

# The Relation Between Modality and Evidentiality

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## Zusammenfassung

In diesem Artikel wird die Beziehung zwischen Evidentialität und epistemischer Modalität unter sprachübergreifender Perspektive untersucht. Es wird gezeigt, daß diese beiden Phänomene – entgegen der gängigen Forschungsmeinung – in keiner engen Beziehung stehen. Vielmehr handelt es sich um unterschiedliche Thematisierungen der Rolle des Sprechers: Evidentiale nehmen Bezug auf die Evidenz, über die ein Sprecher verfügt, während epistemische Modale eine Behauptung mit Bezug auf das, was der Sprecher für wahr hält, bewerten. Darüber hinaus wird gezeigt, daß für das Verständnis des germanischen Modalverb-systems das Konzept der ‚Konfirmativität‘ erforderlich ist.

## 1 Introduction

One of the most interesting problems that scholars of evidentiality are faced with is the relation between *evidentiality*, the marking of the source of the information of the statement, and *epistemic modality*, the degree of confidence the speaker has in his or her statement. Many scholars believe the relation between these two categories is a strong one (or even a necessary one). For instance, in a widely cited work on modality, Palmer divides the realm of epistemic modality as follows (Palmer 1986:51):

“There are at least four ways in which a speaker may indicate that he is not presenting what he is saying as a fact, but rather:

- (i) that he is speculating about it
- (ii) that he is presenting it as a deduction
- (iii) that he has been told about it
- (iv) that it is a matter only of appearance, based on the evidence of (possibly fallible) senses.”

Possibility (i) is the area of what is commonly called *judg(e)ments* and is what people usually associate epistemic modality with. The other three possibilities represent three types of *evidentiality*. What binds these four possibilities together, according to Palmer (1986:51) is: “... the indication by the speaker of his (lack of) commitment to the truth of the proposition being expressed.” Evidence for this position comes from languages in which evidentiality and epistemic modality are expressed by the same elements, such as the Germanic languages. A sentence such as (1) below, from Dutch, is, out of context, ambiguous between an epistemic and an evidential interpretation.<sup>1</sup> In other words, the modal verb *moeten* ‘must’ can be both evidential and modal.

<sup>1</sup> Sentence (1) of course also has a deontic interpretation but because deontic modality does not play a **role** in this paper, it will be ignored.

- (1) Het moet een goede film zijn.  
 ‘It must be a good movie.’ or  
 ‘It is said to be a good movie.’

Similar examples can be found in most other Germanic languages (though not in all. English is an exception). Because these are the languages most linguists are familiar with, it comes as no surprise that the use of evidentials is often seen as a diminished commitment to the truth of the statement (e.g., Givón 1982, Haarmann 1970, Willett 1988 and Bybee, Perkins & Pagliuca 1994).

Possibly because of this, evidential meanings are usually listed under epistemic modality in grammars of Germanic languages. See e.g., Allan, Holmes & Lundskaer-Nielsen (1994:295) for the report reading of *skulle* in Danish. It is listed under epistemic modality. Similar statements can be made for Dutch (the ANS, Geerts et al. 1984, gives the evidential reading of *moeten* ‘must’ under the epistemic reading) and Swedish (*lär*, from *lära* ‘to learn,’ as quotative is listed under modal auxiliaries in Holmes & Hinchcliffe 1993, see also section 3 below).

This paper examines the status of evidentiality in Germanic. Although the emphasis will be on Dutch, examples from other Germanic languages will be used where needed. Where appropriate, the data from Germanic are compared with data from a crosslinguistic sample of 200 languages, referred to here as the WALs sample (see De Haan (in preparation) for details). This is done to place the data from Germanic in its proper crosslinguistic perspective.

It will be shown that the relation between the areas evidentiality and epistemic modality is not a strong one, let alone a necessary one. Rather, epistemic modality is but one of many factors that can play a role in evidentiality. In the Germanic languages, it is the principal source for evidentiality (something which needs to be explained, see section 5) but it is by no means the only source, even in Germanic.

The paper is built up as follows. In section 2 I will define both epistemic modality and evidentiality. Section 3 discusses the various ways in which evidentiality is expressed in the Germanic languages. Section 4 examines whether there is a necessary relation between evidentiality and epistemic modality. It will be shown that the answer is negative. Section 5 discusses how epistemic modals can turn into evidentials. Section 6 attempts to give an explanation for why certain Germanic languages have more ways of encoding indirect evidentiality. It discusses the notion of confirmation, rather than evidentiality, as a driving force behind certain modal or evidential forms. Section 7, finally, draws some conclusions and places the Germanic evidentials in crosslinguistic perspective.

## 2 Definitions

Given that the link between epistemic modality and evidentiality is in dispute, we need to start with outlining the definitions of the two areas that are used in this paper. Both areas have been defined differently by different scholars, and so it is very important to have a precise understanding of each area.

Epistemic modality is concerned with the areas of possibility and necessity, which are referred to as *weak* and *strong* epistemic modality, respectively. Weak epistemic modality is grammaticalized in Germanic with the verbs *may* and *can* and its cognates in other Germanic languages, for example: *können* (German), *mogen/kunnen* (Dutch), or *kunne/mätte* (Danish), among others. Strong epistemic modality is grammaticalized as *must* or *shall*, or a cognate verb in the other Germanic languages, for example, *sollen/müssen* (German), *moeten* (Dutch), *mätte/skulle* (Danish). In addition, there are verbs that encode intermediate levels, such as *should* in English, or *böra* ‘should’ in Swedish. This list is by no means exhaustive of course, but it is meant merely as a bird’s eye view of modality in the Germanic languages

Possibility and necessity refer to the commitment of the speaker to the truth of what he/she is saying. When the speaker uses a weak epistemic modal, his level of commitment to the truth is obviously lower than when he uses a strong epistemic modal.

Evidentiality refers to the source of evidence the speaker has for his statement. Commonly, evidentiality is divided into *direct* and *indirect* evidentiality. Direct evidentials are used when the speaker has witnessed the action (visually, aurally, or potentially, with the other senses) while indirect evidentials are used when the speaker has not witnessed the action personally but has either deduced the action or has heard about it from others. When the action is deduced, we are talking about *inferentials*, when information about the event is conveyed through others, they are called *quotatives*.

In order to exclude such lexical markers of evidentiality as the English adverbs *reportedly* or *evidently* from the discussion, the second part of the definition of evidentiality requires some level of grammaticalization of evidential morphemes.<sup>2</sup> It is not always possible to give exact requirements for grammaticalization since this is to a certain degree a language-specific issue.<sup>3</sup> In the next section I will discuss to what degree evidentiality has been grammaticalized in the Germanic languages.

In examining the semantic definitions alone, one can wonder about the a priori relation between modality and evidentiality, since they encode entirely different cognitive areas. Examining the WALS data, for those languages for which reliable inferences regarding sources of evidentials can be made, modal elements as source for evidentials are comparatively rare. This is one of the

<sup>2</sup> Similar considerations also apply to epistemic modality. Adverbs such as *possibly* or *likely* are excluded as well.

<sup>3</sup> In De Haan (1997) I have given some tentative requirements for grammaticalization.

reasons that the link between epistemic modality and evidentiality is not a necessary one. Thus, it is necessary to explain the use of modal elements in Germanic.

### 3 Expressions of evidentiality in Germanic

This section gives a short overview of expressions of evidentiality in Germanic. It is not meant to be exhaustive: as mentioned in the previous section, what is and what is not an evidential is to a certain degree a theoretical issue. Some frameworks allow a wider interpretation of the term evidential.

As discussed in the previous section, my definition of evidentials are only those morphemes that a) mark source of information only and b) show signs of grammaticalization. According to this definition, one can divide evidentials in Germanic into two categories: those that are derived from modal elements and those that do not.

#### 3.1 Evidentials from modal elements

Evidentials from modal elements come mainly from strong epistemic verbs. The reason for this will be discussed in section 4 below. The two main verbs most commonly used are verbs that are cognate with English *must* and those that are cognate with English *shall*.

The Dutch verb *moeten* is cognate with English *must* and an example was already shown in (1) above. Using a cognate of the verb *shall* is more common, however. Below are examples of German, Danish and Swedish, respectively:

- (2) a. Er soll steinreich sein.  
       ‘He is said to be extremely rich.’ (Palmer 1986:72)  
       b. De skal have købt bil.  
       ‘They are said to have bought a car.’ (Allan et al. 1995:295)  
       c. Hon skall vara vacker.  
       ‘She is said to be beautiful.’ (Holmes & Hinchcliffe 1993:293)

In addition, German and Dutch make use of the subjunctive for indirect evidentiality. In German, the subjunctive is a separate inflectional category while in Dutch it is expressed with the past tense of the verb *zullen* ‘shall’.<sup>4</sup> Examples are given in (3):

- (3) a. Er sei krank.

<sup>4</sup> The Dutch use of *zullen* differs from the use in other Germanic languages as discussed in (2) because only the past tense of *zullen* is evidential. Note that all examples of *shall*-cognates in (2) are in the present tense. In these languages, both present and past tenses appear to be evidential. This can be compared to the use of Dutch evidential *moeten* ‘must’ which is also evidential in both the present and past tense.

- ‘He is said to be ill.’  
 b. Jan zou ziek zijn.  
 ‘Jan is said to be ill.’

German and Dutch have therefore two ways of indicating that the action reported on was not witnessed directly. This suggests that there is a functional difference between the use of a modal verb and the use of the subjunctive. This question will be taken up in section 6 below.

From a crosslinguistic point of view, evidentials from modal verbs (as in (2) above) are not as common as evidentiality expressed through mood (subjunctive, irrealis, or otherwise). Finnish is the only example in the WALS sample of a language with evidentiality deriving from a modal verb. This is in all likelihood due to the areal influence of Germanic. It does not seem to occur, for instance, in Estonian.<sup>5</sup> The other possibility is more common, with examples from the Australian languages Mangarayi and Gooniyandi, as well as several Siberian languages and the Baltic languages.

### 3.2 Evidentiality from non-modal sources

Even though the focus of this paper is the behavior of evidentiality and modal verbs in Germanic, it must be mentioned that the Germanic languages have several other ways of marking source of information. These other possibilities are on the whole not as grammaticalized in these languages as the examples in section 3.1. Nevertheless, they are interesting from a theoretical perspective since they appear to run counter to some well-established typological patterns.

In a number of studies I have linked evidentiality with the notion of *deixis*. In De Haan (forthcoming a) I treat visual evidentials as being morphemes in which the action is viewed from the perspective of the speaker. In De Haan (forthcoming b), inferential evidentials are being viewed as being ambiguous between those that denote that the action is being viewed from the perspective of the speaker (similar to direct evidentials) and those that denote that the action is viewed as one in which the speaker plays no role at all. The latter is the usual definition of indirect evidentiality.

In English, as well as other Germanic languages, complements of perception verbs such as *see* and *hear* show evidential interpretations:<sup>6</sup>

- (4) a. I see that John is sick.  
 b. I hear that John was fired from his job.

<sup>5</sup> As a more general statement, it is true that evidentiality is a linguistic category that can spread quite easily from language to language as an areal feature. This is witnessed, for instance, by the spread of evidentiality in the Balkan area and the Amazon region.

<sup>6</sup> There is a vast bibliography on perception verbs. See e.g. Dik & Hengeveld (1991) for a discussion.

What is interesting about sentences like the ones in (4) is that the complement of *see* and *hear* in these cases does not mean that the action was witnessed directly, but rather that the action described was deduced (as in (4a)) or reported to the speaker (as in (4b)). In other words, *see* and *hear* act as indirect evidentials, not as direct evidentials.

These verbs are not (yet?) grammaticalized evidentials, however. For one, the most common syntactic construction with *see* or *hear* as indirect evidentials is with a first person subject, although second person subjects are apparently also possible. Third person subjects of *see* and *hear*, however, do not seem to have an evidential interpretation. Secondly, the sentences in (4) are biclausal structures whereas fully grammaticalized evidentials never occur in biclausal structures (see De Haan 1997 and 1999b for discussion).

The development of perception verbs into indirect evidentials is relatively rare crosslinguistically. In the WALS sample, the only clear example of such a language is Sanuma, a Yanomam language spoken in the Venezuela/Brazil border area of the Amazon region (Borgman 1990). In Sanuma, a preverbal particle *a/ha* can be used to denote both auditory, direct, evidence and quotative, indirect, evidence (1990:212). More often than not, indirect evidence, especially quotative evidentiality, is expressed with a grammaticalized form of a verb meaning ‘to say’ (see e.g., Harris & Campbell 1995:171 for discussion). Because the important part of indirect evidentials is to denote that the speaker had no role in observing the action he/she describes, it is very natural to use a deictic form which directly conveys that. In the use of ‘say’-verbs as quotatives, it is expressly stated that the information came to the speaker. In using a form of ‘see’ or ‘hear’ for indirect evidentiality, the deictic relation is reversed, placing more emphasis on the speaker’s role than is warranted. For this reason, the use of perception verbs as source for indirect evidentials is in general not preferred.

There are a number of other evidentials used in the Germanic languages. In Swedish, the particle *lär* is used, from the verb *lära* ‘to learn’. An example is given in (5) below:

- (5) Hon lär skriva dikter.  
 ‘She is said to write poetry.’ (Holmes & Hinchcliffe 1993:295)

The verb ‘to learn’ is also an uncommon source of evidentials crosslinguistically, for the same reason as perception verbs: the deictic relation is reversed.

An intriguing example of grammaticalization in action is exemplified by the use of the raising verb ‘seem’ in many Germanic languages. In De Haan (1999b) I have sketched the development of *schijnen* ‘seem’ in Dutch; from a full verb, with the meaning ‘to shine’ to a raising verb with the abstract meaning of ‘there is evidence that.’ Diewald (this volume) discusses the grammaticalization of German *scheinen*. Verbs like *schijnen* and *seem* exhibit essentially a deverbalization pattern (cf. also the Afrikaans example (15) below of the evidential particle *glo*, from a full verb *glo*, meaning ‘believe’). From a

full verb with a very concrete meaning these verbs developed into verbs with a more auxiliary-like status and with a very abstract meaning. This grammaticalization path is not unlike the path modal verbs have taken. In some linguistic theories modal verbs are analyzed as Raising verbs, an approach which is consistent with the deverbilization approach. It is very likely that similar cognitive patterns are at work here.

#### 4 The link between modality and evidentiality

In the Germanic languages a strong epistemic modal verb is used for evidential purposes as we have seen above. This has compelled some scholars to define strong epistemic modality in evidential terms, thereby implicitly assuming that there is a necessary link between them. For instance, Sweetser (1990:61) gives the following analysis of a sentence with the strong epistemic modal verb *must*:

- (6) You must have been home last night.  
 ‘The available (direct) evidence compels me to the conclusion that you were home.’

By explicitly linking a strong modal verb with the notion of evidence, the impression is created that this is a necessary part of the meaning of strong epistemic modality. This also entails that evidence is somehow absent from other types of modality. Indeed, Sweetser’s analysis of weak epistemic modality makes no mention of the notion of evidence. Rather, the traditional analysis of *nihil obstat* is chosen (Sweetser 1990:61):

- (7) John may be there.  
 ‘I am not barred by my premises from the conclusion that he is there.’

As argued in De Haan (1999a), this type of analysis is flawed for two reasons: one, it implies that evidentials can be derived only from strong modal elements, and two, that evidence is relevant only for strong epistemic elements. Both statements are false.

In many languages, the evidential morphemes are not necessarily derived from strong modal verbs. Firstly, there are many cases where evidentials do not derive from a modal element at all, as is for instance the case with perfects that turn into inferentials or the well-known path of ‘say’-verbs grammaticalizing into a quotative (see e.g., Harris & Campbell 1995 with data from Caucasian languages and De Haan 1999a with data from Mesoamerican languages. See also the previous section.). These do not involve modal elements at all. Secondly, even in those cases where evidentials do derive from modals, it is not necessarily the case that strong modals are involved. We have already seen examples of the subjunctive used in an evidential sense, but there are a number of languages where even weak epistemic modals, such as *dubitatives*, can take on evidential interpretations.





In this example, there is no modal present at all, but the same evidence is present in the situation. The speaker has apparently no direct evidence of the statement (John was not seen or heard) but evidently the correlation between evidence and situation is so high, that the speaker does not feel the need to assign a degree of doubt to his or her statement.

It would therefore be entirely possible for languages to grammaticalize indirect evidentiality by means of a morpheme that otherwise means certainty or is unmarked for doubt. Such an example is Suena, a New Guinean language (Wilson 1974). In Suena, the marker for the Quotative is the sentence-final particle *sia*, as shown in (10) below:

- (10)   Oneki   gutu-ra bam-i   sia.  
           Oneki   isle-to went-he QUOT  
           ‘Oneki reportedly went to the island.’                   (Wilson 1974:151)

This use of *sia* contrasts with its use in a sentence such as (11), in which it is used as a marker of certainty (Wilson 1974:113):

- (11)   ma-n-a               sia  
           come-I-IND       CER  
           ‘It is that I’ve come.’                                   or  
           ‘It’s true, I’ve really come.’

In other words, we must distinguish between morphemes that are epistemic in nature, which evaluate the statement, and evidential morphemes, which assert the level of evidence on which the statement is based.<sup>7</sup> There are languages in which both types of morphemes can occur side by side. Such a language is Western Tarahumara, a Uto-Aztecan language (Burgess 1984):

- (12) a. alué   hu-rá  
           he    be-QUOT  
           ‘They say it is he.’  
       b. rahá-ra-guru  
           burn-QUOT-truth  
           ‘They say he burned it and it’s probably true.’  
       c. simí-le-ga-ra-e  
           go-PAST-STAT-QUOT-DUB  
           ‘Someone said he went but he did not.’                   (Burgess 1984:104)

In Western Tarahumara, the quotative suffix *-ra* can be optionally followed by a suffix indicating truth or doubt. (12a) is a sentence with only an evidential morpheme, while (12b) and (c) are sentences in which the evidential is

<sup>7</sup> In addition, there may be a third category that is relevant, namely the category of *assertives*. These are morphemes that assert that the action happened, happens, or will happen. This assertion is not based on any evidence. In some languages, assertives are separate morphemes, such as the Germanic modal particles (an example is the Dutch particle *toch*). In languages like English, assertiveness is handled via a special intonation.

accompanied by an epistemic morpheme that shows the evaluation of the statement by the speaker. In Western Tarahumara, then, the category of evidentiality is neutral with respect to the degree of confidence and a separate epistemic morpheme is needed to show this.

## 5 Evidentiality and epistemic modality: which comes first?

Even though the link between evidentiality and epistemic modality is clearly not a necessary one, we still need to explain why evidentiality in the Germanic languages is so often expressed by means of modal verbs. One way of looking at this question is to ask which category derives from which and why? Does evidentiality in Germanic derive from epistemic modality or is it the other way around? In the literature, both viewpoints are found.

### 5.1 Epistemic modality from evidential meanings

In a highly influential paper, Traugott (1989) addresses the issue of the development of epistemic meanings from deontic ones in English. Her argument is that epistemic modality arose from evidential meanings because of the process of subjectivization. Traugott (1989:35) posits a grammaticalization tendency according to which “Meanings tend to become increasingly based in the speaker’s subjective belief state attitude toward the proposition.” In her view, statements based on evidence such as *It is obvious from evidence that* are “weakly subjective” while epistemic statements such as *I conclude that* and *I think that* are “strongly subjective.”

Given that the tendency runs from less to more subjective, the prediction is then that deontic modals acquire an “evidential” reading (i.e., a weakly epistemic one) before they become fully epistemic. The earliest examples of epistemic modals in English should therefore be weakly subjective. Traugott gives two examples of this evidential use of the Old English verb *sculan*, one of which is cited in (13), from Traugott (1989:41):

- (13) & to þam Pentecosten ... wæs gesewen  
and at that Pentecost was seen  
blod weallan of eorþan, swa swa mænige sæden  
blood to:well:up from earth as many said  
þe hit geseon *sceoldan*  
that it see should

‘And at the Pentecost ... blood was seen welling up from the ground, as many said who supposedly saw it.’

Traugott states that strongly subjective epistemic interpretations for the English modal verbs do not occur until well after the Old English period.<sup>8</sup>

According to this scenario, the driving force behind the grammaticalization of epistemic modality is *subjectivity*. Given that this process is independently attested, this scenario is plausible, but the data given by Traugott are inconclusive and another scenario is possible.

## 5.2 Evidentiality from epistemic modality

One reason to doubt the scenario outlined in section 5.1 above is that evidentiality has a narrow use. Evidentials are used when there is a question of evidential basis, which is a relatively rare occurrence (one such place is the matter of *confirmation*, discussed in section 6 below). From a pragmatic point of view, the epistemic *I doubt that* is much more likely to be relevant in conversation than *I have evidence that*. Also, the order evidentiality before epistemic modality would seem to imply that there are languages in which there are evidentials but no epistemic modals. To my knowledge, there are no such languages whereas there are languages in which there are epistemic modals but no evidentials (English would qualify as such a language). We need therefore to explore the reverse development: evidentials from epistemic modals.

In De Haan (1999b) I argued that the evidential use of Dutch *moeten* arose through pragmatic strengthening of the evidence used to make the statement and a bleaching out of the epistemic part of the meaning of *moeten*. Thus:<sup>9</sup>

- |      |                          |                        |   |
|------|--------------------------|------------------------|---|
| (14) | epistemic <i>moeten</i>  | probability for action | (which can be based on evidence)  |
|      | evidential <i>moeten</i> | evidence for action    | (without any indication regarding the truth or falsehood of the action) |

The syntactic history of the modal verbs also points in this direction. The development from main verbs to (in the case of evidential verbs) a position in which basically the entire sentence is in the scope of the modal verb is essentially a process of deverbalization of this group of verbs.

As I have argued elsewhere (see De Haan 1997, 1999b), *moeten* as an evidential verb cannot be in the scope of negation because the entire sentence has to be in the scope of the evidential. While there exists an epistemic modal verb which denotes that the negation has scope over the modality (i.e., the interpretation *it is not necessary that*), namely *hoeven* ‘need,’ this verb is not

<sup>8</sup> Traugott also states that the quotative interpretation of the German modal verb *sollen* do not fully develop until after 1700. If this is true, this is further evidence for the position that evidentials arise from epistemic modals and not the other way around. Gloning (2001), however, claims that the quotative use of *sollen* is already present in examples from the 13th century.

<sup>9</sup> The phrasing is reworded slightly from De Haan (1999:79).

evidential, since this would mean that negation has scope over the evidential, something which, as we have seen, is an impossibility.

The deverbalization of an epistemic verb into an evidential particle has reached the final stage in Afrikaans, a language with very little verbal morphology anyway. The particle *glo*, from a verb meaning ‘to believe’ (cf. German *glauben* and Dutch *gelooven*), is now used as an evidential particle, as in:

- (15) Sy boeke was *glo* baie populêr vroeër  
 ‘His books are said to have been very popular before.’

Thus, the diachronic evidence appears to point to the second scenario as the most likely one, on the grounds that it is more consistent with known patterns of deverbalization, although it needs to be tested in diachronic corpus-linguistic studies.

## 6 Confirmed and unconfirmed information

In languages such as Dutch and German, more than one form exists to denote that the action was not witnessed personally. In German, the forms used are the modal verb *sollen* and the subjunctive (see examples in (16)) while in Dutch the corresponding forms are the modal verb *moeten* and the past tense of the verb *zullen*, *zou(den)*. Examples are given in (17).

- (16) a. Er soll krank sein.  
 b. Er sei krank.  
 “He is said to be ill.”
- (17) a. Het moet een goede film zijn.  
 b. Het zou een goede film zijn.  
 “It is said to be a good film.”

We can then ask why there are essentially two ways to convey the same thing, indirect evidence. Are these two possibilities functionally equivalent or are there differences in usage? I would suggest here that there are indeed differences and I will argue that the difference between the two is that the forms in *sollen* and *moeten* are used evidentially and the other forms are used when the action reported is *unconfirmed*. The basis for this hypothesis is Friedman’s work on evidentiality in the Balkan area.

In a series of papers, (Friedman 1979, 1986, 1999) Friedman has argued that much of what is commonly called evidential is not actually evidential in the sense that the statement is based on some kind of evidence, but rather on whether the speaker has personally confirmed the action or not. Based on in-depth studies of the Balkan Slavic (especially Bulgarian and Macedonian), Friedman has come to the conclusion that indirect evidentiality in Bulgarian and Macedonian is a pragmatic inference of the primary notion from non-

confirmation. If an event is non-confirmed, but we feel secure enough to report it, it can be assumed that we have some sort of (indirect) evidence for it.

In languages such as Bulgarian, the confirmed vs. unconfirmed distinction is in everyday use, according to Friedman. I will argue that the same distinction can be used in Germanic as well, but on a much narrower scale. It is only attested in certain registers of language. I will limit myself to Dutch in this discussion.

It would appear that the distinction between confirmed and non-confirmed events in Dutch is limited to registers where the distinction is crucial. Such a register is newspaper language (and language in the media in general). It turns out that in this register the evidential verb *moeten* is not used at all, but that the past tense of *zullen* is used exclusively. The following example is typical evidential usage of the media register. It comes from the NOS Teletekst service (Tuesday, Jan 16, 2001):

(18) “Kabila gedood bij coupoging”

KINSHASA De Congolese president Laurent Kabila *zou* dinsdag tijdens een poging tot staatsgreep zijn gedood. Dat meldt het persbureau Reuters *op gezag van de veiligheidsdienst van Oeganda. Volgens de Belgische ambassade* is er geschoten bij de residentie van Kabila. De radio en televisie werken niet, en de telefoon is afgesloten. Een officier van het Congolese leger had eerder bevolen de luchthaven en de haven aan de Congo-rivier af te sluiten. Oeganda en Rwanda steunden de rebellen die sinds augustus 1998 proberen Kabila af te zetten. De president kreeg de steun van Angola, Namibië en Zimbabwe.

“Kabila reportedly killed in coup attempt

KINSHASA The President of the Congo Laurent Kabila was reportedly killed Tuesday during a coup attempt. This is reported by Reuters on the authority of Ugandan Security. According to the Belgian embassy shots were fired near Kabila’s residence. Radio and television are off the air and telephones are disconnected. Earlier, a Congo Army officer had ordered the closure of the airport and port on the River Congo. Uganda and Rwanda supported the rebels who are trying since August of 1998 to depose Kabila. The President received the support of Angola, Namibia and Zimbabwe.”

The first part of the text is unconfirmed information, which is signalled by several means. The main focus of the text is unconfirmed (but newsworthy) and this is clearly stated in the first sentence with the use of *zou*. Further on, some parts are confirmed (and are left unmarked for confirmation) and those sentences that convey unconfirmed information give the source of information.

This is marked overtly with phrases such as *op gezag van* ‘on the authority of’ or *volgens* ‘according to.’<sup>10</sup>

Another way of marking unconfirmed actions is the use of quotation marks in the title. This is also used to denote unconfirmed information. Note that the title is not a direct quotation, since it is not attributable to any specific person. It is rather a convenient way of marking a general rumor. This use shows that headlines are a special register within newspaper language in general, given that quotation marks outside of titles are used for direct quotes.

Newspaper headlines are about the only place where grammaticalized evidentials can be found in English, as is shown in the following headlines from the on-line edition of the New York Times:

- (19) a. Sierra Leone Mine *Said* Collapses. (March 7, 2000)  
 b. Plane *Said* Crashed Just Flying Low. (January 7, 2001)

The particle *said* has been stripped of its verbal properties, as demonstrated by the fact that the present tense is used in (19a) and the past in (19b). Its usage corresponds to the use of the form *zou* in the Dutch example (18); it is a nonconfirmational particle.

At present, it is unclear just how widespread the use of the nonconfirmational particles is outside of the newspaper register. I have tested examples (19) with some speakers of Standard American English and it was universally judged ungrammatical in everyday use. More studies on the use of confirmed and unconfirmed reports (preferably crosslinguistic ones) are needed.

As far as the evidential verb *moeten* is concerned, it is unclear at present how widespread it is. It is not used to denote that an action is unconfirmed and it would seem that *moeten* is purely evidential, i.e., its function as an evidential verb is to show that the speaker has only indirect evidence for his or her statement. What is needed is a corpus-linguistic study of the verb *moeten* with special reference to its evidential use.

<sup>10</sup> The corresponding English version (from the New York Times, January 16, 2001) runs as follows:

Congo President Reportedly Shot

KINSHASA, Congo (AP) -- Congolese President Laurent Kabila was shot during an attempted coup d'etat on Tuesday, a senior military official in neighboring Republic of Congo said. It remained unclear whether Kabila had been killed during an intense 30-minute gunbattle at his palatial residence in the capital. Intelligence officials in Rwanda, which supports rebels battling Kabila's government, said they had unconfirmed reports that Kabila was dead.

Apart from the use of the adverb *reportedly*, the unconfirmed parts of the text are clearly marked lexically, with such phrases as *it remained unclear* and a direct attribution of the statements. Note that the situation is not treated as doubtful; there are no modals present in the text.

## 7 Conclusions

In this paper, I have looked at the link between modality and evidentiality. While definitive answers are hard to give (as has been shown by countless, sometimes contradictory studies in this area), it appears to be the case that the link between these highly abstract areas of grammar is much weaker than would appear if one just looks at data from Germanic. Given the difficulty in defining of what constitutes an evidential and what is a modal verb (and we are not yet even close to a definitive answer here either), we must be very careful not to leap to any conclusions before more data is in. Many studies have been based on just a handful of carefully selected languages and not much attention has been given to the wider picture.

We know that evidentiality relates to a number of other areas. Epistemic modality is one of them, but it may not be the most important one. Other areas that are just as important include (spatial) deixis, and tense/aspect systems, not to mention the areas of *perception* (see De Haan forthcoming a) and *mirativity*, the marking of unexpected information (see De Lancey 1997). Mirativity is often expressed with the same morphemes as evidentiality. Fortunately, more and more scholars are starting to pay attention to such matters, as evidenced by the recent flood of articles and books dealing with evidentiality, the two most recent ones being Guentschéva 1996 and Johanson & (Utas 2000). With the help of studies such as the ones contained in these books and in the present volume, the time that evidentiality was considered to be a category that only occurs in a couple of “exotic” languages is surely behind us.

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