

[Рец. на: / Review of:] **S. E. Murray. The semantics of evidentials.** (Oxford Studies in Semantics and Pragmatics, 9.) Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017. 192 p. ISBN 978-0-19-968157-0.

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As mentioned in the preface, “The semantics of evidentials” elaborates on Sarah E. Murray’s [2010] PhD thesis “Evidentiality and the structure of speech acts”. The monograph proposes “a new semantics of evidentials”, which should be understood as an update of the formal semantic approach to evidentiality. It appeared as volume 9 of “The Oxford Studies in Semantics and Pragmatics”, a series of more specialized studies parallel to “The Surveys” series.

The book consists of six chapters, including the Introduction and the Conclusion. After some preliminaries, the Introduction presents evidentiality as a linguistic category. In Chapter 2, the results of formal semantic tests (also called “diagnostics”) are compared for a set of four different languages. Data come from the author’s extensive fieldwork on Cheyenne and studies by other authors within the formal paradigm on German, St’at’imcets (or Lillooet, a Salishan language from southern British Columbia, Canada), and Cuzco Quechua (a Quechua variety from the Cuzco region in Peru). Examples from Japanese, Kalaallisut (West Greenlandic), and Tariana (an Arawak language from the Amazonas region in Brazil) are also referred to throughout the book, and English examples are used for illustrative purposes. In Chapter 3, the idea of evidentials as a special type of context update (i. e. contributing not-at-issue content) is explored within a broader theory of the semantic contributions of all types of sentences. In Chapter 4, the framework of Update with Modal Centering is introduced, and suggestions are made to incorporate the theory put forth in Chapter 3 into this framework. Murray illustrates how this can be implemented with declarative sentences featuring different types of evidential markers in Cheyenne. Chapter 5 elaborates on the preceding chapter by testing the theory with Cheyenne interrogatives. The Conclusion summarizes the main contribution of this study according to the author: a new (formal) semantic theory of evidentials, which is integrated into existing theories on context updates and allows to account for the interaction with mood and other categories, as well as cross-linguistic variation among evidential markers. Two Appendices are included for reference; they contain a more explicit account of the Update with Modal Centering theory, including definitions and illustrative examples (Appendix A) and a summary of “semantic contributions by phenomenon”, i. e. formal notations of how particular types of sentences update the common ground (Appendix B).

The aim of “The semantics of evidentials” according to its author is “to give a compositional, truth-conditional, cross-linguistic semantics for evidentials” (p. 5). In other words, the goal is to propose an elaboration on formal semantic theory that can accurately characterize evidentiality while also accounting for cross-linguistic variation. Murray defines evidentials as “contributing a particular type of relation between an individual, the evidence holder or evidential anchor, and a proposition, e. g., the speaker has the specified type of evidence for a proposition *q*. The scope proposition is that propositional argument of the evidential relation. In addition to the evidence holder, there is another individual (or body of information) involved, which I call the evidence base or source” (p. 10). She narrows down the scope of the study to “grammatical, closed-class morphemes” (p. 2) that meet the definition above. Crucial to Murray’s theory is the distinction of three semantic contributions that sentences make to the common ground. (The term “common ground” is understood here as what discourse participants imagine to be their shared knowledge.) These are:

- **at-issue content**, a basic proposition relating to some event,
- **not-at-issue content**, non-negotiable information added directly to the common ground,
- an **illocutionary relation**, which structures the relationship between the at-issue content and the common ground.

Rather than viewing evidentiality as a special type of illocutionary relation or speech act, Murray treats it as contributing not-at-issue content. Not-at-issue content, as opposed to at-issue content, cannot be denied or directly challenged.

CHEYENNE

- (1) *Méave'ho'eno é-héstáhe-séstse Mókée'e.*  
 Lame\_Deer 3-be.from-REP.3SG Mókée'e  
 'Mókée'e is from Lame Deer, I hear.'
- (2) a. *É-sáa-hetóměstovè-hane-Ø.*  
 3-not-be.true-NEG<sub>INAN</sub>-WTN  
 'That's not true.'
- b. *É-sáa-héstáhé-he-Ø Méave'ho'eno.*  
 3-not-be.from-NEG<sub>AN</sub>-WTN Lame\_Deer  
 'She's not from Lame Deer.'
- c. *#Hovánee'e é-sáa-nè-hé-he-Ø.*  
 nobody 3-not-that-say-NEG<sub>INAN</sub>-WTN  
 'Nobody said that.'

In (1), the at-issue content is the proposition 'Mókée'e is from Lame Deer'. This is the scope proposition of the (reportative) evidential marker *-séstse*. While the scope proposition can be directly challenged (as in (2b)), the not-at-issue content contributed by the reportative marker (i. e. 'the speaker heard that [x]') cannot.<sup>1</sup> So, when sentence (1) is challenged or denied as in (2a), this can only be interpreted as (2b), while (2c) is infelicitous. The illocutionary relation contributed by the declarative mood in (1) is to propose new information (the at-issue content) to be added to the common ground. The addressee may challenge or deny this information. On the other hand, the not-at-issue content (i. e. the information that the speaker heard this message from someone) is added to the common ground directly. The semantic contributions of sentences are thus different types of "update" to the common ground. (Chapter 4 and Appendix A show how these different updates can be formalized.) Other ways to contribute not-at-issue content mentioned by Murray are non-restrictive relative clauses, as in (3), and certain types of embedding (following Potts [2005] on conventional implicatures).

- (3) *Annie, who placed first at trials, won the race.*

The at-issue content in (3) is that Annie won the race. The fact that she placed first at trials is not-at-issue. If the addressee accepts that Annie won the race, the fact that she placed first at trials is accepted by default.

The theory put forth in the book under review forms part of a dynamic approach in formal semantics; it formalizes context and interaction between speakers by viewing (parts of) speech acts as "updates" to the common ground. Murray shows that the information contributed by evidential marking is not-at-issue, which means it is not directly challengeable or deniable, as opposed to the information contributed by the scope proposition (2). This is an important point, as it fundamentally distinguishes evidentiality from other categories such as tense and (partly) modality

<sup>1</sup> The examples from Cheyenne and their explanations are adapted (p. 13). Most significantly, I compressed Murray's examples B and B' into (2a) and its possible continuations (2b) and #2(c), because the first part of the expression in B and B' ('That's not true') is identical. I use the # symbol following Murray to indicate infelicitous sentences.

in terms of its function in higher-level structures. Whether the content of a proposition is at issue or not, helps to tease apart evidentials and (epistemic) modal meanings, which are often intertwined. The compositional analysis of the Cheyenne inferential in Section 4.3.3 is an example of how these different layers of meaning can be distinguished. Although the theory is claimed to be cross-linguistically valid, so far it has been verified only with data from Cheyenne. Other languages are taken into account in Chapter 2 to provide some empirical basis on cross-linguistic patterning for the following chapters, but examples from Cheyenne form the principal body of proof for the main theory elaborated in Chapters 4 and 5.

The theory itself appears solid enough, based on the evidence presented in the study. It is further strengthened by its implementation into existing formal frameworks. While Murray's theory distinguishes itself in terms of formal elaborateness, the idea of viewing evidentiality as contributing not-at-issue content is not new. In addition, the classification of evidentials as contributing not-at-issue content rests on non-challengeability. As shown in a recent study by Korotkova [2016], challengeability is usually tested with a limited set of contexts. As soon as this set is expanded, evidentials show quite different patterns of behaviour in comparison to other types of not-at-issue content. I will now move on to discuss some other methodological issues, which are not specific to the formal semantic approach.

Although it is explicitly mentioned in the Introduction that the study in question deals only with grammatical evidentials, this strategy is subsequently abandoned. In Section 2.1.3, for instance, examples from English with "evidential" parentheticals, adverbs, and modals are used to illustrate how contradictory sentences with evidentials differ from Moore's paradox sentences.<sup>2</sup> It is perfectly natural to employ English examples and paraphrases to render examples from less familiar languages more comprehensible, especially when dealing with a topic like evidentiality, but they cannot serve as proof in their own right in a study that excludes them in its preliminaries. This rigorous demarcation also calls into question the inclusion of the German modal verb *sollen* in the body of evidence in Chapter 2. This verb is well-established as an evidential marker in literature (e. g. [Schenner 2010]), but in the first place, *sollen* is a modal verb with multiple context-dependent interpretations. For some authors, this is a reason to exclude it from studies on evidentiality, cf. [Diewald, Smirnova 2010: 75—96].

While a case can be made for the added value of including such an inherently polysemic item in a comparative cross-linguistic study, it is certainly not an uncontroversial example of grammatical evidentiality. Moreover, its status influences the results presented in Chapter 2.

Murray mentions that formerly, two semantic classes of evidentials were proposed: illocutionary evidentials (to which Cheyenne and Cuzco Quechua evidentials were argued to belong) and propositional, or epistemic evidentials (German and St'át'imcets). She argues that the results from Chapter 2, however, reveal a cline of semantic behaviour rather than two distinct semantic classes. One end of this cline is occupied by Cheyenne, while German is on the opposite end. Cuzco Quechua and St'át'imcets are located somewhere in between, the former being closer to Cheyenne and the latter patterning more similar to German. This cline may actually reflect different levels of grammaticalization and functional polysemy (or lack thereof) of the markers in question.

Regarding the varying results revealed in Chapter 2, Murray remarks the following (p. 56):

The morphosyntactic category and status of the item should be taken into account and should predict some of the behaviour of the evidential. For example, Faller 2006 says that German *sollen* is a modal verb; for reportive uses, it should be classified as a grammatical element, in contrast to its deontic uses, which should be classified as a full content verb.

<sup>2</sup> A Moore's paradox sentence contains a seeming contradiction (as in the famous example *It's raining, but I don't believe it*). Although an odd sentence, it can still be true and is not necessarily a contradiction. Denying the evidential value of a sentence, however, results in an actual contradiction, rather than a Moore's paradox (cf. *It's raining, I believe, but I don't believe it*), according to Murray (p. 21—25).

Nonetheless, the abovementioned parameters and their possible influence on the results are not discussed in any detail. Similarly, in Table 2.4 (which summarizes the results of all the diagnostics used throughout the chapter), it is noted for Cheyenne and Cuzco Quechua that evidentials cannot occur in an antecedent of a conditional or under an embedding verb. As Murray points out in the corresponding sections, this has to do with how subordinate clauses in general are organized in these languages. Marking the result of the diagnostic as “no” rather than “not applicable” in the table is therefore a bit misleading in my opinion. It suggests that the impossibility of using an evidential in these contexts is a feature specific to the evidential, while judging from Murray’s description, it applies to finite verb forms in general. Table 2.4 also shows an asymmetry in the data used: Cheyenne is represented with results for 22 distinct tests (2 of which were deemed “not applicable”), while for German there are only 11 results.

As I have already mentioned above, the main source of evidence for this study was Cheyenne. Though not a problem in itself, this fact might lead to biased generalizations like the following: “Sentences with a direct evidential make a commitment to the truth of the scope proposition while inferential / conjectural evidentials commit to at least its possibility” (p. 19). It should be pointed out here that throughout the book, Murray incidentally refers to inference as “true inference”. I understand this to refer to a situation where a speaker witnessed some result or visible consequence of a situation, from which they infer that this situation took place. This is opposed to conjecture (also referred to as presumptive in literature on evidentiality), in which case the speaker makes an inference based on less tangible evidence, such as general knowledge or personal reasoning. Crucial in this respect is the fact that in Cheyenne, both inference and conjecture are apparently covered by the same marker, which licenses the conclusion cited above. This might not ring true, however, for languages with a dedicated marker of “true inference”. In a study on the Perfect in Bagvalal (an East Caucasian language), for example, Tatevosov [2003] identified a probability and a recoverability constraint restricting the inferential usage of the Perfect by demanding a high degree of commitment on the side of the speaker. Depending on the language, an inferential may signal a lot more than just a commitment to at least the possibility of a proposition being true, rendering Murray’s statement not as cross-linguistically accurate as it is presented to be.

I now proceed to parallels from other theoretical frameworks.

After its discovery and establishment as a linguistic term in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the study of evidentiality has been occupied mainly with two distinct lines of inquiry: 1) the particular meanings and morpho-syntactic features of individual markers and possible generalizations thereof across languages; 2) the status of evidentiality as an independent grammatical category and its relationship to other categories, most notably tense, modality, and mirativity.

“The semantics of evidentials” is part of a general tendency in more recent research to zoom in on the communicative function of evidentials and their role in higher-level structures. In Murray’s conceptualization (as described above), evidentials form propositions that take another proposition as their argument. These evidential propositions characterize the relationship between an evidence holder and a propositional argument. The relationship between evidentials and their scope propositions is explored thoroughly in [Boye 2010]. According to Boye, scope properties can be used as defining features alongside common semantic definitions. These scope criteria refer to the type of clause they can and cannot designate. They can identify evidentials in contrast to forms that have similar semantics but do not show any signs of grammaticalization. They are also necessarily accompanied by a notional definition (e. g. the item refers to the information source for the proposition), because they share their scope properties with epistemic modals.

The general idea of evidentials representing a proposition on a proposition was actually first put forth in the seminal work by Roman Jakobson [1957/1984], in which he “tentatively” identified the category of evidentiality within a broader typology of verbal categories. Evidentiality in Jakobsonian terminology is referred to as a “shifter” category. Typical shifter categories are person, mood, tense, and evidentiality, which, according to Jakobson, are “indexical symbols” [Ibid.: 42]. While these categories embody fixed concepts, such as “past tense” or “first person”, their actual meaning in a given instance is always dependent on the context (i. e. the speech event).

A first-person form, for example, can refer to any given person but always indicates a first-person perspective tied to a specific referent. Likewise, a basic past tense can be used to refer to any moment preceding the speech event. In the case of evidentiality, there is a “narrated event” (i. e. the scope proposition) and a speech event. Between them, a “narrated speech event” characterizes the relationship between the scope proposition and one of the speech act participants.<sup>3</sup> The idea of evidentials as inherently deictic (which is presupposed by their classification as “shifters”) was revived relatively recently by de Haan [2005; 2012], who characterizes them as a form of “propositional deixis”:

An evidential grounds an action or event with respect to the speaker, just as a demonstrative grounds an object with respect to the speaker. In other words, the relation between a proposition and an evidential is analogous to the relation between a noun (phrase) and a demonstrative [de Haan 2012: 1038—1039].

In her study, Murray describes evidentials as characterizing a relationship between a proposition and an evidence holder. She refers to indexicality or deixis only briefly when discussing the fact that evidentials are known to switch their reference to the second person in interrogative sentences as opposed to the first person, their default referent in declaratives.<sup>4</sup>

Within the framework of Cognitive Grammar, evidentials have recently been analyzed as elements of clausal grounding [Langacker 2017]. Generally speaking, such elements characterize the relationship between the ground and the situation of speech. Evidentials, parallel to tense and modality, measure the epistemic distance between a deictic centre and the ground (i. e. the speech situation and its participants). Directly witnessed events are more proximate, while events accessed through hearsay are further removed from the deictic centre. Inference is located somewhere in between. According to Langacker [2017: 24], evidentials and other clausal grounding elements profile an event, while the relationship designated by the evidential marker “remains offstage”; Murray also mentions that the relationship designated by the evidential usually remains unspecified (p. 10). Besides the general characterization of the relationship encoded by the marker, it does not provide any details on the exact source. As an example, a proposition based on hearsay may be based on the words of one person, or it may be rooted in several conversations with people who introduced the same information to the speaker. Like Jakobson, Langacker groups evidentiality in one category with tense. Murray and Boye, on the other hand, show that evidentials scope over tense, while the opposite is usually impossible, thus legitimizing a distinct status for evidentials based on this property.

The feature these approaches have in common is their conceptualization of evidentiality as a semantically backgrounded expression that takes a proposition in its scope. They differ mainly in the set of phenomena with which they group evidentials in this regard. Another major difference is whether they overtly qualify them as deictic elements. Jakobson’s classic conception of shifters relates them to tense, mood, and person. In Cognitive Grammar, they are associated with clausal grounding elements such as tense, agreement, and modals (see [Brisard 2002]). Boye manages to distinguish evidentials and epistemic modals from other categories such as tense in terms of their scope properties but needs to rely on a semantic notion to separate the two. Murray claims that her compositional analysis allows evidentiality to be separated from modal components based on their semantic contribution to the sentence, as demonstrated in Section 4.3.3. This idea is promising but requires more evidence to be properly evaluated. In addition, Murray’s analysis of evidentials as not-at-issue content also relies on a semantic notion in order to distinguish them from other types of not-at-issue content, such as relative and embedding clauses. (Although the distinction of evidentiality from other types of not-at-issue content is not explicitly discussed.)

<sup>3</sup> The term “narrated speech event” may be slightly misleading. It suggests some kind of hearsay evidence in all cases, while Jakobson distinguishes different types of intermediate propositions, such as evidence from dreams or from memory.

<sup>4</sup> This phenomenon is referred to by Murray as “interrogative flip”.

Cheyenne evidentials thus find themselves in a descriptive category containing inflectional evidential suffixes on the one hand and clause types on the other.

In conclusion, the compositional analysis proposed by Murray seems to do what it promises at least to a certain extent: it accounts for cross-linguistically common properties of evidentials (mostly relating to scope and negation) as well as variation (in terms of commitment to a scope proposition within a formal semantic framework). Moreover, this approach arguably allows evidentiality to be teased apart from modal components that may accompany it. As the study is mostly based on evidence from Cheyenne, this remains to be verified with data from other languages. Aside from some methodological problems discussed above, the central theory proposed in the book seems solid.

The merit of Murray's approach is that it seeks to further isolate evidentiality from other categories with which it is usually associated (such as tense and modality) based on scope behaviour. The theory could have benefited, however, from a more explicit characterization of defining scope properties, as proposed, for example, in [Boye 2010], as well as a more detailed account of how it relates to other elements contributing not-at-issue content.

#### ABBREVIATIONS

- 1, 2, 3 — 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> person  
 AN — animate  
 INAN — inanimate  
 NEG — agreement that appears with negation and inferential evidentials  
 REP — reportative  
 SG — singular  
 WTN — direct (witness) evidential

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Получено / received 23.10.2017

Принято / accepted 14.11.2017

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### Исправление в рецензии на книгу Кс. Деламара « Les noms des gaulois » (2018, № 2)

В № 2 за 2018 г. на с. 152 в рецензии Т. А. Михайловой на книгу Ксавье Деламара «Les noms des gaulois» (Paris: Éditions Les Cent Chemins, 2017) автором была допущена ошибка в переводе на русский язык цитаты из рецензии Штефана Циммера на книгу Ксавье Деламара «Noms de lieux celtiques de l'Europe ancienne (–500 / +500): Dictionnaire» (Arles: Éditions Errance, 2012), вышедшей в журнале *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie* (2012, Bd. 59, S. 257–259): «Tausend Details des reichhaltigen Werkes laden die Fachgenossen zu weiterer Diskussion ein. Auf jeden Fall gebührt dem Autor für seine beachtliche Leistung der Dank nicht nur aller Keltologen, sondern auch des gebildeten Publikums in ganz Europa, dem damit ein (eingermaßen) zuverlässiges Nachschlagewerk an die Hand gegeben wird».

Приводим точный перевод этой цитаты: «Тысячи деталей этого обширного труда приглашают коллег к дискуссии. Однако в любом случае автор заслуживает благодарности не только от всех кельтологов, но и от образованной общественности всей Европы за то значительное достижение, которым является это (до некоторой степени) надежное справочное издание».

Автор рецензии и редакция приносят читателям журнала, а также лично Штефану Циммеру и Ксавье Деламару, извинения за искажение смысла цитаты в переводе.