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LINGUISTIC WAYS OF RENDERING EVIDENTIALITY IN THE TEXTS OF THE BRITISH NEWSPAPERS

Abstract
Evidentiality is the linguistic encoding of information source. In English it is not a grammatical category. Evidentiality can be expressed in numerous ways. To explore them on the basis of the articles of the British newspapers, both broadsheets and tabloids, is the aim of this research. Media texts are frequently being used as corpora in linguistic studies. In my research I use a text-driven approach, the method based on the manual analysis of small-scale text corpora. Two aspects are of great interest: the linguistic ways of how Evidentiality manifests itself and comparison of these devices in broadsheet and tabloid newspapers.

Key words: Evidentiality, Markers of Evidentiality, Media, Broadsheets, Tabloids.

This research is the part of my master paper on the topic *Linguistic Ways of Rendering Evidentiality (E) in the Texts of the British Newspapers.* E itself is a linguistic category related to the source of information. Some examples to demonstrate the subject of my study (underlined – the source of information, whether it is known or not, the verb which shows how the information was conveyed – in bold, italicized – information itself):

E.g. A person familiar with the case **says** *he will accept a plea deal*. (The Mirror)

It is thought that *whatever the dress design, it will be a joint venture.* (The Times)

Lorre allegedly *wanted to quit the sitcom so he could work on his other shows …* (The Guardian)

She **said**:*"I had a huge row with photographers the other day telling them to go away."* (The Sun)

She **reacted with just one tweet, writing**: [sic] *Had an awful week thanks for all* [sic] *ur support x*. (The People)

My aim is to explore the linguistic ways of rendering E in the texts of the British English newspapers. In my work I study the texts of the print media available online, in particular reported in both broadsheets and tabloids. According to the Concise Oxford English Dictionary *broadsheet* is 'a newspaper with a large format, regarded as more serious than tabloids', while *tabloid* is 'a newspaper having pages half the size of those of a broadsheet, typically popular in style and dominated by sensational stories ' (COED 2006).

The aim of this study is to take an overview of the use of E in newspaper language, and to investigate differences that may occur in the expression of E in broadsheets and tabloids.

The corpus on which my analysis is based consists of texts taken from ten British national newspapers: five broadsheets (The Times, The Sunday Times, The Guardian, The Observer, The

Telegraph) and five tabloids (The Sun, The Daily Mirror, The Daily Mail, The People, The Daily Star).

In the present research I use a text-driven approach. This methodology is based on the manual analysis of small-scale text corpora. This means the corpus 'hunting' for expressions relating to E. (Bednarek 2006 a). Aikhenvald treats E as a linguistic category whose primary meaning is source of information (Aikhenvald 2004). Therefore newspaper texts are a particularly good source for researching E, because a news story is a genre that preoccupied with information/knowledge. Knowledge itself is a concept that is notoriously difficult to define. Following Bednarek (2006 a) I will use *knowledge* in a pre-theoretical sense referring to (true or false) information of which the authors/ writers are aware, and to which they refer in their propositions.

News stories as base for linguistic research

As a scholar who studied media texts Bednarek (2006 b) points out that they are frequently being used as corpora in linguistic analysis. But although we can find a wealth of research on media in general, much of it is either non-linguistic or of a limited scope (focusing on a few aspects of media language, offering case studies, etc). Neither is there much linguistic research on tabloid newspapers.

News is one of the most widely studied media forms. As Bell notes (2006) the language of the news media has always been of great interest for linguists and discourse analysts. The reasons for this attraction include accessibility of language data from the media, the significance of the media as language-producing institutions, linguistic interest in the ways media use language, and the importance of media institutions and their discourses in shaping culture, politics, and social life.

In general media (in our case – newspapers) is a technical mediator/ medium between the one who compiles/ translates information and its recipient (Veinberga 2005). In many cultural environments writing was considered as the central mode for the transfer of canonical knowledge and authoritative discourse. For instance, over 40 percent of the papers published in the journal *Discourse Society* are based on media texts (Garret and Bell 1998). Media texts provide discursive and linguistic resources that can be seen as authoritative voice.

The news story is popularly considered to be a means of transferring 'knowledge' about current situations and events to the reader – knowledge which may be intact, as recounted or witnessed, or may be manipulated by the writer. Reporting is the potential to influence the readers' beliefs and knowledge of the world (Clark 2010).

Topic constant

I have chosen to keep the topic constant in all of the ten newspapers. I will concentrate my attention on celebrity news. As I see, the same topic seems to be most significant for research. I examine the texts providing information about celebrities. I consider *celebrity* as 'a famous person' (COED 2006). No doubt that we live in the time of increased interest in the lives of public people. Evolutionary biologists say it is natural for humans to look up to individuals who receive attention because they have succeeded in a society (BBC news). 'All the royals, aristocrats, film stars and other personalities of the day make their appearance in newspapers. <…> [Celebrity news] provide a guide to the comings and goings in a world of glamour which holds the public spellbound' (Allen 1983). Newspapers as one of the most significant sources of information satisfy this demand and provide a wide field of action for researcher who decided to examine this type of texts.

My aim is to watch how the authors convey this sort of information, which linguistic means they use to share their knowledge with the reader, whether it is first-hand or non-firsthand information. It is interesting to observe how the E manifests itself both in broadsheets and tabloids and explore differences and similarities between the ways the authors bring news to their readers.

Definitions of the Evidentiality

E is a linguistic category whose primary meaning is source of information (Aikhenvald 2004) – whether the narrator actually saw what is being described, or made inferences based on some evidence, or was told about it, etc. Languages vary in how many information sources have to be marked. Many just mark information reported by someone else; others distinguish firsthand and non-firsthand information sources. In rarer instances, visually obtained data are contrasted with the data obtained through hearing and smelling, and through various kinds of inference (Aikhenvald 2006).

As Boas (1938, cited by Bednarek 2006 a) put it, "while for us definiteness, number, and time are obligatory aspects, we find in another language location near the speaker or somewhere else, source of information – whether seen, heard, or inferred – as obligatory aspects. " The terms '*verificational*' and '*validational*' are sometimes used in place of '*evidential*'. French linguist Guentchéva (1996, cited by Bednarek 2006 a) employs the term '*mediative*'. A summary of work on recognizing this category, and naming it is in Jacobsen (1986) and Aikhenvald (2004). 'Evidentials express the kinds of evidence a person has for making factual claims' (Anderson 1986) by encoding information about how the knowledge was acquired and the relationship between the writer and the knowledge (Mushin 2001), which affects, therefore, the relationship between the reader and the knowledge, as mediated by the writer.

History of the question

Initially, the concept of E was originated with the early Americanists (Boas, Sapir, Hoijer), but the term *evidential* was probably introduced by Roman Jakobson (1971 [1957]) as a provisional label for a verbal category that indicates the source of the information on which a speaker's/ writer's statement is based (Jacobsen 1986). However, as Comrie (2000) points out, it was only in the mid to late 1980s that a swell in interest in E occurred (e.g., Chafe and Nichols1986; Willet 1988), and appears still going on (recent research includes Johanson and Utas 2000; Mushin 2001; Aikhenvald 2004).

Though the concept of E is relatively modern, in linguistics much research is to be undertaken regarding this phenomenon. But, compared to the amount of research it has attracted concerning other, usually more 'exotic', languages (Bednarek 2006 a) such as Fasu, Koasati, Wintu, and many others, it has been somewhat neglected in the research focusing on English. This results in quasi-total exclusion of the English language from such (mostly typological) research (Haan 2001; Aikhenvald 2004). It may be happens because of some confusion about the term the notion it bears. One of the initiators of the concept of E, A.Y. Aikhenvald, disapproves of using the term 'evidentiality' in connection with the English language at all. She treats E as grammatical category.

While in the languages which Bednarek calls 'exotic' E can be expressed grammatically by the use of affixes, clitics or particles there is another state of art in the English language. On the contrary the expression of E in English is considered to be optional (Clark 2010) and can be expressed in numerous ways, as Chafe notes:

> English has a rich repertoire of evidential devices. It expresses E with modal auxiliaries, adverbs and miscellaneous idiomatic phrases (Chafe 1986).

Concerning the English language Aikhenvald uses the term 'evidentiality strategies' (Aikhenvald 2003). She recognizes that English has some lexical way of referring to information source, e.g., *reportedly* or *allegedly*. Also, in English, different complement clauses distinguish an auditory and a hearsay meaning of the verb *hear*: saying *I heard Brazil beat France* implies actual hearing while *I heard that Brazil beat France* implies a verbal report of the result. These evidential-like extensions are what she calls 'evidentiality strategies'. Bednarek prefers using the term *epistemological positioning* (rather than E), she notes that 'concerning E (in its broader definition) there is much more overlap with the concept of epistemological positioning' (Bednarek 2006 a). In my work I will adhere strictly to the term 'Evidentiality'.

We should say more about typology of E. Here are repeated semantic dimensions of E across languages proposed by Aikhenvald (2004):

I VISUAL: covers information acquired through seeing.

II NON-VISUAL. Sensory: covers information acquired through hearing, and is typically extended to smell and taste, and sometimes also to touch.

III INFERENCE: based on visible and tangible evidence, or result.

IV ASSUMPTION: based on evidence other than visible results: this may include logical reasoning, assumption, or simply general knowledge.

V HEARSAY: for reported information with no reference to those it was reported by.

VI QUOTATIVE: for reported information with an overt reference to the quoted source.

These semantic dimensions of E can be applied to languages that manifest E both as grammatical and non-grammatical category (Bednarek 2010 a). This classification (sometimes with some variations) is used by many authors and is applied to the English language, though in English E manifests itself as lexical and non-grammatical category. In my research I am going to explore lexical categories.

E and markers of E, evidentials, are nowadays defined in diverse ways, but broadly speaking, two main approaches can be distinguished: narrow and broad.

In a narrow definition (close to Jacobson's), 'evidentials express the kinds of evidence a person has for making factual claims' (Anderson 1986). Included are linguistic forms that mark the speaker's source of knowledge: as something seen, inferred, heard or told (see e.g. Du Bois 1986). Often, such research regards only grammaticalized expressions (e.g. Aikhenvald 2004), in particular evidential morphemes. As Muchin (2000) notes, '[t]he linguistic study of E has been primarily concerned with the status of evidential forms and evidential meanings in morphological systems.'

The broad definition of E has been developed for English by Chafe (1986). In this approach, E, or *epistemological stance*, as Mushin (2001) calls it, involves various 'attitudes towards knowledge' (Chafe 1986). Evidence in this approach is only one of the epistemological considerations that are linguistically encoded. The term *evidential* here is much more than marking of evidence. E in this sense includes marking the reliability of the speaker's knowledge, marking the source of knowledge (as evidence, language or hypothesis), the mode of knowing (as belief, introduction, hearsay or deduction) and marking the matching of knowledge against the verbal resources that are employed by speakers against discourse expectations (Bednarek 2006 b). Therefore E is concerned with matters of truth, certainty, doubt, reliability, authority, confidence, validity, circumstantial inference, evidence, confirmation, surprise and expectedness (Chafe and Nichols 1986). Compare with Aikhenvald's assertion that '[e]videntiality is a verbal grammatical category in its own right, and it does not bear any straightforward relationship to truth, the validity of a statement, or the speaker's responsibility' (Aikhenvald 2004).

In my work I will adhere the typology suggested by Aikhenvald.

Examples

Broadsheets:

*"After all, "*e **added, after insisting on anonymity,** *"it's not like she did anything she should be proud of."* (The Observer)
She **reportedly** summoned him to a meeting in Buckingham Palace. (The Sunday Times)
We **know** that *to every question there is a right answer*. (The Times)
He **said**: *"When you make music you're very happy that anybody listens, whoever they may be, but somebody with such an extreme lifestyle as.…"* (The Telegraph)
On Thursday, he **Tweeted:** "*Torpedo away... You corporate Trolls were warned. And now you've been served!"* (The Guardian)

Tabloids:

It is expected that *the child will be born in Los Angeles*. (The Mirror)
She also **spoke out** about *her troubles during her final days of pregnancy*. (The Daily Mail)
She **tells** the BBC, *"It's incredible that I've been able to make it 10 years and here we are celebrating it."* (The Daily Star)
…there **were the rumours** *he was being taken into psychiatric care.* (The Daily Mirror)
Adele **said**: *"I **saw** William playing footie in the park.…"* (The Sun)

Three things can be examined there:

- Who is the source of knowledge/ information (the writer, the third party, or whether it is unknown)?
- What are the means of transmitting of this knowledge (verbs, verbal phrases)? What types of verb (mental-state verbs; *v*erbs of perception, denoting sight, sound, touch, smell, and taste, etc) are used by writers?
- Differences and similarities of how E manifests itself in different types of newspapers.

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