Aspect and tense in evidentials

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11.1 A tense-independent approach to evidentials

Traditionally, evidential categories are said to express information regarding the source of evidence for a proposition (e.g. Boas 1947; Jakobson 1957; Willet 1988; Chafe and Nichols 1986; Aikhenvald and Dixon 2003). Classifications of evidentials establish distinctions between, for instance, direct, reported, and inferred sources of evidence, speaker (un)certainty (“illocutionary” evidentials in Quechua (Faller 2002, 2011), Cheyenne (Murray 2010), and Japanese (McCready and Ogata 2007), and “modal” evidentials that indicate epistemic uncertainty, as in St’át’imcets (Matthewson et al. 2007)). From a morphosyntactic perspective, evidentials can be encoded by a wide array of categories, including particles, aspectual and temporal morphology, modals, verbs, and adverbs.

The goal of this chapter is to investigate the interaction between evidential categories and temporal anchoring. With this aim in mind, we compare Bulgarian, Mëbengokre, and Matses, whose evidential systems seem to differ in the complexity of temporal dimensions. Bulgarian is a South Slavic language with a system of evidentiality morphologically infused by tense and aspect. Mëbengokre is a Jê language in central Brazil whose evidential markers do not interact with temporal and aspectual categories. Matses, a Panoan language in the Amazon region in Brazil and Peru, has an evidential system with a high degree of temporal complexity described by Fleck (2003, 2007). We argue for an analysis of the interaction between temporal and evidential markers on the basis of Bulgarian, where the matter has long been studied. We extend our proposal to Mëbengokre and Matses, which we discuss more briefly given the sparseness of the literature, and conclude that it provides a successful account for very varied evidential systems.

Temporal matters have attracted previous attention in the literature on evidentials (Nikolaeva 1999; Aikhenvald 2004; Fleck 2003, 2007; Speas 2010), but interest on
the topic has experienced considerable growth in formal semantics in recent years. Some analyses mainly in the context of Korean and Bulgarian argue that evidential constructions are in need of a particular temporal relation—an additional “evidential tense”—which takes the time of the acquisition of the evidence as evaluation time, and situates the described event in relation to the time the information was acquired (Lee 2011, 2013; Lim 2010; Koev 2011; Smirnova 2011, 2013).

In investigating the interaction of temporal, aspectual, and evidential categories in Bulgarian, Mëbungokre, and Matses, we address questions such as the following: (a) To what extent do temporal categories affect the interpretation of evidentials? Can the temporal perspective of evidentials be displaced from the speech time? (b) To what extent do evidentials affect the interpretation of temporal categories? Does the interpretation of aspect and tense change in the scope of evidentials? Our conclusion is that temporal categories retain their usual interpretation in evidential contexts both in languages with evidential systems that seem independent from tense such as Mëbungokre, and in systems where evidential markers are fused with temporal categories such as Bulgarian and Matses. There is no need to postulate an independent “evidential” system of temporal reference in these languages. Standard interpretations of temporal categories suffice to account for temporal dimensions in evidential constructions in a uniform manner in languages that, as we will see, have very different evidential and temporal systems.

Bulgarian, on the one hand, has rich tense and aspectual systems, and it is our view that aspectual morphology is crucial in signaling evidentiality. Matses also appears to encode complex relations by combining temporal and evidential markers. Bulgarian now counts amongst languages where it is claimed that tense displaces the interpretation of evidentials (Koev 2011; Smirnova 2011, 2014), and parallel claims exist about Matses (Fleck 2003, 2007). Mëbungokre, on the other hand, has a relatively impoverished tense system. There is no formal literature on evidentials in this language, and no claims relating evidentials and tense. Our studies of the evidential systems of these languages support the following preliminary conclusions. Bulgarian, Matses, and Mëbungokre are parallel insofar as temporal operators do not manipulate the time at which the evidence is acquired in evidentials. Both tense and aspect maintain parallel interpretations in evidential and non-evidential (indicative) contexts. Temporal operators in the scope of evidentials receive their usual speech-time anchored interpretation. These conclusions suggest that there is no need to postulate an independent “evidential tense” in Mëbungokre, whose evidential particles are independent from tense or aspect markers, in Bulgarian, whose evidential verbal paradigm is infused by tense and aspect, or in Matses, whose evidential system seems based on complex interactions with temporal markers.

In our discussion, we simplify the interpretation of evidentials, and assume that evidential marking corresponds to an operator (EV) characterized as an
epistemic/evidential modal\(^1\) within a situations framework in the sense of Kratzer (1989, 2011b), with the semantics in (1):

\[
\text{\text{[EV]\(c\)} = \lambda p_{<s,t>}.\forall s': s' is compatible with the knowledge/evidence available in } s^*, \exists s: s < s' \& p(s) = 1 \quad \text{(where } s^* \text{ is the utterance situation corresponding to } c). 
\]

According to (1), EV is a universal modal quantifier over situations compatible with the particular body of knowledge/evidence available in the utterance context; i.e. its domain of quantification will only include situations in which everything that is known is true.\(^2\) In combination with a proposition \(p\), the modal will deliver truth iff all situations compatible with what is known in the utterance context include a situation in which \(p\) is true.

The structure of the chapter is as follows. In section 11.2 we discuss Bulgarian, arguing that its evidential system is rooted in aspect. Section 11.3 examines Mēbengokre. Section 11.4 examines Matses, arguing that its evidential system also exploits aspect, which dispenses with the need for an extra temporal relation particular to evidentials. Section 11.5 concludes.

### 11.2 Bulgarian

The evidential system of Bulgarian, which Scatton (1983) labels the Renarrated Mood (RM), is infused with tense and aspect. Based on Arregui et al. (2014), in sections 11.2.1 and 11.2.3 we develop an analysis that assigns a major role to Viewpoint Aspect in capturing what appear to purely be its temporal relations, and also addresses its ‘modal’ relations. In section 11.2.4, we briefly compare our proposal to an alternative by Smirnova (2013), who argues in favor of additional temporal relations particular to evidentials defined in relation to the Evidence Acquisition Time (EAT). We show that our viewpoint hypothesis offers advantages over the EAT hypothesis, since it successfully captures the temporal relations adduced in support of EAT and also temporal and “modal” relations that fall outside of the scope of, and constitute problems for, EAT. We conclude that a successful account of the Bulgarian RM must crucially rely on aspect and not on temporal relations specific to evidentials.

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\(^1\) The characterization of evidentials has been the subject of much debate. For e.g. Matthewson et al. (2007), McCready and Ogata (2007), von Fintel and Gillies (2010), and Lee (2007), they are modal. Arguments against this view are presented in e.g. Faller (2002, 2011) and Murray (2010).

\(^2\) Following Izvorski (1997), this is the body of knowledge corresponding to what the speaker has evidence for, but we leave this aside. As noted, we make some simplifying assumptions (Gillies and von Fintel 2007; von Fintel and Gillies 2010, for discussion), and assume that EV is anchored to the utterance situation.
1.1.2.1 Introducing the Renarrated Mood

Bulgarian has a RM evidential verb paradigm illustrated in (2a–c), which, for simplicity, we translate into English with ‘apparently’.

(2) a. Ivan svirel na piano.
   Ivan play.RM on piano
   ‘Apparently, Ivan plays/played the piano.’

b. Ivan izjal tsjalata banitsa.
   Ivan eat.RM whole.the cheese pie
   ‘Ivan apparently ate the whole cheese pie.’

c. Ivan bil izjal tsjalata banitsa.
   Ivan be.RM eat.Pple whole.the cheese pie
   ‘Ivan has/had apparently eaten the whole cheese pie.’

The RM has been a topic of considerable attention in the Bulgarian tradition (e.g. Andrejeva 1944; Maslov 1959; Pašov 1989, 2005), was brought to the attention of the linguistic public by Roman Jakobson (1957), and has attracted recent interest in formal semantics (Izvorski 1997; Sauerland and Schenner 2007, 2013; Koev 2011; Smirnova 2011, 2013).

The RM is used in reports where the speaker has not witnessed the described events (e.g. Maslov 1959), and can also express inferential meanings (e.g. Izvorski 1997; Smirnova 2011, 2013; Koev 2011). By contrast, the Indicative Mood is usually understood as based on direct evidence justifying belief, and serves for generally accepted truths.

The RM exhibits a paradigm of tenses (e.g. Scatton 1983; Pašov 1989, 2005; Rivero 2005) partially illustrated in Table 11.1 for 3rd person masculine singular forms, and can allude to present, past, and future.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Indicative Mood</th>
<th>Renarrated Mood</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Present</td>
<td>пише</td>
<td>пише-l</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘(he) writes, is writing’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imperfect</td>
<td>пишеше</td>
<td>писа-l</td>
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<tr>
<td>‘(he) was writing, etc.’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aorist</td>
<td>пиша</td>
<td>писа-l</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘(he) wrote’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present Perfect</td>
<td>еписал / пиел</td>
<td>bi-l писал / пиел</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘(he) has written’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past Perfect</td>
<td>бе писал / пиел</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘(he) had written’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
RM forms are characterized by participles (Pple) with L-morphology. Some RM 1st/2nd person forms overlap in morphology with Indicative Present Perfects. The received view, however, is that the two paradigms contrast in the 3rd person, with RM (2a) lacking the be-auxiliary in Present Perfect (3).  

(3) Ivan е сърела на piano. Indicative Present Perfect
Ivan be.Present play.Ppl on piano
‘Ivan has played the piano.’

A syncretism important for our purposes is that only two RM forms compete with the three simple tenses in the Indicative. That is, the traditional imperfective participle пишет and the perfective participle писал of the RM compete with Indicative Present писа ‘(He/she) writes, is writing,’ Aorist писа, roughly ‘He/she wrote,’ and Imperfect писале with the interpretations in Arregui et al. (2014). In section 11.2.2 we argue that such a syncretism indicates that the (semantic) system behind morphological “tenses” in the RM depends on Viewpoint Aspect (Smith 1991), and is crucially driven by the opposition labeled Imperfective (IMPF) vs. Perfective (PERF).

11.2.2 Viewpoint in the RM
To justify Viewpoint Aspect as a driving force in the RM, we begin with the connection between morphology and semantics in RM participles. As to morphology, we adopt a traditional position. Table 11.1 shows that RM пишет and писал are identical in form to the two participles available to Indicative Present Perfects. Given such an identity, we consider RM пишет a tenseless morphologically imperfective (imp) form and RM писал a morphological perfective (pf) form, parallel to Indicative participles. We characterize RM пишет as semantically imperfective (IMPF), making it aspectually parallel to the (semantically imperfective) Indicative Imperfect писал. RM писал, imperfect писале, and present писа oppose Indicative aorist писа and perfective RM писал, which we characterize as semantically perfective (i.e. PERF).

Following Arregui et al. (2014), we propose that imperfective RM пишет reflects the presence of a modal imperfective operator IMPF, which quantifies universally over situations identified by a “modal base” MB, as in (4):

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3 Both RM morphology and semantics have proven controversial. For Pašov (2005: 190), RM forms and Indicative Present Perfects have evidential meanings, but such meanings differ. RM patterns without 3rd person aux are reportative: (2a–c). Present Perfects with a 3rd aux display an inferential reading among other interpretations: (3). By contrast, for Izvorski (1997) and Smirnova (2011, 2013) the RM has both reportative and inferential readings. For Friedman (1986, and related work), (a) Present Perfects have a “non-confirmative” reading in reportative contexts, (b) 3rd person present auxiliaries are optional, and (c) Bulgarian lacks an independent evidential system. In our view, the RM and the Indicative Mood are morphologically distinct in several tenses including futures. Reportative readings are not under dispute in the RM, and they prove sufficient for our claims, so we omit discussion of inferential readings.
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(4) \[ \text{IMPF}^c = \lambda P_{\mathcal{X}}, \lambda s. s. \mathcal{M}_P(s) = 1, \mathcal{E}: P(e)(s') = 1, \text{defined only if there is a contextually or linguistically determined salient modal base (MB) of type } \alpha. \]

IMPF in (4) quantifies over situations corresponding to a given MB (technically, an accessibility relation), and in combination with a predicate of events P claims that all situations \( s' \) compatible with the relevant MB include a P-event. According to this proposal, flavors in imperfective readings are due to the different MBs available to IMPF. In Bulgarian, those MBs are identical in the RM and Indicative systems, but are hosted by different morphologies. IMPF is hosted by present and imperfect tense inflections in the Indicative, and by imperfective verb stems such as pšel in the RM.

The flexible semantics of IMPF in (4) allows temporal reference to be past, present, or future. Thus, imperfective pšel in (5) may be felicitously disambiguated towards the past (5a), the present, or the future (5b,c), by deictic adverbs.

(5) (Spored dobre osvedomeni iztočnici.)
(According to well informed sources.)

a. \ldots Ivan pšel kni\v{g}a \v{c}era.\ldots Ivan wrote.RM.imp book yesterday
b. \ldots Ivan pšel kni\v{g}a dnes.\ldots Ivan write.RM.imp book today
c. \ldots Ivan pšel kni\v{g}a utre.\ldots Ivan write.RM.imp book tomorrow

An instance with IMPF in the (non-evidential) Indicative is (6), where an adjunct clause disambiguates the matrix verb in the imperfect tense towards the past.

(6) Kogato Petar vleze v stajata, Ivan pše\v{s}e kni\v{g}a.\ldots When Peter entered.Aorist in room.the, Ivan write.Imperfect book

Regarding perfectives, we propose that aorist inflectional morphology on Indicative p\v{s}a and perfective morphology on RM p\v{s}al do not reflect a modal quantifier over situations. Instead, we follow a traditional view according to which aorists/perfectives locate eventualities in the past with respect to Speech Time, with a PERF operator receiving the (simplified) temporal semantics in (7):

(7) \[ \text{PERF}^c = \lambda P_{\mathcal{X}}, \lambda s. s. \text{s precedes } s^* \land p(s) = 1. \]
Given (7), PERF combines with a property of situations to restrict the domain of the function to situations that are past with respect to the speech situation \(s^*\). An instance of PERF in an Indicative is the Aorist in (8).

(8) Ivan pisa včera/ "utre.
   Ivan write.Aorist yesterday/ "tomorrow
   ‘Ivan wrote yesterday/"tomorrow.’

In section 11.2.3 we demonstrate that when IMPF is under the scope of the operator EV, the modal semantics in (4) suffice to derive both temporal and modal interpretations, and that PERF in RM pisal always situates events in the past, indicating that the event is over by Speech Time.

11.2.3 Imperfectives vs. perfectives in the RM
11.2.3.1 Imperfectives  Imperfective RM forms allow for reported events to be situated towards the past, present, or future, and also report on the modal dimensions of events that were interrupted or habitual.

In our proposal, different flavors in imperfectives depend on the identical MBs available to IMPF in the RM and the Indicative, so let us introduce some flavors of IMPF when embedded under EV, with examples borrowed or adapted from Arregui et al. (2014) and Rivero and Slavkov (2014).

A reading familiar in discussions of imperfectives is known as “ongoing”/"processual." In (9a), imperfective RM govorela—a feminine participle that agrees with a feminine subject—reports on an eventuality ongoing in a (salient) past situation. We propose that here IMPF is interpreted in relation to an Ongoing MB (9c).

(9) a. (Spored dobre osvedomeni iztočnitsi,) Maria govorela s
   (According.to well informed sources,) Mary talk.RM.imp to
   prijatela si včera.
   boyfriend.the her yesterday
   ’(According to well informed sources,) Mary was talking to her boyfriend yesterday.’

b. \[EV [ IMPF [Maria govorela s prijatela si včera]]]\n
c. \[\{\{gb\}\}\] = 1 iff
   \(\forall s: \text{s is compatible with the knowledge available in } s^*,\)
   \(\exists s < s^* \& \forall s^*: MB_{Ongoing}(s)(s^*) = 1,\)
   \(\exists e: e \text{ is an event of Maria talking to her boyfriend yesterday in } s^*,\)
   \(\text{where for any two situations } s \text{ and } s^*, MB_{Ongoing}(s)(s^*) = 1 \text{ iff } s^* \prec s.\)

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4 See Arregui et al. (2014) and Cipria and Roberts (2000) for further discussion. In (9c) we appeal to proper parts \(<\), but remain agnostic regarding the advantage of using ‘regular’ parts \(≤\).
According to (9c), (9b) will be true iff in all situations compatible with what is known at the utterance situation there is some situation such that Maria is talking to her boyfriend (yesterday) throughout that situation. Depending on the “size” of s, this MB will result either in an interpretation in which there was an event of Maria speaking to her boyfriend in the past or in a continuous, ’repetitive’, reading.

Deictic adverbs may disambiguate imperfective RM forms towards the past. Adjunct clauses with perfective RM forms such as došla in (10) have a similar effect. Again, perfective RM forms parallel Indicative Aorists (compare (10) to (6)).

(10) Kogato Olga došla v stayata, Mary govorela s
    When Olga enter.RM.pf in room.the Mary speak.RM.imp with
    prijatela si.
    boyfriend.the her.
    ‘Apparently, when Olga entered the room, Mary was talking to her boyfriend.’

Second, the “event-in-progress” reading of imperfectives familiar in non-evidential contexts is brought out in so-called “imperfective paradox” contexts with accomplishment Vs, and speaks of events that began but were interrupted in some past time. Imperfective RM participles may host such modal reading, as in (11), and involve the (simplified) MB in (12b), which appeals to events that continue in the situations quantified over.

(11) Šaxmatistät pečelel igrata, kogato bil udaren po
    Chess.player.the win.RM.imp game.the when be.RM hit.Pple on
    glavata i igrata bila prekāsnata.
    head.the and game.the be.RM interrupted.Pple
    ‘Apparently, the chess player was winning the game, when he was hit on the head
    and the game was interrupted.’

(12) a. [EV [ IMPF Šaxmatistät pečelel igrata]]
    b. \((\exists s < s' \& \forall s' \& \exists e : MB_{\text{Event-inertia}}(s)(s') = 1, \exists e : e \text{ is an event of the chess player winning the game in } s', \forall s \in s' : MB_{\text{Event-inertia}}(s)(s') = 1)\]
    where for any two situations s and s', MB_{\text{Event-inertia}}(s)(s') = 1 iff all the events that have actually started in s continue in s'' as they would if there were no interruptions.

Third, another reading familiar in imperfectives is the generic/habitual type. A RM with such a reading is (13), with a MB based on characteristic situations, as in (14a,b).
(13) (Spored dobre osvedomeni iztočnitsi,) Ivan četjal ot sutrim do večer.

(According to well informed sources,) Ivan read RM.imp from morning to evening.

According to well informed sources, Ivan used to read from morning to evening.

(14) a. [EV [ IMPF [Ivan četjal ot sutrim do večer]]]

b. \[\llbracket (14a) \rrbracket^c = 1 \text{ iff} \]

\( \forall s' : s' \text{ is compatible with the knowledge available in } s^c, \)

\( \exists s : s < s' \text{ and } \forall s' : \text{MB}_{\text{Generic}}(s)(s') = 1, \)

\( \exists e : e \text{ is an event of Ivan reading from morning till evening in } s, \)

where for any two situations \( s \) and \( s' \), \( \text{MB}_{\text{Generic}}(s)(s') = 1 \) iff \( s \) is a characteristic part of \( s'. \)

We now conclude by reconsidering ambiguous (5b). This may report on a past or present event, but may also speak of a plan to write a book later today, as in (15a) (or also tomorrow, as in (5c)). In the last case, IMPF reports on past plans for events to happen today or tomorrow, appealing to "inertia situations" of a preparatory type (a modal dimension). Following Arregui et al. (2014), IMPF in (15a) is interpreted relative to a MB that identifies the domain of quantification in terms of situations in which plans are carried out, with the Logical Form in (15b), and the truth-conditions in (15c):

(15) a. (Spored dobre osvedomeni iztočnitsi,) Ivan pišel kniga dnes.

'(According to well informed sources,) Ivan was/is (supposed to be) writing a book (later) today.'

b. [EV [ IMPF [Ivan pišel kniga dnes]]]

c. \[\llbracket (15b) \rrbracket^c = 1 \text{ iff} \]

\( \forall s' : s' \text{ is compatible with the knowledge available in } s^c, \)

\( \exists s : s < s' \text{ and } \forall s' : \text{MB}_{\text{prep-inertia}}(s)(s') = 1, \)

\( \exists e : e \text{ is an event of Ivan writing a book (later) today in } s, \)

where for any two situations \( s \) and \( s' \), \( \text{MB}_{\text{prep-inertia}}(s)(s') = 1 \) iff all the events that are in preparatory stages in \( s \) continue in \( s' \) as they would if there were no interruptions.

According to (15c), (15b) will be true iff in all situations compatible with what is known in the utterance, there is a situation in which plans have been made for Ivan to write a book later today (no claim is made as to whether he actually did or not). Given the (simplified) definition of the MB in terms of continuations in which plans reach fruition, the situation where plans are made has to temporally precede the situation
of Ivan writing a book (in all the situations quantified over that are compatible with what is known).

In brief, IMPF is encoded in imperfective RM participles such as pišel in (5) and (15), govorela in (9,10), pečelel in (11,12), and četjal in (14). The MBs available to this IMPF operator in Bulgarian cut across the Indicative vs. RM distinction, and include an Ongoing type, an Event-Inertia type, a Generic type, and a Preparatory-Inertia type. Such MBs account for temporal and modal flavors of imperfective participles in RM constructions.

11.2.3.2 Perfectives As to perfective RMs, vzela in (16) is the RM counterpart of imperfective RM vzmala.\(^5\) In the temporal semantics in (7), PERF combines with a property of situations to restrict the domain of the function to situations that are past with respect to the speech situation (s*). Thus, the perfective verb embedded under EV in (16) gives rise to past readings.

(16) Maria (veče) vzela lekarstvoto.
   ‘Apparently, Maria (already) took the medicine.’

The proposal accounts for why PERF cannot combine with future-oriented adverbs in (17a–c).

(17) a. ‘(Spored dobre osvedomeni iztočnitsi,) Ivan pisal kniga utre.
   ‘(According to well-informed sources), Ivan wrote a book tomorrow.’

   b. [EV [ PERF [ Ival pisal kniga utre]]]

   c. \[\{17b\}\] \(c = 1\) iff
   \(\forall s: s\) is compatible with the knowledge available in \(s^*\),
   \(\exists s < s^* & s\) precedes \(s^*\) &
   \(\exists e: e\) is an event of Ivan writing a book tomorrow in \(s\).

According to (17b,c), (17a) will be true iff in all situations compatible with what is known there is a situation that precedes the speech event that includes a situation of Ivan writing a book tomorrow. Given the incompatibility of the temporal specification, (17a) cannot be true and sounds contradictory.

In sum, taking a position that we dub a “Viewpoint hypothesis,” we analyzed a variety of RM constructions, arguing that their temporal anchoring depends on aspect. Imperfective RM participles may lead to past or prospective readings in parallel to Indicative verbs in the Imperfect. By contrast, perfective RM participles are always past, like Indicative verbs in the Aorist. The temporal and the modal

\(^5\) Both perfective vzela and imperfective vzmala are prefixed participles. Thus, the IMPF-PERF viewpoint contrast does not crucially depend on absence/presence of prefixes (and see Rivero and Slavkov 2014 for relevant discussion).
flexibility available to imperfective RM participles are due to their IMPF operator. In particular, the temporal orientation of RMs is a side effect of the choice of modal flavor (accessibility relation) for this operator, without the need for extra temporal relations specific to the RM.

11.2.4 Dispensing with Evidence Acquisition Time (EAT)

The relation between temporal and evidential categories in Bulgarian has always concerned grammarians, and has recently been taken up by Smirnova (2012, 2013) and Koev (2011) under new lights. Smirnova in particular argues for a specialized tense for evidentials based on the Evidence Acquisition Time (EAT), characterizing the semantic contrast between the reportative RM forms in (18) and (19) as a difference in tense. Both are claimed to be imperfective, but (feminine) pisala in (18) is past, and (feminine) pišela in (19) is present. By contrast, we argued in sections 11.2.2 and 11.2.3 that pisala/pišala encodes PERF and pišel/pišela encodes IMPF, making them aspectually parallel to Indicative Aorist and Imperfect/ Present tenses.

(18) Reportative context: Last month Ivan told you that Maria, your former classmate, spent last year writing a book and that the book has just been published. You believe Ivan. Today, your friend asks you what Maria was doing last year. You say:

Maria pisala/# pišela kniga.

‘Maria was writing a book, [I heard].’

(19) Reportative context: Last month at the class reunion Ivan told you that Maria is busy writing a book. You believe Ivan. Today your old friend asks you what kept Maria from coming to the class reunion last month. You say:

Maria #pisala/pišela kniga.

‘Maria was writing a book, [I heard].’

Smirnova goes on to argue that (18) and (19) provide evidence in favor of tenses specific to evidentials. These tenses order the event reference time with respect to the time of acquisition of information (EAT), differing from Indicative tenses that establish an order relative to Speech Time. On Smirnova’s view, past RM forms claim that the event reference time precedes the time the evidence was acquired, while present forms claim that the event reference time and evidence acquisition time coincide. Thus, pisala in (18) indicates that the reference time for the writing event precedes the time at which the speaker acquired the information about this event: i.e. it had happened before the speaker heard about it. By contrast, pišela in (19) claims that the reference time for the writing event overlaps the time at which the speaker acquired the information: i.e. it was ongoing when the speaker heard about it. Smirnova explicitly opposes (traditional) aspectual characterizations of the RM forms in (18,19), and instead favors a view in terms of tense.
In section 11.2.2 and 11.2.3 we developed a proposal that relies on Viewpoint Aspect to capture temporal relations in the RM, without appealing to a specialized tense operator specific to evidentials. In this section, we argue that our proposal easily accommodates the RM patterns adduced in support of the EAT hypothesis, and offers the advantage of also accounting for RM patterns that run foul of the EAT hypothesis.

To motivate our claim, we first reconsider (18,19) from the perspective of our earlier proposals. Our claim is that it is possible to account for such RM examples within a view where pisala and pišela encode a semantic contrast between the viewpoint operators PERF and IMPF, without specialized tense operators appealing to EAT.

Smirnova provides an informal context for (18) that builds up the available information in several steps. We propose that such a context constitutes a body of information that makes salient a background where the described event culminated, not where the event was still in progress. That is, it presents the situation as “perfective” in a way roughly comparable to Mary wrote a book and she (or somebody else) published it last year, with a sequencing/advancing effect. Given this body of indirect information where the completion of the book is the salient dimension, a suitable reportative answer is with a perfective RM pisala, namely one that intuitively speaking encodes that the report is about an activity that has reached its end. By contrast, the context in (19) provides a body of indirect information that leaves the described event open, the traditional definition of imperfectivity, and this can be felicitously reported by means of an imperfective pišela, for example appealing to the Event-Inertia MB discussed in section 11.2.3.

Smirnova’s proposal that RM pišela is a present form that indicates that the reported event was ongoing at the time the evidence was acquired is problematic. On this view, several interpretations familiar in the literature on imperfectives should be infelicitous when encoded in RM pišela, which is an incorrect prediction. To illustrate, (20) is a felicitous report of a writing activity that ceased, and thus could not be ongoing as the information was acquired. On Smirnova’s approach, such an event should be reported with pisala—the form we consider perfective and not imperfective—which is not the case.

(20) (Minalata godina) Marija pišela/ #pisala (kniga) no (Last.the year), Maria write.RMimp/ #write.RMpf (book) but sprjala (da piše) prez dekemvri. stop.RMpf (to write) during December

‘Apparently, (last year) Mary was writing a book but stopped (writing) in December.’

Examples of type (20) seem to lead to contradiction under the EAT approach. They would indicate that the activity had stopped in view of perfective sprjala, while also being ongoing while the evidence was acquired in view of pišela. Similar problems arise with ‘imperfective paradox’ examples of type (11), which display imperfective RM forms in the main clause: Šaxmatističt pečelel igrata, kogato bil udaren po glavata
Apparently, the chess player was winning the game, when he was hit on the head and the game was interrupted.

In addition, the last example raises the issue of the role of adjunct clauses within evidential constructions, which Smirnova does not mention. When they are added as in (11), they specify temporal and modal relations internal to the structure under the scope of the EV operator. These relations replicate familiar behaviors of imperfectives and perfectives in non-evidential contexts, suggesting that extra relations such as EAT play no role in them.

The pattern in (20) represents a standard case in discussions of IMPF vs. PERF in the literature. However, Smirnova’s views are also problematic when less standard interpretations are considered, as in those including modal dimensions in types such as so-called “habitual” and “futurate” imperfectives.

On the one hand, habitual readings do not easily fit within the EAT view, but are renarrated with imperfective participles, as in (13). Thus, we proposed a familiar analysis of the IMPF operator leading to generic/habitual readings embedded under the EV operator.

On the other hand, the idea that RM verbs such as pišela are present forms that indicate that the reported event was ongoing at the time at which the evidence was acquired cannot account for “futurate” examples such as (15a), Spored dobre osvedomeni iztočniti, Ivan pišel kniga dnes ‘According to well-informed sources, Ivan was supposed to be writing a book (later) today.’ In our approach, these are unproblematic with the analysis in (15b,c), where IMPF accesses the same preparatory inertia MB as in Indicative Imperfect verbs.

All the above correlations, then, are easily captured by our analysis where viewpoint IMPF is contained in imperfective (imp) RM participles and PERF in perfective (pf) RM participles, and where IMPF and PERF receive interpretations familiar in many languages. On our approach, no reference is made to the time the evidence was acquired in the RM, which is similar in this respect to the Indicative.

An advantage of the Viewpoint hypothesis is that it allows for a unified perspective on temporal systems that interact with evidentials in a crucial way, such as Bulgarian, and those that seemingly lack interactions, as in Mëbengokre (section 11.3).

11.3 Mëbengokre

11.3.1 Evidentials

Mëbengokre modal or aspectual notions are expressed by optional left-peripheral particles or post-verbal elements, both in bold in (21).\(^6\)

---

6 Abbreviations for Mëbengokre are NFUT = non-future, NOM = nominative pronoun, PL = plural, V = finite verb, N = non-finite verb, WE = evidential, DJA = conjectural evidential. Morpheme boundaries are not indicated.

7 Mëbengokre data were collected by Salanova in the field unless otherwise indicated.
(21) Karinhô nê ba akôr onhê.
tobacco  NFUT 1NOM 3.blow:N sit:V
'I am smoking some tobacco.'

Left particles include nê (nonfuture) in (21), dja (future), evidentials, frustratives (indicating an initiated but unaccomplished action), and comitative and continuative aspect. Postverbal elements include items with progressive meanings such as nhê in (21), nê (result state), mā (prospective), kadį (purposive), and manner modifiers.

Left particles have a different morphosyntactic behavior from postverbal elements. While the latter combine with the nominalized lexical verb N (e.g. akôr in (21)), left particles may appear with all types of predicates, including non-nominalized V, as in (22) with nê.

(22) Kajtire nê arým mā tê.
Kajtire NFUT already away go:V
'Kajtire has left already.'

Mèbengokre normally marks propositions that are learned through indirect evidence with we, called "hearsay evidential" in other work (e.g. Arregui et al. 2014). This particle can attach to any type of predicate, and seems to have no restrictions regarding co-occurrence with other particles. We illustrate its various flavors, before we discuss its interaction with temporal markers.

We is very frequent in narratives, where it often occurs in almost every sentence, as in (23a,b) from myths, and (24a,b) elicited with everyday contexts.

(23) a. Onija kajkwâ krax kam we mē ari ba.
far heaven beginning in WE PL constantly stay
'They lived, it is said, far away towards the beginning of heaven [i.e. the east].'
b. Kam mēō we ariënŋâ tên we kēn kam mät kre
so someone WE hunting went.and WE rock in maccaw hole
see
'So someone went hunting, it is said, and saw a macaw's nest on the side of a rock, it is said.'

(24) a. Gorotire nê we kato.
Gorotire NFUT WE win
'Gorotire won [the tournament], it is said.'
b. Mŷj kadį nê jâ?– we mesa kadį.
what for NFUT this?– WE table for
'What is this for?– It is for the table, it is said.'
The primary use of we in narrative is hearsay, as in (23a,b). In elicited (24a,b), both hearsay and inferential readings are possible. If one controls contexts carefully, however, one may find clear instances where we could not be hearsay and has to be inferential, as in (25a,b).

(25) I am looking for Bep in his house. He is not around. His son-in-law has not seen him and does not know where he went, but notices that his gun is not where it normally is. He tells me:

a. We bákam tê.
   WE hunt go
   'Apparently he has gone hunting.'
   Or, if the basket is missing:

b. We puru mā nē tê.
   WE garden to NFUT go
   'Apparently it is to the garden that he has gone.'

As expected, (25a,b) are equally fine in a hearsay use, i.e., in contexts where I have been told rather than inferred the proposition myself. We can therefore conclude that we may be used in both hearsay contexts and contexts of inference.

Our interest is in temporal matters, so we characterize we simply as an evidential operator as in (1) [EV]. Temporal markers provide information regarding the location of events relevant to the embedded proposition. Generally, evidentials in Mëbengokre are speaker-oriented. They are often translated into Portuguese as propositional attitude verbs with first person subjects (‘I believe that . . .’ , ‘I heard that’), or with the evidential diz que of colloquial Portuguese and Spanish,8 which may be both a hearsay and an inferential evidential.

One final evidential category of Mëbengokre is the conjectural, which cannot be used as a reportative. A statement made on the basis of a belief in things happening according to a plan will be marked with the future particle dja in (26). In previous work, this particle has been glossed as future (a reading it also encodes) or irrealis (a term that is intended to cover both future and conjectural uses).

(26) Kajtire dja arým ǔrûkwâ kam bóx.
   Kajtire DJA already 3.house in arrive
   ‘Kajtire should have already arrived at his house.’

This usage is not unlike the conjectural use of the Spanish future (cf. Rivero 2014):

(27) Habrá llegado a casa.
   Will.have arrived to house
   ‘S/he has likely arrived home.’

Though it is possible to have both *dja* and *we* in the same sentence, the former will only get its non-evidential future interpretation in those cases. In other words, it is impossible to combine conjectural evidentiality with inferential or hearsay evidentiality in a single clause.

As far as we have been able to ascertain, it is impossible to combine conjectural *dja* with hearsay *we* (e.g. *dja* always gets a future interpretation if *we* is also present).

### 11.3.2 Temporal markers in evidentials

As noted above, evidential *we* can co-occur with other particles. In (28), it co-occurs with the non-future tense *nê*:

(28) Gorotire *nê* *we* kato.

Gorotire NFUT WE win

‘Gorotire won the tournament, it is said.’

We follow Salanova (2013) in the claim that finite forms such as (28) include a category-forming v-head that projects below tense responsible for quantifying over events, as in (29) (modified for the situations framework):

(29) \[ \begin{array}{c} v \rightarrow \lambda P_{<l, <s, t, >} \cdot \lambda s \cdot \forall e: P(e)(s) = 1 \end{array} \]  

(adapted from Salanova 2013)

The role of tense is to place restrictions on the temporal location of embedded propositions. We adopt a referential approach to tense according to which tense is a referential expression that picks out the topic situation the claim is about (see Kratzer 2011b; Arregui et al. 2014). As a situation "pronoun," tense is interpreted via the given variable assignment. The general pattern for the interpretation of topic situations pronouns is given in (30):

(30) Where \( s_i \) is a pronoun ranging over situations,

\[ [s_i]^{c} = g(i) = s_i, \text{ where } g \text{ is the variable assignment salient in } c. \]

Tense features introduce presuppositions that restrict felicitous interpretations of the situation pronoun (situating the running time of the topic situation \( \tau(s_i) \)) in the past, present, or future, with respect to Speech Time). The Non-future tense in (28) is interpreted as in (31), so is restricted to non-future situations:

(31) \[ [nê]^{c} = g(i) = s_i, \text{ where } g \text{ is the variable assignment salient in } c. \]

Defined only if the variable assignment \( g \) salient in \( c \) is such that \( \tau(s_i) \) either precedes or overlaps Speech Time in \( c \) (i.e. if \( s_i \) is non-future with respect to Speech Time).

The EV operator corresponding to *we* takes propositional arguments so, following Heim and Kratzer (1998), we propose that an index abstracts over the tense pronoun to generate a property of situations embedded under the evidential, as in (32):
Given the above assumptions, \((28)\) receives the (simplified) Logical Form in \((33a)\) and the truth-conditions in \((33b)\):

\[
(33)\begin{align*}
\text{a. } & \{\text{we} \ [\text{nē} \ [\text{v} \ [\text{Gorotire kato}]]]\} \\
\text{b. } & \llbracket(33a)\rrbracket^S = 1 \text{ iff} \\
& \forall s' : s' \text{ is compatible with the speaker's beliefs in } s^* \\
& \exists s_i : s_i < s' \text{ and } \exists e : e \text{ is an event of Gorotire winning the tournament in } s, \\
& \text{defined only if } s_i \text{ precedes } s^* \text{ or } s_i \text{ overlaps } s^*.
\end{align*}
\]

According to \((33b)\), the interpretation of \((33a)\) will only be defined if \(s_i < s'\) as the denotation of \(\text{nē}\) is not future. If the interpretation is defined, the sentence will be true iff all situations compatible with the speaker’s beliefs in the utterance situation include a non-future situation \(s_i\) in which there is an event of Gorotire winning the tournament. In this proposal, there is no interaction between the temporal specification of such an event and the temporal anchoring of the evidential, which is always evaluated in relation to the speaker’s beliefs in the utterance context. In other words, the temporal operator locates the eventuality corresponding to the clause embedded under the evidential in relation to the utterance situation.

The intuitions reported by native speakers support the hypothesis that \(\text{we}\) scopes over \(\text{nē}\) in \((33a)\), which can only be interpreted in terms of the speaker’s current beliefs about a past event and not in relation to the speaker’s past beliefs. That is, \((33a)\) cannot mean that according to what the speaker used to believe, \(\text{Djudjêkô is/was the winner}\) (compare \((33b)\) with the interpretations in non-evidential \((21)\) and \((22)\)).

In our view, Mëbengokré provides another example of a system where there is nothing special about temporal operators in evidential contexts (as opposed to non-evidential contexts). In evidentials, temporal operators provide the temporal parameter for the location of the eventuality corresponding to the clause embedded under EV. The evidential itself is interpreted in relation to the utterance situation (current knowledge/evidence).

One corollary of our analysis is that the time of acquisition of evidence (EAT) has no status in the grammar of Mëbengokré. In the case of direct evidence, EAT is determined pragmatically: by necessity, it has to coincide with the reference time, as
it is from that time that the speaker is “viewing” the event. In the case of indirect evidence, EAT is left undetermined. In Mëbengokre, then, there is no way of modifying a proposition marked with evidential we to indicate the time of acquisition of evidence.

11.4 An apparent counterexample: Evidence Acquisition Time in Matses?

11.4.1 A Viewpoint “aspectual” hypothesis

A language with interesting interactions between tense and evidentiality is Panoan Matses (Fleck 2003, 2007; Munroe et al. 2012). Fleck (2003, 2007) argues that the Matses sentences in (34a,b), which we label “Inferentials” from now on, are “double tense” constructions that support the postulation of a temporal relation particular to evidentials.9

\[(34)\]

a. mayu-n bëste-wà-nëdak-o-șh.
   non.Matses.Indian-ERG hut-make-dist.past.inf-recent.past.exp-3
   ‘Non-Matses Indians (had) made a hut.’ [an old hut was discovered by the speaker a short time ago] (Fleck 2007: (1a))

b. šhëktenamë kuen-nëdak-o-șh.
   white.lipped.peccary pass.by-distant.past.inf-recent.past-3
   ‘White-lipped peccaries (evidently) passed by.’ [old tracks were discovered a short time ago at a distant location] (Fleck 2007: (1b))

Roughly, Inferentials are felicitous when describing events the speaker did not experience directly, but whose results the speaker can relate to the event so as to justify the deduction. Fleck tells us that (34a,b) encode both the time an inference was made (-o-as recent past) and the period between the inference and the described event indicated by -nëdak- as a portmanteau morpheme that simultaneously encodes distant past and evidentiality.

Based on the rich materials and discussion of Fleck (2003, 2007), we would like to explore an alternative analysis for Inferentials. While we aim to dispense with the extra temporal relation particular to them, which bears a resemblance to EAT in Bulgarian, our proposal is deeply indebted to Fleck’s.

Let us sketch our general idea. Oversimplifying, our morphology-rooted proposal consists in arguing that the Inferentials in (34a,b) are characterized by an overt morpheme for evidentiality that is independent from tense: -ak-. Such a morpheme encodes an EV operator, which scopes over two additional morphemes with, roughly speaking, “temporal” flavors: -o- and -nëd-. On the one hand, -o- is under the scope of inferential EV -ak-, and encodes the topic/reference time of the described event. On the other hand, -nëd- is a resultative also under the scope of EV, and

9 Fleck labels (34a,b) "Recent experiential with a distant inferential."
establishes an aspectual-like relation with the topic/reference time. On this view, then, the complex temporal relations in Inferentials result from the interaction of topic-time and aspectual-like resultative morphemes under the scope of an evidential operator with its own distinct morphology.

Fleck proposes (2007: 589): "All evidential markers are portmanteau verbal inflectional suffixes that simultaneously mark evidentiality and tense." He analyzes constructions of type (35), which he labels Experientials, treating -o- as a marker for both evidentiality (experiential) and tense (recent past).

(35) nid- o- ʂ h tumi-o.
go- rec.past.exp- 3 manis.name-abs

'Tumi went.'

As stated above, we differ from Fleck in considering that evidentiality is marked by morphemes that are independent of temporal markers. In the case of (35), we consider -o- the same independent temporal marker of recent past also observed in (34a) and (34b). On our view, (35) is overtly marked only for tense, but not for evidentiality. Depending on analysis, (35) could (a) be semantically unmarked, implying direct perception as one option, or (b) contain a covert operator for (direct) evidentiality, whose denotation would differ from the one we later propose for -ak- in (34a,b).

11.4.2 The structure of inferentials

We propose that (34a) and (34b) are evidential constructions with the structure in (36), where an operator EV scopes over a tense/topic phrase (TP), a resultative phrase, and a VP that encodes event properties. Inferentials are interpreted in relation to the moment of speech, i.e. anchored on evidence available at the speech time.

(36)

Let us add detail to (36). As mentioned in section 11.3 for Mèbengokre (see the discussion concerning (30)), EV embeds a clause headed by a Tense/Topic head. This Tense head hosts a topic situation pronoun s<sub>i</sub> that identifies the situation the claim is "about." The situation pronoun bears an index bound by a c-commanding index i, which generates a property of situations abstracting over the topic situation. Matses has several topic-situation pronouns partially mentioned later, and the features of each
of those pronouns are treated as presuppositions. The Tense Phrase in (36) embeds a Resultative Phrase identifying a result state. Temporal anchoring in result states is also morphologically encoded in Matses, so this language also displays an inventory of resultative-like morphemes/situation pronouns mentioned later.

11.4.3 Applying the analysis

With (36) in place, we illustrate in (37a–c) possible temporal combinations in Inferentials in addition to those in (34a/b):

(37) a. šëktenamë kuen-nëdak-onda-ʂh.
   white.lipped.peccary pass.by-rec.past.inf-rem.past.exp-3
   ‘White-lipped peccaries (evidently) passed by.’ [old tracks were discovered a long time ago at a distant location] (Fleck 2007: (18b))

b. šëktenamë kuen-ak-o-ʂh.
   white.lipped.peccary pass.by-rec.past.inf-rec.past.exp-3
   ‘White-lipped peccaries (evidently) passed by.’ [fresh tracks were discovered a short time ago at a distant location] (Fleck 2007: (18a))

c. šëktenamë kuen-ak-onda-ʂh.
   white.lipped.peccary pass.by-rec.past.inf-dist.past.exp-3
   ‘White-lipped peccaries (evidently) passed by.’ [fresh tracks were discovered a long time ago at a distant location] (Fleck 2007: (18d))

Given (36), the morpheme templates we propose for (34a) and (34b) are given in (38a) and (38b) respectively.

(38) a. Verb Resultative Evidential Topic situation
    1  2  3  4
    bëste.wa- nëd- -ak- -o- (+person)
    ‘hut.make’ Distant past EV Recent past

b. kuen- nëd- -ak- -o- (+person)
   ‘pass.by’ Distant past EV Recent past

In our proposal,10 Inferentials contain three independent layers of semantic and morphological relevance to the analysis, with the evidential one being the only layer that is systematically overt:

11.4.3.1 (i) The evidential operator in (36) As stated, this systematically corresponds to an overt morpheme (a)k/(i)k, which scopes over the two temporal-like elements in the structure, which may be phonologically null. The evidential tells us what kind

10 Note that we differ from Fleck and consider position [2] nëd in (38a,b) an (independent) distant past resultative, with ak standing for EV. To repeat, we do not adopt the idea that evidentiality and tense combine in a portmanteau morpheme.
of indirect evidence is relevant/where the evidence is coming from. In Inferentials, it also involves reasons, causes, or results related to the event.

11.4.3.2 (ii) The topic-situation morpheme in (36) This morpheme treated as a pronoun ranging over situations adds a temporal dimension to the result state of the VP eventuality. In Matses, topic situations for different pasts are encoded by different morphemes or pronouns. The morpheme o in (34a,b) stands for a recent past, in contrast with onda in (37a) for a distant past. Another option is remote past denne, mentioned by Fleck but not illustrated here (the encoding of topic situations, however, can also be covert/phonologically null).

For recent past -o- in (34a,b), the interpretation is (39).

(39) \[ [o]_c^c = g(i) = s_i \text{, where } g \text{ is the variable assignment salient in } c. \]

Defined only if \( \tau(s_i) \) is in the recent past of the speech time in c.

11.4.3.3 (iii) The resultative morpheme in (36) This item introduces a result state of a building event in (34a), or a bird-passing event in (34b), and adds another temporal dimension to Inferentials. Similarly to tense pronouns, resultative morphemes may encode different pasts, and can also be null as in (37b,c) (Fleck also mentions forms for more remote pasts, which we omit).

Inspired by Parsons (1990) and Kratzer (2000), we propose to capture the second temporal-like relation in Inferentials by means of the Resultative Phrase in (36), with (40) providing the semantics for ended in (34a,b):

(40) \[ [\text{ended}]_c^c = \lambda p <_{<,1>} \lambda s_{<}. \exists s'. p(s') = 1 \& \text{distant-result}(s')(s) = 1. \]

Where for any two situations s and s', \( \text{distant-result}(s')(s) = 1 \) if s is a result of s' and \( \tau(s') \) is in the distant past with respect to \( \tau(s) \).

According to (40), ended takes as argument a property of situations p. It will provide as value a proposition true in a situation s iff (a) there is some situation s' such that p is true in s', (b) s is a result of s', and (c) the running time of s' \( [\tau(s')] \) is temporally in the distant past with respect to the running time of s \( [\tau(s)] \).

We do not provide a formal characterization of when a situation s is a result of a situation s', a complex issue. It should minimally be the case that s' temporally precedes s, but there will presumably be other constraints. The proposal in (40) can be understood as a “tensed” resultative characterizing distant results, with the constraint being that the running time of the result situation s \( [\tau(s)] \) remotely/distantly precedes the running time of the situation corresponding to the VP eventuality.

With the above ingredients, let us compose the interpretation of (34b) repeated as (41) with the morphemic segmentation we assume.

\[ \text{(41)} \]

\[ [\text{ended}]_c^c = \lambda p <_{<,1>} \lambda s_{<}. \exists s'. p(s') = 1 \& \text{distant-result}(s')(s) = 1. \]

For simplicity, we assume that the distant-result situation only holds between world-mate situations.
Aspect and tense in evidentials

(41) štēkenamë  kuen-  nēd-  ak- o-  šh.
  white.lipped.peccary  pass.by-  distant.past-  evidential-  recent.past-3
  ‘White-lipped peccaries (evidently) passed by.’ [old tracks were discovered a short time ago]

On the above view, (41) has the structure in (42), and the truth conditions in (43).

(42)  

   S  
     /\  
    /   \  
   EV   Tense/Topic Phrase  
  /\     /\  
 /     /\  topic situation  Resultative Phrase  
 /     /\  /\  
 /     /\  /\  Result_dis VP  
 /     /\  /\  /\  (nēd)  
 /     /\  /\  /\  (štēkenamë kuen)-nēd-ak-o-šh

(43)  
  a.  ak [i [o1 [nēd [štēkenamë kuen]]]]
  b.  [[(43a)]]  

        ∀s: s is compatible with the knowledge/evidence available in s∗, 
 3s:s<s & 3s:white.lipped.peccaries pass by in s & distant-result(s)(s) = 1, 
defined only if τ(s) is in the recent past of the speech event in c.

According to (43b), (43a) is true iff every situation s compatible with the knowledge/evidence available at the speech time (s∗) includes a situation s (s<s) such that there is a situation s’ in which white.lipped peccaries pass by and s is the distant result of s’ (i.e. s is the result of s, and s temporally is in the distant past of s). The truth-conditions are only defined if the temporal location of s is in the recent past of the speech event in c.

Now consider (37a) repeated in (44a). It contains the distant past topic-situation marker -onda- instead of recent past -o- in (34a,b). The analysis is (44b,c).

(44)  
  a.  štēkenamë  kuen-  nēd -  ak-  onda-  šh.
  white.lipped.peccary  pass.by-distant.past-  evidential-  distant.past-3
  ‘White-lipped peccaries (evidently) passed by.’ [old tracks were discovered a long time ago]
  b.  ak [i [onda, [nēd [štēkenamë kuen]]]]
Given our proposals, Inferentials include both an eventive component (hut-building, bird-passing) and a stative/resultant component (the state of the hut having been built, the prints on the ground having been made), and each is assigned a different time interval. In (36), the resultantive head mediates between the VP and the topic time, functioning as a kind of aspectual projection reminiscent of a resultantive perfect. In morphology, temporal resultant relations are encoded in position [2] in (38a,b).

In our analysis, the evidential operator in Inferentials is always an overt independent morpheme: ak. However, the temporal morphemes for TP and RP in (36), or positions [4] and [2] in (38a,b), may be headed by null items (under specifiable conditions). To briefly illustrate, consider Inferential (45a) (=Fleck 2007: (1a)) with our morphemic segmentation (45b). This represents a case where the Resultative Phrase lacks phonological content, so evidential -ak- attaches to the verb, and is followed by topic-situation -onda.

(45) a. Mayu-n beste-wa ak-onda ʃh.
   non.Matses.Indian-ERG rec.past ev dist.past
   'Non-Matses Indians (had) made a hut.' [a recently made hut was discovered by the speaker a long time ago]

b. Verb Resultative Evidential Topic situation
   1 2 3 4
   beste.wa ʃl ak onto da (+person)
   'hut.make' Recent past EV Distant past

We can now briefly compare our analysis with Fleck’s (2007) proposal (Fig. 11.1).

---

**Fig. 11.1** ‘Temporal reference points for the suffixes that Fleck labels “inferential” and “experiential” respectively (see Fleck 2007: 590, table 1)’
The main difference between the two proposals is that we contemplate three relations while Fleck contemplates only two. First, our analysis proposes a resultative relation encoded in an independent temporal-like morpheme that can be phonologically null in (45a,b) or overt in (34a,b). Second, it identifies an independent evidential marker ak in all Inferentials. Third, it identifies a topic-situation morpheme that provides the result-state situation as the "clue" for detecting the event given what we know; this corresponds to Fleck’s "detection." The topic-situation pronoun can be onda, a distant past with respect to Speech Time, or o, understood as a recent past.

In sum, Matses Inferentials contain an overt evidential morpheme ak independent from tense markers; this corresponds to EV in (36) and semantically scopes over the construction. Second, they also display a temporal morpheme for a result state/topic time for the described event; this corresponds to TP in (36), is overt for distant and remote pasts, and can be covert for recent pasts. Third, Inferentials display a Resultative morpheme—RP in (36)—which interacts with the topic situation morpheme, encodes temporal information, and may also be overt or covert under specifiable conditions.

11.5 Conclusion

Our goal in this chapter has been to investigate the interpretation of temporal markers in evidentials. There has been much recent interest in the semantics of evidentials, and proposals have been made that temporal operators have special “evidential-specific” interpretations in evidential contexts. We have argued against this view on the basis of three languages with very diverse evidential and temporal systems. Our overall hypothesis is that temporal operators retain their usual interpretation in evidential contexts. A careful analysis of the role of tense and aspect, paying particular attention to the richness of aspectual interpretations, can account for cases in which temporal interpretations appear to shift in evidential contexts without positing an independent “evidential-specific” paradigm.

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