Investigating a grammatical category and its lexical correlates

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The increasingly abundant research on evidentiality has given rise to a sort of implicit confrontation between those, mainly typologists, advocating a strict definition of evidentiality within the domain of grammar, and those considering evidentiality as a more general functional category whose scope includes not only grammatical but also lexical phenomena and can therefore be extended to languages traditionally considered as unaffected by evidentiality. Such a confrontation has been explicitly addressed in this collection of articles soliciting contributions on lexical phenomena in the languages of Europe and, at the same time, asking Alexandra Aikhenvald, one of the most active typologists pleading the cause of evidentiality as a totally separate grammatical category, to write a final commentary article. The result confirms the impression that a rigid distinction between grammatical evidentiality and lexical expressions of information source has the advantage of being conceptually clear as well as terminologically elegant (it is "necessary and reasonable […] if one wants to establish a common conceptual ground for a cross-linguistic analysis" as Giacalone & Topadze, this volume, put it), but it may be too restrictive if the whole continuum between grammar and lexicon is taken into account (Cornillie, this volume). In other words, a clear-cut distinction between the set of obligatory markers of 'exotic' languages such as Quechua, Tariana, Qiang, Western Apache or Shipibo-Konibo (see Aikhenvald, sections 2-3, this volume) and the English adverbs *reportedly*, *allegedly*, *supposedly* is not only desirable but also unavoidable. Nonetheless, the 'exotic' morphemes and the English lexemes might be conceived as the opposite endpoints of a continuum that admits several intermediate stages, displaying linguistic forms that are less paradigmatic than evidential morphemes and at the same time more morphosyntactically constrained than English adverbs. The gradient nature of such a continuum is clearly presented in Aikhenvald (this volume), who demonstrates that recognizing it is not tantamount to denying the basic structural difference between grammatical evidentiality and lexical marking of information source. In fact, only a careful study of the intermediate stages between lexicon and grammar can really contribute to clarify the

boundaries between the two, avoiding further misconceptions. Even if seen from different perspectives this point is shared by all the articles collected here, which discuss examples of purely lexical phenomena but also compare lexical and grammatical phenomena or present examples of the intermediate stages between lexicon and grammar in different languages of Europe. The empirical coverage includes Romance (French, Italian, Occitan, Spanish), Germanic (English, Dutch, German, Swedish) and Baltic (Lithuanian), also exploring the fringes of Europe (Georgian) as well as the evolution of Spanish outside Europe (Mexican Spanish).

Due to the focus on intermediate stages of grammaticalization, semi-grammatical phenomena have particularly attracted attention and are treated in different articles. This is the case of raising verbs, extensively analyzed in Germanic by de Haan and also treated in Romance by Cornillie and Giacalone & Topadze, while Romance modal verbs are discussed by Dendale & Van Bogaert, Giacalone & Topadze and Pietrandrea. Attention is also paid to lexical items showing signs of morphosyntactic decategorialization and assuming new functions. Cases in point are verbs of saying reanalyzed as reportive markers in Georgian (Giacalone & Topadze), Mexican Spanish (Olbertz), Lithuanian (Wiemer), Italian (Giacalone & Topadze and Pietrandrea), verbs of visual perception reanalyzed as evidentials (Giacalone & Topadze) or epistemic-evidential markers (Pietrandrea) in Italian, verbs of auditory perception or fossilized participles of the copula reanalyzed as reportive markers in Lithuanian (Wiemer). In dealing with decategorialization some authors have also included a discussion on the grammatical status of controversial forms, as in Wiemer's article, where the complex distinction between particles and conjunctions is analyzed, while Olbertz looks at particles from the lexical side of the boundary distinguishing them from adverbs.

A comparative look at the vast array of diverse data presented in this collection also gives the opportunity to measure different degrees of grammaticalization. Thus, the Georgian reportive particle *–o* phonetically eroded, etymologically obscure and morphologically agglutinated to the verb (Giacalone & Topadze, section 2.3) is more grammaticalized than the morphologically invariable but still syntactically mobile reportive Mexican *dizque* (Olbertz) and Italian *dice* (Giacalone & Topadze, Pietrandrea). This explains why the Mexican *dizque* is conceived by Olbertz as an instance of lexicalization rather than grammaticalization, even if the latter option arises again if one considers that *dizque* also modifies nouns, thus being more similar to a grammatical particle than to lexical adverbs. In this respect,

the Mexican Spanish *dizque* is more decategorialized than its Italian counterpart *dice*, which, still consistent with its verbal origin, can be parenthetical but cannot modify constituents below the clausal level. Along the same lines, Dutch *schijnen* and German *scheinen* show different degrees of syntactic decategorialization (only the latter occurring as parenthetical), even though they can be accommodated in the same morphosyntactic and semantic cline generally affecting raising verbs in Germanic (de Haan).

Recognizing a continuum between lexicon and grammar is connected to the assumption that as decategorialization proceeds some form of semantic bleaching occurs, which is expected to make the semantic content of lexical items different from grammatical semantics. In this respect, the results presented in this collection deliver a complex and multifarious picture. On the one hand Dendale & Van Bogaert demonstrate that some French lexical verbs having an evidential meaning also have special semantic features that are not to be found in grammatical evidentials, which confirms the semantic separation between lexicon and grammar. On the other hand Pietrandrea proposes a comprehensive functional paradigm in which grammatical, semi-grammatical as well as purely lexical adverbs can be equally accommodated, even though she recognizes that lexical items may express more refined nuances that are neutralized in grammatical forms. While not sharing Pietrandrea's unifying conception of grammar and lexicon Giacalone & Topadze recognize the mutual interplay of different linguistic means, both lexical and grammatical, in expressing evidential meanings at the discourse level. Their comparison between Georgian and Italian demonstrates how lexicon and grammar should be taken into account together in an overall typological classification of evidential systems.

To whatever extent one wants to stress the parallelism between lexicon and grammar, it cannot be denied that the semantic issues raised by lexical phenomena are strikingly similar to those currently debated in dealing with grammatical evidentials. This is particularly apparent if one considers the semantic overlap of evidentiality and epistemic modality, which is a well-known and much debated feature in evidential grammatical forms as well as in evidentiality strategies (see Aikhenvald and de Haan this volume). In his comprehensive account of Lithuanian evidential markers, Wiemer demonstrates that this is often the case in lexical phenomena as well. While *girdì*, a petrified form of the verb 'hear', is restricted to reports without any epistemic overtones, the adverb *tariamai*, even if derived from a neutral verb of saying, can hardly occur without epistemic overtones with

respect to the reported content, and in most of the numerous other markers that Wiemer accurately describes by means of original corpus data, evidential meaning and epistemic overtones coexist, making it difficult to draw the line between semantic content and pragmatic implicatures. While Wiemer aims at providing a comprehensive account of several evidential markers, Olbertz makes the opposite choice, studying in detail one single marker, the Mexican Spanish *dizque*. Nonetheless, their results are quite comparable: Olbertz provides answers to some of the issues debated in Wiemer demonstrating that the pragmatic implicature of epistemic disbelief occurring with *dizque* at clausal scope becomes part of its semantic content at the predicate level. This means that scope narrowing is joined by an increase of epistemic interpretation, while the original evidential (report(ta)tive) interpretation prevails with larger (clausal) scope.

The interplay of epistemicity and evidentiality is also thoroughly analyzed by Pietrandrea, who bases her treatment on the balance between these two notions distinguishing purely epistemic and nonfactual markers from evidential adverbs and also recognizing an intermediate semantic domain, which she dubs epistemic-evidential. The primary role of epistemicity in this picture also justifies the author's terminological choice of using 'epistemic modality' as a cover term for the whole functional domain, which, while deviating from the general lines of the other articles, is quite consistent with Pietrandrea's approach.

The discussion on the demarcation between evidentiality and epistemicity is also fuelled by Dendale & Van Bogaert, who quite lucidly demonstrate that the French verb *trouver* 'think, judge' can be described as "an evidential marker of direct evidence", while its quasi-synonymous *croire* 'believe, think' and *penser* 'think' are not restricted to any specific evidential source and can therefore be more consistently described as "epistemic modal markers, signalling the hesitation or uncertainty of the speaker". Nonetheless, disentangling evidentiality and epistemicity can be much more difficult with other lexical items, such as the French pair *paraître / sembler*. As noted by Dendale & Van Bogaert the answer to the question whether *paraître / sembler* can be described as evidential is crucially connected to the syntactic constructions in which the two verbs occur.

The role of syntax as a crucial element in determining the grammatical vs. the lexical status of an evidential marker, which is only mentioned by Dendale & Van Bogaert, is thoroughly analyzed by Cornillie and de Haan, who significantly deal with the Spanish and Germanic counterparts of the French pair *paraître / sembler*.

Cornillie's systematic diachronic as well as synchronic corpus-based account of the Spanish constructions with the verb *parecer* 'seem' demonstrates that the infinitival construction *parece* 'seem' + infinitive is restricted to one evidential mode of knowing (inferences) as opposed to other syntactic structures (*parece* + complement clause, *parece* + datival expression of the conceptualizer, parenthetical uses), which cover a wider array of subjective (belief) and intersubjective (hearsay) meanings.

Quite conveniently, the general comparative background in which Cornillie's Spanish data can be accommodated is provided by de Haan, who puts together diachronic data from Germanic languages and demonstrates the common features in the evolution of different SEEM-verbs (English *seem*, German *scheinen* and Dutch *schijnen*) all ending up as evidential markers and sharing some syntactic properties as raising verbs. De Haan argues that, despite their semantic and syntactic differences, the diachronic evolutions of these verbs can be unified under the general umbrella of the traugottian subjectification. This allows the author to extend the comparison to a non-raising verb such as the Swedish *lär*, which combines modal, temporal and evidential (hearsay) meaning.

The interaction with syntax is also quite significantly addressed by Pusch, who investigates Gascony Occitan preverbal clitic particles interestingly showing the multifarious relationship between evidentiality and assertivity. The synchronic and, most plausibly, also diachronic connections of Gascon particles to highly assertive verbs of perception, cognition and utterance suggest a common semantic and syntactic background for evidentiality and assertivity, which provides an additional problematic dimension to the many boundaries of evidentiality.

The last point I would like to make affects the areal coverage of this collection: the vast and varied array of the data demonstrates how even the languages of Europe, despite the generalized absence of grammatical markers dedicated to evidentiality, can significantly contribute to improving our understanding of this linguistic phenomenon, making its typology probably less clear-cut, but also more intriguing. Between the two opposite endpoints represented by languages with a fully-fledged grammatical paradigm of evidential forms, and languages which totally attribute these functions to the lexicon, we should admit languages showing a more mixed nature. These languages demonstrate that evidentiality shows up as a semantic development of grammatical forms (evidentiality strategies in Aikhenvald's terms), but is also expressed by semi-grammatical markers as well as by the

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interplay of lexical and grammatical phenomena. In this respect, some traditional typological assumptions based on areal considerations might be revised: as very clearly demonstrated by Giacalone & Topadze, Georgian is more similar to Italian than traditionally assumed, both languages having evidential strategies, semi-grammatical markers of evidentiality and showing a comparable interplay of lexical and grammatical phenomena.

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