

Evidentiality in Meadow Mari

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Like other Uralic languages and similar to Turkic, Meadow Mari encodes evidentiality in its tense system. The Past 1 form is associated with direct evidentiality (speaker witness), while the Past 2, historically derived from a gerund, is associated with indirect evidentiality (hearsay and inference). In a recent paper, Brugman and Macaulay (2015) argue that only two core properties are expressed in evidential systems: the nature of the evidence, and a grammatical locus. According to this view, other properties normally linked with evidentiality, for example the speaker's evaluation of the reliability and/or truth of a proposition, and mirative and epistemic meaning, are subject to cross-linguistic variation. In this paper we aim to characterise evidentiality in Meadow Mari by first demonstrating that the system satisfies Brugman and Macaulay's core criteria for an evidential system, and then by situating Meadow Mari within a cross-linguistic typology of evidentials. Using a questionnaire-based methodology developed by Kittilä et al (2014), we will explore evidentiality in Meadow Mari as it interacts with tense/aspect and mood/modality. In particular, we will discuss:

- (a) the nature of the sensory perception which licenses the use of direct evidential Past 1 forms, both visual and auditory;
- (b) the dual locus of evidentiality in both tense and complementiser systems, and some related scope effects;
- (c) the interaction between negation and evidentiality;
- (d) the relationship between evidentiality and other aspects of the tense system, for example temporal proximity.

Izvorski (1997) posits a relationship between evidentiality and present perfect tense, and Lau & Rooryck (2017) link evidentiality and present perfect tense with mirativity. We will discuss some unexpected findings in Meadow Mari across the tense-aspect system to suggest that the distribution of evidentiality and mirative semantics is wider than predicted in the literature.

References

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