Introduction

Speakers infuse their discourse with their personal opinion. As people speak, they convey information and simultaneously impart their perspective, opinions, and beliefs. Some utterances convey more speaker perspective than others, and warrant special consideration. When using an evidential the speaker makes an utterance and simultaneously asserts that there is evidence for what he is saying (de Haan 1999).

In some instances an evidential asserts that the speaker has evidence to support making the proposition, but does not necessarily commit to the truth of that proposition. These may be bound morphemes or periphrastics

Types:

Inferential Evidentials
Reported Speech Evidential

Inferential Evidentials

Based on the evidence, a deduction or conclusion is reached. The evidence may be perceived via olfactory, visual, tactile, auditory senses, or a combination.

*English:* It looks like it’s going to rain today.

Uttered while looking at the clouds.

“It must be raining.”

Uttered when someone walks in with a wet jacket on or you hear rain hitting the roof.

**SEEM as an Inferential Evidential**

*Library Have Deaf Life Magazine* topic *SEEM* head nod brow furrow

It seems the library has Deaf Life magazine.

*(Tim, Jennifer Divorce)* topic *SEEM* head nod brow furrow

It seems that Tim and Jennifer are getting a divorce.

Reported Speech Evidentials

*Spanish dizque:* he’s says that also encodes speaker doubt regarding the source and/or truth of the information expressed (Travis 2006).

*English:* I heard the lines at Highland High School were around the block.

Uttered when discussing high voter turnout. The speaker has not seen the lines, but uses “heard” as evidence for his claim of high voter turnout.

**ASL Reported Speech Evidentials**

The coding often results in a complex temporal blend (Dudis 2004). Signer pauses mid-stream in the discourse. Assumes vantage point of self as participant in another discourse setting. Relates relevant part of the discourse. Constructed discourse expresses signer’s reaction. Signer resumes discourse using that blended frame, including the constructed discourse as evidence for a claim.

*Someone told me something interesting. I thought it was a good idea. If I’m in North Carolina and call the video relay service I won’t get the one in Charlotte. I’ll get one in another state. There’s less conflict of interest that way, because we don’t know each other. So there’s less conflict of interest.*

Summary

Inferential evidentials include words such as SEEM and OBVIOUS and appear to also express speaker commitment. Reported Speech evidentials in ASL use past space blends and body partitioning to indicate source and sometimes to comment on the veracity of claims.

References


