Evidentiality in Cuzco Quechua
Some Implications for Theories of Meaning

Abstract

Evidentiality, narrowly conceived of as the grammatical marking of the speaker's source of information, is a phenomenon seldomly addressed within formal theories of meaning. The few existing formal proposals analyze evidentials along the same lines as epistemic modals within possible world semantics. Examples for this kind of approach are Kratzer's (1987) and Ehrich's (2001) treatments of the reportative meaning of the German modal *sollen*, Izvorski's (1997) analysis of the so-called perfect of evidentiality in Bulgarian, Turkish and other languages, and Garrett's (2000) analysis of Tibetan indirect evidentials. Notably, all these studies deal with evidentiality marked by verbal TAM elements.

In Cuzco Quechua, the main evidential distinctions are made within the system of focus enclitics, which do not mark TAM. The three evidential enclitics are: Direct *-mi*, Conjectural *-chá*, and Reportative *-si*. Their basic evidential values (EV) are illustrated in (1).

(1) a. Para-sha-n-**mi**.
     rain-PROG-3-**mi**

   p='It is raining.'
   EV: speaker sees that it raining

   b. Para-sha-n-**si**.
     rain-PROG-3-**si**

   p='It is raining.'
   EV: speaker was told that it is raining

   c. Para-sha-n-**chá**.
     rain-PROG-3-**chá**

   p='It is possibly raining.'
   EV: speaker conjectures that it might be raining [1]

In this talk, I argue that the evidentials Direct *-mi* and Reportative *-si* should not be analyzed in parallel to epistemic modals, because they have different properties. In particular, they cannot be analyzed in terms of necessity and possibility. Instead, I propose an analysis of these two enclitics as speech act modifiers. This analysis also accounts for the ambiguous interpretation of content questions that contain them, illustrated for the Reportative *-si* in (2).

(2) Pi-ta-**s**   Inés-qa   watuku-**sqa**?
   who-ACC-**si** Inés-TOP visit-**sqa**

   'Who did Inés visit?'
   EV: (i) speaker indicates that somebody else is asking
   (ii) speaker expects hearer to have reportative evidence for his or her answer

As shown in (1c), sentences containing the Conjectural *-chá* are interpreted as expressing epistemic possibility. This invites an analysis of *-chá* as an epistemic modal. Such an analysis is, however, not the only viable one, and I will discuss an alternative analysis of *-chá* as a speech act modifier in parallel to the analyses proposed for the Direct *-mi* and Reportative *-si*.

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[1] Abbreviations used in examples: 3: 3rd person, ACC: accusative, PROG: progressive, PST2: indirect past tense, TOP: topic

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