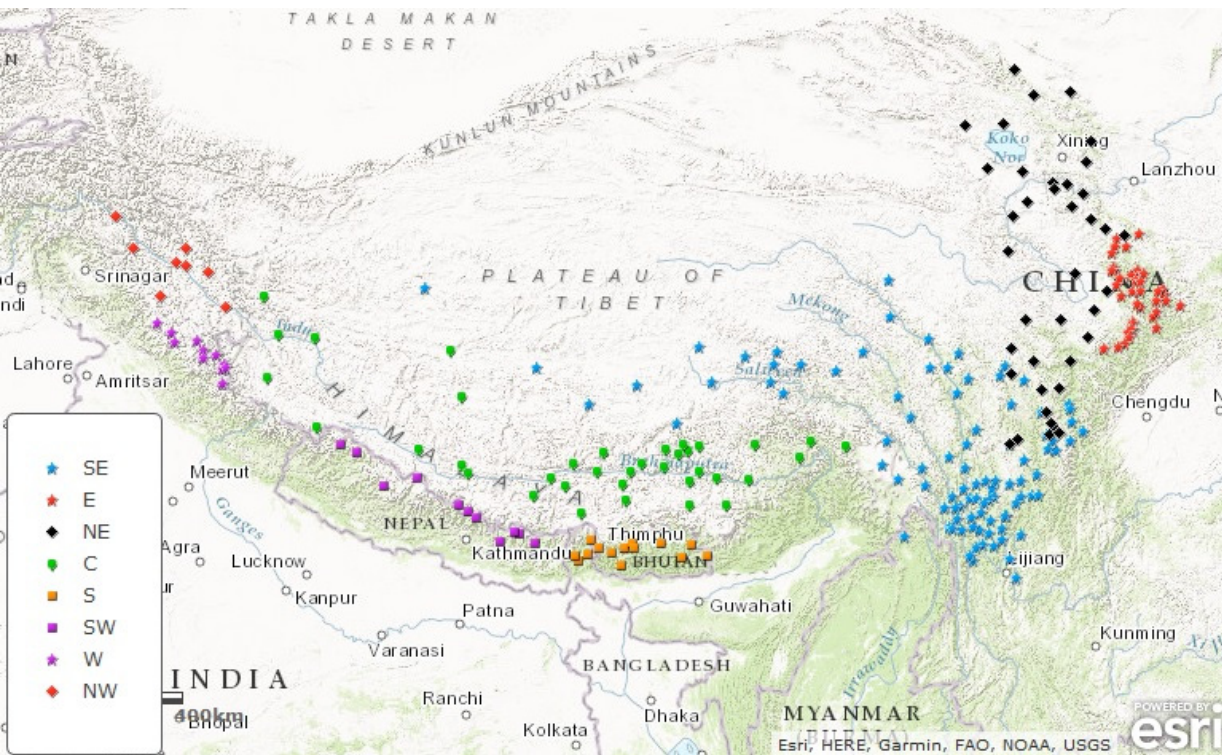
Evidential-epistemic system in Tibetic languages

- Compare Aikhenvald's (2018) framework [Model 1] and Tournadre & LaPolla's (2014) [Model 2].

Category	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
Model 1			visual	nonvisual	inference	assumption	reported	quotative	
Model 2	egophoric	factual		sensory	inferential	assumed	reportative	quotative	hearsay

(source: Dawa Drolma & Suzuki 2024)

- As a system, egophoric and factual must be in the same category as evidential in Tibetic:
  a kind of **access to information**.

- To characterise 'egophoric', other evidential categories are also to be discussed.

- In particular, a focus can be on factual, that is installed together with egophoric in Model 2.

Morphemes functioning as an egophoric

- Two morphemes derived from Literary Tibetan (LT) appear in the slot of egophoric, *yin* and *yod*, in many Tibetic varieties, functioning as copulative and existential, respectively.

- Previous studies have suggested that they acquired the egophoric function after the establishment of Classical Tibetan since they did not convey any evidential meanings in Old Tibetan and Early Classical Tibetan (Takeuchi 2015; Shao 2016).

- It is possible to summarise that the egophoric meaning has established since the emergence of the sensory and/or *factual* categories.

- Although the emergence of the egophoric meaning is exemplified in written historical texts such as Mi la ras pa (Zeisler forthcoming) [Oisel 2024 employs the term 'authoritative source'], it is already difficult to access a specific Tibetic variety in which we can observe the emergence of the egophoric meaning in contrast to the factual counterpart.

Shaping the factual category: Origin

- In contrast, forms in the factual evidential are acquired through grammaticalisation---mainly from a verb stem.

- The most widespread word for the factual copulative (not existential) is *red*. The origin of *red* is a verb, meaning 'be in a good state' and 'become' (Shao 2016). The morphemes designated to the factual category of the copulative verbs in Tibetic languages usually pertain to lexical terms such as 'become'.

- In a modern language (Zhollam; Sems-kyi-nyila Khams), *red* still functions as a stative verb:

  ˆɦɨəˁː-ŋɔŋ   (*red-snang*)   instead, Zhollam uses *snang* for the factual copulative

  well-EVD   (Suzuki 2012)

  Alright./That's good.

Shaping the factual category: Another type

- Likewise, /dʐi/, used in Thewo-smad and mBrugchu, is probably derived from *'gyur*, meaning 'change, become' (Suzuki 2023).

- The map shows the distribution of three types:
  A1, A2=using *red* for the factual copulative
  B1, B2=using *red* for a stative verb meaning 'be good'
  C=/dʐi/-type
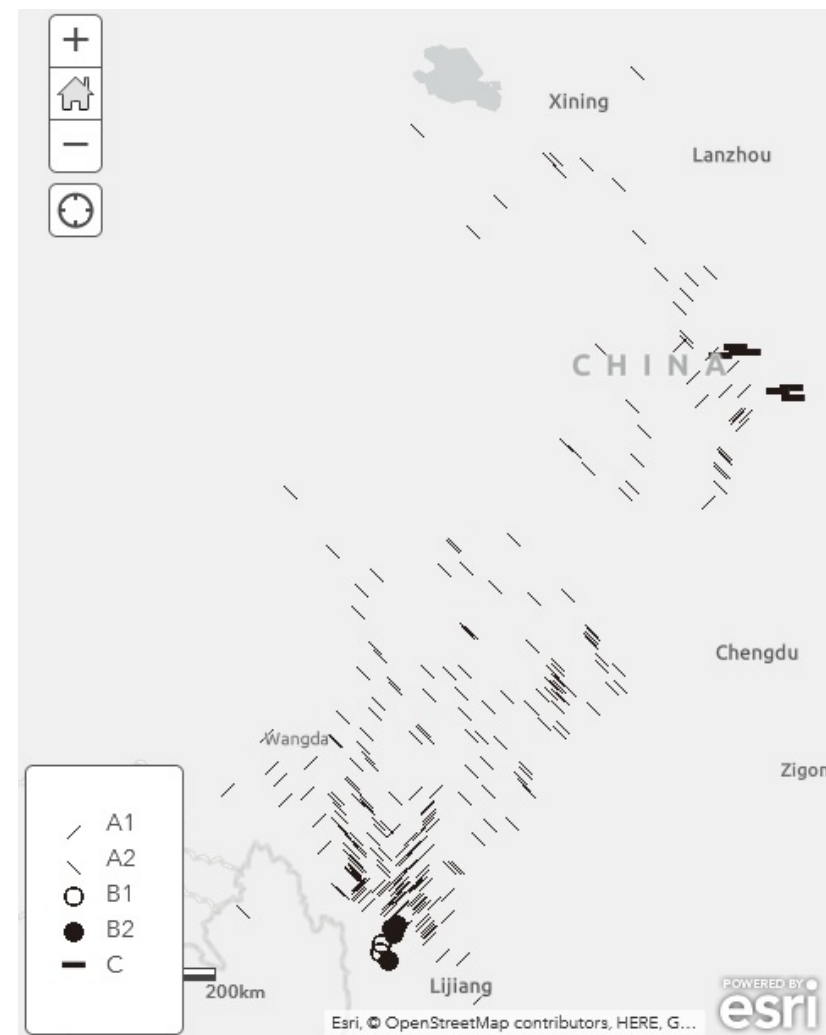
Shaping the factual category: Typology

- However, both *red* and *'gyur* have already completed their grammaticalisation process.

- Therefore, we cannot examine their evolution by observing linguistic phenomena in any modern varieties.

- In any cases, it is hypothesised that the factual category is made with a verb meaning 'become, change, be in a good state'.

- Why does a language need such a factual expression?

- Changing a viewpoint, we can find other cases in which a verb 'become' is related to a factual-like expression---Japanese.

Japanese *naru* 'become': Recent usages

- The current perspective is based on contemporary linguistic changes found in Japanese.

- It has been argued that the verb *naru* 'become' is employed as if it were an equational copula in Japanese, just like *da* 'COP', *desu* 'COP.ADRHON', and *dearu* 'COP'.

- Although the three former forms are commonly used as copulas in Japanese, in current usage, *naru* 'become' seems to function as a copula in present usage too.

- There have been at least three arguments on the evolution of *naru* in past discussions according to Nishikawa (2022), classified in A, B, and C.

[Abbreviations] ADRHON: addressee honorific; COP: copula

Japanese *naru* 'become': Three interpretations (1)

- (A) *naru* as a copula is derived from an analogy with the original meaning 'become'

(A1) mathematics

(A) 1   iti   tasu   ni-wa   san-ni   nari-masu
one   plus   two-TOP three-PURP   *naru*-ADRHON
'One plus two *become* (=are equal to) three.'

(A2) mathematics

     > equational usage

(A) 2   oturi-wa   yoen-ni   nari-masu
change-TOP   four yen-PURP   *naru*-ADRHON
'The changes are [to be] four yen.' (calculating > copula?)

(A3) future's planning

(A) 3a   watasi-wa   tentyoo-ni   nari-masu
1-TOP   shopkeeper-PURP *naru*-ADRHON
'I will be a shopkeeper (in the future).'

(A4) objective description
on the current situation

(A) 3b   watasi-ga   tentyoo-ni   nari-masu
1-SUB   shopkeeper-PURP *naru*-ADRHON
'I *am* the shopkeeper.'

[**Abbreviations**] 1: first person; ADRHON: addressee honorific; PURP: purposive; SUB: subject; TOP: topic

Japanese *naru* 'become': Three interpretations (2)

- (B) *naru* as a copula is derived from an analogy with the morpheme to form a honorific verb and thus it can be analysed as a form in the respectful register system

(B)   sensei-ga   o-kaki-ni   nari-masu

teacher-SUB   RPF-write-PURP   *naru*-ADRHON

'The teacher writes_{HON} down.' [*o-V-ni naru* is a honorific construction]

- This structure is an established (and productive) honorific form in Japanese.

Japanese *naru* 'become': Three interpretations (3)

- (C) *naru* as a copula is an honorific expression developed artificially, through a service company's (mainly chain of convenience stores' and restaurants') manual for a common language service within the subsidiaries

(C) 1   kotira-ga   menyuu-ni   nari-masu

this-SUB   menu-PURP   *naru*-ADRHON

'This is [our] menu.' [*This (thing) becomes a menu]

(C) 2   gookei-wa   sen'en-ni   nari-masu

total amount-TOP   thousand yen-PURP   *naru*-ADRHON

'The total amount [that you pay] is a thousand yen.' (calculating > copula?)

- (C1) is less acceptable depending on Japanese speakers, asking "How does a thing become a menu?". According to this interpretation, *naru* is still understood as a verb 'become'.

Japanese *naru* 'become': Commonality and difference from Tibetic

- Of the three, (B) and (C) pertain to the respectful register system or politeness strategies which are widely discussed in Japanese linguistics.

- However, the discourse centres around the interpretation of (A).

- Honda (2006) argues that the process (A) of semantic change of *naru* is a change from "in the real world" to "in the cognitive world" where the unknown has changed in the known.

- Observing the usage of *naru* and its various contexts, it is argued that (A) is most related to the factual concept when viewed from the perspective of evidentiality in Tibetic languages.

Contrast of the Japanese and Tibetic factual

- Although the Japanese evidential system is less elaborate than Tibetic, many concepts are shared, albeit with morphosyntactic differences.

- Old/Classical Japanese possessed a systematic evidential categories, especially visual, nonvisual, sensory inferential, logical inferential accesses, and hearsay source (Oda 2015:177-192), but Modern Japanese is less sensitive to these.

- Current studies on Japanese do not argue egophoric and factual; however, the emergence of the factual category can be observed according to the examples of *naru*.

- This is based not only on lexical commonality ('become' as a factual form), but also on its use in different utterances. To illustrate, let us examine typical examples in Japanese in comparison with Tibetic (Minyag Rabgang Khams).

Case 1: description on the third person subject

- Japanese

	(1)a	kore-ga	kusuri-ni	nari-masu
		this-SUB	medicine-PURP	*naru*-ADRHON
	(1)b	kore-ga	kusuri	desu
		this-SUB	medicine	COP.ADRHON

'This is the medicine.'

- Tibetic

	(2)a	e 'di	sman	red
		this	medicine	CPV.FAC
	(2)b*	e 'di	sman	yin
		this	medicine	CPV.EGP

'This is the medicine.'

[**Abbreviations**] *: unacceptable; ADRHON: addressee honorific; COP: copula; CPV: copulative verb; EGP: egophoric; FAC: factual; PURP: purposive; SUB: subject

Case 1: description on the third person subject

- Examples (1a) and (1b) demonstrate the contrasting case marking structures between *naru* and *desu*, although both are acceptable.

- The main difference between them is an attitude of the speaker to the addressee; (1a) is viewed as a formal expression that enhances the politeness conveyed by the ADRHON morpheme and is deemed more polite than (1b).

- This formality is commonly employed in business discussions and presentations to present medicine from an objective standpoint.

- To the contrary, examples (2a) and (2b) differ in the grammatical acceptability despite the same structure.

- This is also evident in the first person arguments, such as in (3) and (4).

Case 2: description on the first person subject

- Japanese (3)a watasi-ga   tentyoo-ni   nari-masu

                   1-SUB   shopkeeper-PURP *naru*-ADRHON

           (3)b   watasi-ga   tentyoo   desu

                  1-SUB   shopkeeper   COP.ADRHON

           'I am the shopkeeper.'

- Tibetic (4)a? nga   tshong dpon   red

                  1   shopkeeper   CPV.FAC

           (4)b   nga   tshong dpon   yin

                  1   shopkeeper   CPV.EGP

           'I am the shopkeeper.'

Case 2: description on the first person subject

- Examples (1) and (2) alike, Examples (3a) and (3b) are both acceptable.
- However, we find that Japanese and Tibetic have different strategies for indicating evidentiality.
- The verb *naru* can be described as having a factual-oriented semantic value, which is similar to *red*.

- The factual notion as an evidential category is represented by an access to general knowledge.
- For (3a) and (3b), (3a) pertains to a statement within general knowledge, meaning "as known to people/everyone", whereas (3b) refers to an assertion made by the speaker alone, which may only be acknowledged or authorised by the speaker themselves.
- Therefore, their more precise translations in English are: (3a) "I am the shopkeeper, as everyone knows" and (3b) "I am the shopkeeper(, as far as I recognise /, authorised by me)".
- Of course, (3b) is unmarked; hence, it is not necessary to clarify with "as far as I recognise / authorised by me" in this context.

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Comparison (1)

- Similarly to examples (1a) and (1b), there is a difference in the degree of formality between (3a) and (3b).

- However, when a description of the speaker's status, (3a) highlights the novelty of the information for the addressee, rather than being a simply polite expression. It is worth noting that (3b) may carry subjective connotations, and thus cannot be accurately determined without further context.

- The purpose of using a factual expression, such as in (3a), is to indicate that the statements are objective.

- This helps to prevent any potential influence from subjective or authoritative opinions. The choice of (3a) may imply an abandonment of the speaker's *territory of information* (cf. Kamio 1997) in order to take the conveyed information out of their territory.

Comparison (2)

- In Minyag Rabgang Khams, (4b) is considered an unmarked utterance, whereas (4a) is constrained to particular instances, such as when describing the speaker themselves in a dream, photo, and role-playing.

- This occurrence is characteristic in the egophoric category. Notably, when used in role-playing, the utterance of (4a) can also signify "I play a role of (=become) a shopkeeper," as suggested in Japanese; cf. Type (A) and (1a, 3a).

Case 3: authoritativity and factuality of utterances in Japanese

(5)a*	kore-ga	nanika-no	kusuri-ni	nari-masu
	this-SUB	something-GEN	medicine-PURP	*naru*-ADRHON

(intended meaning): 'This is a medicine for some [disease].'

(5)b*	watasi-ga	dokoka-no	tentyoo-ni	nari-masu
	1-SUB	somewhere-GEN	shopkeeper-PURP	*naru*-ADRHON

(intended meaning): 'I am a shopkeeper of [a store] somewhere.'

- Another noteworthy implication of the *naru*-form in Japanese is that the definiteness of the complement is prerequisite only to the speaker and not necessarily shared with the addressee.

- In this sense, in (1a), the English translation should be "This is *the* medicine" and in (3a), it should be "I am *the* shopkeeper". The use of an indefinite complement is not intended, and sentences of (5) are not acceptable.

- These examples indicate that the *naru*-form has a *factual* connotation in the evidential sense defined by the speaker's intention since the information remains within the speaker's (ego's) knowledge.

Discussions (1)

- As demonstrated by examples (3), (4) and (5), the Japanese case does not wholly align with the egophoric access found in Khams Tibetan.

- This indicates that the emergence mechanism of the egophoric concept differs between the two cases. Nevertheless, the factual notion remains a marked concept in both cases to indicate access to information as common knowledge.

- Thus, the egophoric access is associated with the factual notion, and the languages have each developed their own interpretation of the egophoric concept.

- This may be a contributing factor to the variation and utilisation of egophoric categories, which is dependent on the dialects and varieties found within Tibetic.

Discussions (2)

- Japanese is now developing a factual expression by using *naru*, whereas many Tibetic languages completed the establishment of the factual category.

- The question is not why the verb *naru* is chosen but why speakers need a specific form to factual.

- Based on the current usages in Japanese, I think that all the utterances are possible to be interpreted in a subjective reading, whether a given utterance deals with ego's or others'.

- Return to Examples (3):

Discussions (3)

(3)a	watasi-ga	tentyoo-ni	nari-masu
	1-SUB	shopkeeper-PURP	*naru*-ADRHON
(3)b	watasi-ga	tentyoo	desu
	1-SUB	shopkeeper	COP.ADRHON

'I am the shopkeeper.'

- (3a) is understood to be a factual statement, whereas (3b) indicates that the speaker is defining their identity as a shopkeeper by self.

- Consequently, Japanese is in need of a new expression that is interpreted only as a factual reading. This expression should be used in situations where the speaker wishes to convey that a fact is commonly known or understood in a particular way.

Discussions (4)

- This case further suggests that a factual is not *alterophoric* (=access to other's knowledge) but an intentional access to general knowledge.

- This means that the factual category is not a general access but is positively chosen by a speaker to seek the general knowledge, excluding the subjective knowledge or prejudice of the ego.

- The current non-factual utterances in Japanese are not egophoric; rather, they are considered to be either subjective or authoritative, rather than objective.

Discussions (5)

- According to Oisel (2024), the evidential system of Middle Tibetan includes an 'authoritative' source, which morphologically corresponds to egophoric in modern Tibetic varieties (*yin* and *yod*).

- Furthermore, Oisel (2024:101-114) points out an interaction between politeness register and evidentiality; this is also discussed in Japanese.

- This suggests that Japanese is now undergoing a similar process of acquiring an authoritative function; in order to avoid expressing the authoritative with *desu*, modern Japanese produces a factual form with *naru*.

- It is an intriguing question whether egophoric access will emerge in Japanese.

Summary

- We find commonalities in the historical development of Japanese and Tibetic languages.

  - an authoritative connotation in utterances has emerged

  - a verb denoting 'become' functions for a formation of the factual category

- The most striking difference exists in the time of the development.

- There are Tibetic languages that have already established the egophoric system, whereas Japanese has not.

- The appearance of the authoritative function precedes the establishment of the egophoric category.

- The usage of *desu* in Modern Japanese seems to correspond to 'authoritative' in Middle Tibetan.

Concluding words

- The present discussion concludes that Tibetic and Japanese employ distinct strategies in the development of their respective evidential systems with regards to the egophoric access, from the standpoint of the evolution of factual notions.

- This contrast indicates that factual expressions are more or less marked, as opposed to simply being considered an access to general knowledge.

- Following locutional strategies, it is often necessary to distance an utterance from the subjective knowledge of the ego.

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