

The encoding of evidentiality in East Caucasian: different types of marking and areal distribution

Samira Verhees

Linguistic Convergence Laboratory, HSE University

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jh.verhees@gmail.com | [website](#)

shorturl.at/hkqQV

Evidentiality

Evidentiality is usually defined as the encoding of information source.

→ how people know what they are talking about: personal experience, a wild guess, hearsay, etc.

Evidentiality

- (1) kieylali-k kan-n-tika
 peccary-OBJ to.die-VS-EVID:INFER.CERT/PST
 hala-n-dana
 to.stink-VS-EVID:SENS.CERT/PRS
 ‘The peccary **died**; (because) it **stinks**.’

(Eberhard 2018: 347)

Sabanê (Nambikwara)

Evidentiality

Evidential markers do not simply tag an utterance with a source reference.

They determine the speaker's relation to an event in terms of their access to information about it (**Plungian 2001, Hanks 2014, Bergqvist 2018, Verhees 2019**).

Information source types form a cline from direct to less direct.

Evidential typology

Table 1: Semantic domain of evidentiality

Direct		↔		Indirect				
Active participation	}	Sensory observation	}	Inference from results	}	Inference from reasoning	}	Hearsay
		↓						↓
		Visual						Secondhand
		↓						↓
		Auditory						Thirdhand
								↓
								Folklore
				{ General knowledge? }				

Evidentiality in East Caucasian

In East Caucasian languages, evidentiality is less grammaticalized, and semantically more diffuse.

Focus on marking events generally not witnessed by the speaker (INDIRECT EVIDENTIALITY).

Evidentiality in East Caucasian

- (2) ʕali-r sɪ̃ː kʷaː-b-o ekʷa
Ali-ERG bear kill-N-PFV.CVB COP
‘[*It turns out*] Ali **killed** a bear.’

(Tatevosov 2001: 448)

Bagvalal: Kvanada

Evidentiality in East Caucasian

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C1. The speaker meets Ali who is cutting a bear. The speaker: (INFERENCE FROM RESULT)

C2. X told the speaker that Ali had killed a bear while hunting. The speaker tells Y: (HEARSAY)

Indirect evidentiality

Marking of indirect evidentiality is quite common in Eurasia, and some consider it an areal feature of the Caucasus (Johanson 2006, Chirikba 2008)

Aim of this lecture: provide an overview of evidential marking attested in East Caucasian, its diachronic origins and areal distribution.

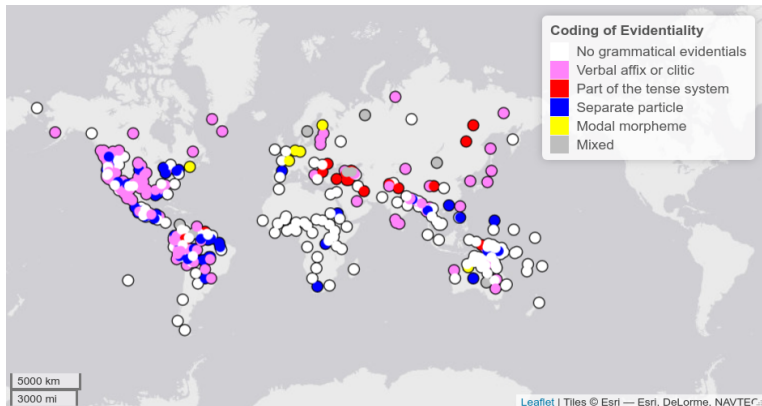
Outline

- ▶ Inventory
- ▶ The areal perspective
- ▶ Evidentiality in the tense system
- ▶ Dedicated particles
- ▶ Summary

Evidentiality in East Caucasian

- ▶ **Tense forms:** the perfect and other tenses with a diachronic relation to the perfect → INDIRECT EVIDENTIALITY
- ▶ **Special auxiliaries** derived from lexical verbs → ~INDIRECT EVIDENTIALITY
- ▶ **Dedicated particles** → mostly HEARSAY
- ▶ **Spatial forms?** deictic copulas in Khinalug (Monika Rind-Pawłowski, p.c.) and Dargwa (Муталов 2002: 146–147) → DIRECT EVIDENTIALITY and others?

The Evidential Belt



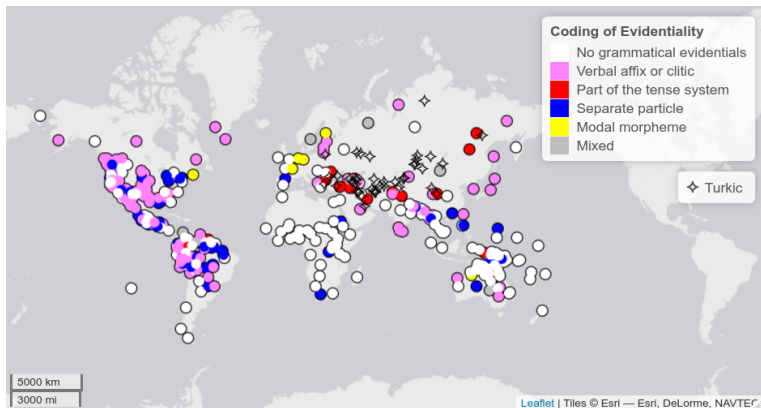
Reproduction of **WALS** Feature 78a: Coding of Evidentiality (de Haan 2013), created with **lingtypology** (Moroz 2017).

Evidentiality in the Caucasus

Indirect tense forms are attested across language families: East Caucasian, Kartvelian, Turkic, and Indo-European (Persian and Armenian) (Johanson & Utas 2000).

Chirikba (2003: 265) noted “a tendency in the Balkans, Caucasus and Central Asia to hold the Turkic languages responsible for the development of the evidential category.”

The Evidential Belt



+ Turkic languages from *Glottolog* (Hammarström et al. 2020)

Tense

Unwitnessed past

Прошедшее совершенное заглазное употребляется, когда говорящий не былъ самъ свидѣтелемъ того, о чемъ онъ рассказываетъ.

Жада нежек вѣкун вѣго доу, дѣда вѣичонігі—сегодня у насъ былъ онъ, хотя я его и не видѣлъ.

Avar (Услар 1889: 135)

He was at our [place] today, but I didn't see him.

Tense

Unwitnessed past

Прошедшее совершенное залгазное употребляется, когда говорящій не былъ самъ свидѣтелемъ того, о чемъ онъ разсказываетъ.

Жада нежеќ вѹкун вѹго доу, дѹда вѹћѹноѓѹ—сегодня у насъ былъ онъ, хотя я его и не видѹлъ.

Avar (Услар 1889: 135)

He was at our [place] today, but I didn't see him.

→ Perfect (Маллаева 2007: 196–206)

Perfect

Perfect – a verb form with a current relevance function, i.e. refers to an event in the past that has some relevance at speech time.

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(3) Ali **has killed** a bear.

→ There is now a dead bear / Ali killed a bear at least once in his life.

See (Comrie 1976: 56–61)

Perfect to evidential

- ▶ **Conversational implicature:** focus on resulting situation → speaker had access to the result and not the event (Bybee, Perkins & Pagliuca 1994: 95–97)
- ▶ **Conventionalization:** utterances with perfects typically carry an inferential connotation
- ▶ **Grammaticalization:** expand usage to contexts where the speaker had no direct access at all, but heard from someone else
- ▶ **Result:** general indirect evidential form compatible with contexts of inference and hearsay

Perfected in East Caucasian

- ▶ Perfect forms are attested across the East Caucasian family¹
- ▶ Not all of them have developed an indirect evidential function, but it is very common
- ▶ There is a parallel tendency towards retaining the current relevance function

¹Full data at [Typological Atlas of Daghestan](#).

Semantics

- ▶ Interpretation of inference vs. hearsay depends on discursive context
- ▶ Interpretation of indirect evidentiality vs. current relevance depends on the semantics of the predicate (lexical verb, aspect, +agent, and others)
- ▶ ... and also discursive context

Evidentiality vs. current relevance

Default current relevance interpretation:

- (4) ingur arχon-d
 window open-PRF
 ‘The window is open/has opened.’

([Personal Fieldwork 2016](#))

Andi: Rikvani

Evidentiality vs. current relevance

Reinterpretation due to agent:

(5) **den** ingur **arχon-d**

I.ERG window open-PRF

‘[*It appears*] I have opened the window.’

(**Personal Fieldwork 2016**)

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Evidentiality vs. current relevance

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‘[*It appears*] I have opened the window.’

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→ Subject to variation: in the Zilo dialect of Andi a neutral ‘I have opened the window’ is possible.

Evidentiality vs. current relevance

Default indirect evidential interpretation:

- (6) hu-j učitel'nica j-ik'-ida
DEM-F teacher F-be-PRF
‘[It turns out] she **was** a teacher.’

(**Personal Fieldwork 2020**)

Botlikh

Evidentiality vs. current relevance

Default readings can be overridden:

- (7) Sanijat-li t'ala^h-ne
Sanijat-ERG dishes-PL
d-irc-ib=ca-d.
NPL-wash.PFV-PRET=COP.PRS-NPL
'Sanijat **has washed** the dishes.' (the speaker
infers from a wet towel and water on the floor)
- (Forker 2018: 496) Dargwa: Sanzhi

Evidentiality vs. current relevance

- (8) Sanijat-li t'ala^h-ne
Sanijat-ERG dishes-PL
d-irc-ib=ca-d. dam=q'ar
NPL-wash.PFV-PRET=COP.PRS-NPL 1SG.DAT=PTC
il či-b-až-ib=da
3SG SUP-N-see.PFV-AOR=1
'Sanijat has washed the dishes. *I saw it myself*.
(*no evidential connotation)

(Forker 2018: 496)

Dargwa: Sanzhi

Evidentiality vs. current relevance

- (9) den qačax w-iš:i-w-o ek'wa!
I.ERG thief M-catch-M-CVB COP
'I've caught the thief (call the police!)'
(CURRENT RELEVANCE)

- (10) s:uni den qačax w-iš:i-w-o ek'wa!
yesterday I.ERG thief M-catch-M-CVB COP
'Yesterday I caught the thief (but I didn't know
he was a thief and let him go).'
(*CURRENT RELEVANCE)

(Tatevosov 2001: 452)

Bagvalal: Kvanada

The perfect in narrative

Default resultative verbs:

- (11) hege-j j-**aɪ**-d.
DEM-F F-become_tired-PRF
'She is tired.'
- (12) hege-j **hogik'o**-d
DEM-F sit_down<F>-PRF
'She is sitting/has sat down.'

(Verhees 2020: 315)

Andi: Rikvani

The perfect in narrative

- (13) se-b zaman hege-j t'ulu=gu
 one-INAN1 time DEM-F very=INT
 j-aɰi-d. hege-j **hogik'o-d**
 F-become_tired-PRF DEM-F sit_down<F>-PRF
 ʔet'uro-ʔ angu-l'a.
 tree-GEN branch-SUP
 'One time, she **became** very **tired**. She **sat down**
 on a tree-branch.' (the speaker is retelling a
 story from their grandmother - elicited)

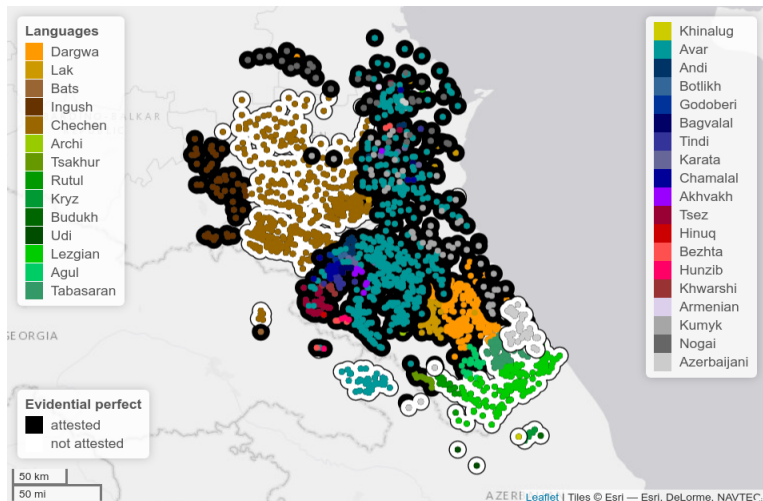
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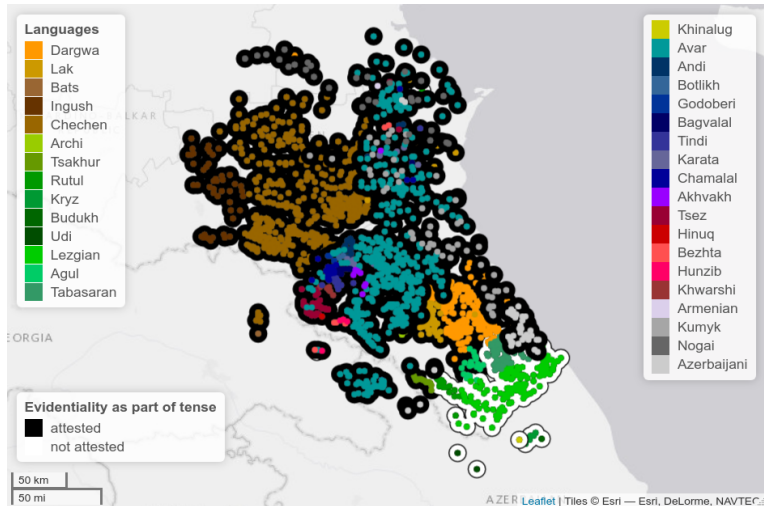
The perfect in narrative

- ▶ Narrative use is also a good indicator of grammaticalization for the indirect evidential function
- ▶ e.g. an inferential implicature may be elicited for the Lezgian perfect (Greed 2017), but it does not appear as an unwitnessed narrative tense

Indirect evidential perfects: distribution



Indirect evidential tenses: distribution



Other forms of the tense paradigm

- Specialized forms are attested (which *might* originate from perfects)

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- ▶ *-wudi* (Axaxdərə Akhvakh) – indirect evidential past (Creissels 2018)
- ▶ *-no* / *-lo* (Tsova-Tush) are homophonous with participle / subjunctive and derive indirect evidential equivalents of tenses (Holisky & Gagua 1994)
- ▶ *-la* (Zaqatala Avar) – past untwitnessed (Саидова 2007: 142-144)

Other forms of the tense paradigm

- ▶ East Caucasian languages have rich periphrastic paradigms, as pointed out in **last week's lecture** by Timur Maisak
- ▶ In languages with an indirect evidential perfect, perfect forms of the auxiliary can form a parallel paradigm (or “series”) of (past) tense forms

Perfect auxiliaries

Table 2: Aorist and perfect series of ‘read’ in Avar

Aorist		Perfect		
c'al-ana		c'al-un	b-ugo	
read-AOR		read-CVB	N-COP.PRS	
Pluperfect		Pluperfect		
c'al-un	b-uk'-ana	c'al-un	b-uk'-un	b-ugo
read-CVB	N-be-AOR	read-CVB	N-be-CVB	N-COP.PRS
Imperfect		Imperfect		
c'al-ul-e-b	b-uk'-ana	c'al-ul-e-b	b-uk'-un	b-ugo
read-PRS-PTCP-N	N-be-AOR	read-PRS-PTCP-N	N-be-CVB	N-COP.PRS

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read-CVB	N-be-AOR	read-CVB	N-be-CVB	N-COP.PRS
Imperfect		Imperfect		
c'al-ul-e-b	b-uk'-ana	c'al-ul-e-b	b-uk'-un	b-ugo
read-PRS-PTCP-N	N-be-AOR	read-PRS-PTCP-N	N-be-CVB	N-COP.PRS

! Auxiliaries are more stable and can outcompete the perfect as evidential marker

Chechen

- ▶ Perfect in Chechen does not express indirect evidentiality (**Molochieva 2010**: 210)
- ▶ Unwitnessed Past has the structure:
verb-PFV.CVB *xil-PRF*

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- ▶ Path from pluperfect to past is cross-linguistically attested (**Сичинава 2013**: 43, 154–158)

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verb-PFV.CVB *xil-PRF*
- ▶ *pluperfect from perfect series?
- ▶ Path from pluperfect to past is cross-linguistically attested (**Сичинава 2013**: 43, 154–158)
- ▶ But other indirect forms use different inflections of the auxiliary *xil-*

Tsakhur

- ▶ Set of indirect periphrastic tenses (incl. perfect) with the copula *wo-d* (Maisak & Tatevosov 2007)
- ▶ Opposed to a neutral set with the attributive copula *wo-d-un*

Tsakhur

- ▶ Set of indirect periphrastic tenses (incl. perfect) with the copula *wo-d* (Maisak & Tatevosov 2007)
- ▶ Opposed to a neutral set with the attributive copula *wo-d-un*
- ▶ The evidential component is associated with the auxiliary, rather than a particular tense form
- ▶ (Also considered to originate from the perfect)

Witnessed past

- ▶ Development of perfect to unwitnessed past can trigger reinterpretation of a general past as witnessed past (DIRECT EVIDENTIALITY)
- ▶ Attested in languages of the Nakh and Tsezic branches, e.g. (Comrie & Polinsky 2007, Khalilova 2011, Nichols 2011)

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- ▶ Attested in languages of the Nakh and Tsezic branches, e.g. (Comrie & Polinsky 2007, Khalilova 2011, Nichols 2011)
- ▶ Could be neutral with direct overtones in context, see (Forker 2018: 499) and (Forker 2014)

Auxiliaries from lexical verbs

- ▶ Lexical verbs in the position of past auxiliaries
- ▶ Not part of the core tense system, but follow similar patterns

Auxiliaries from lexical verbs

- ▶ Lexical verbs in the position of past auxiliaries
- ▶ Not part of the core tense system, but follow similar patterns
- ▶ ‘find’ in languages of the Avar zone
- ▶ ‘stay’ in Dargwa varieties
- ▶ Other auxiliaries

Find

- ▶ Attested in Avar, Andic, Tsezic, Mehweb Dargwa and Archi (Майсак & Даниэль 2018)
- ▶ In past tense marks the MOMENT OF DISCOVERY

Find

Discovery of a result → Inference

- (14) mirza uq^ɕa-li χu
 Mirza I.leave.**PFV**-CVB I.find.PFV
 ‘(When I came home) Mirza [had] already left [*I found out*].’

(Майсак & Даниэль 2018: 127)

Archi

Find

Discovery of a process → Direct evidentiality?

- (15) jamu-m-mu-s bo-χo-li gatu
this-I-OBL-DAT III-find.PFV-PST.UW cat
b-a<r>č-ar-ši
III-<IPFV>kill-IPFV-CVB
'He encountered people tormenting a cat.'

(Майсак & Даниэль 2018: 126)

Archi

Find

Future of 'find' marks inference from reasoning:

- (16) to-w-mu ručka-t:u š:et:e-qi-ši
 he-I-OBL.I(ERG) pen-PL NPL.buy.IPFV-CVB
 χo-qi
 NPL.find.PFV-FUT
 'He is *probably* buying pens [right now].'

(Майсак & Даниэль 2018: 131)

Archi

Find

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 χo-qi
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 ‘He is *probably* buying pens [right now].’

(Майсак & Даниэль 2018: 131)

Archi

→ at the intersection of evidentiality and (epistemic)
modality – evaluation of likelihood (Plungian 2010: 46)

Stay

- ▶ Attested in Icari, Sanzhi, Kubachi, Kajtag, Standard Dargwa (**Forker 2018**: 501)
- ▶ Similar functional range to the perfect (indirect evidentiality: inference and hearsay)
- ▶ Used as narrative tense

Stay

- (17) ileli q'urʔan d-arh-uli
 he.ERG Quran NPL-know.IPFV-CVB
 uʒ-iw-li akku
 stay.M-AOR-CVB COP.NEG
 ‘[*It turned out*] he did not know the Quran.’

(Forker 2018: 502)

Dargwa: Kajtag

Other verbs

- ▶ The verb 'become' in Agul (Майсак & Мерданова 2002: 108)
- ▶ Probably also other auxiliaries waiting to be discovered?

Particles

- ▶ Many particles marking reported speech
- ▶ Most of them are quotatives (i.e. not evidentials)

Particles

- ▶ Many particles marking reported speech
- ▶ Most of them are quotatives (i.e. not evidentials)
- ▶ However, quotatives can be used to form hearsay constructions

Quotative

- (18) holco načalniki-ya niso-na gey
that.OBL chief-OBL.ERG say-PFV.CVB be.PRS
ali-qa [hõs-coy-s öžö dibo gey,
Ali-POSS one-DISTR-GEN1 boy 1SG.GEN1 be.PRS
hõs-coy-s öžö dil
one-DISTR-GEN1 boy(I) 1SG.DAT
Ø-aqa-s]-λo niso-na
I-become-FUT-QUOT say-PFV.CVB
‘The chief said to Ali, “You have one of the boys,
and I will have another boy.”’

(Khalilova 2011: 43)

Bezhta (East Caucasian)

Impersonal quote

- (19) **niso-s**, [**maxačkalali?** **bežl'a-γa** **hōs wodo**
say-PRS Makhachkala.IN Bezhta-near one day
äydää q'urban wodo y-o:-s]-**λo**
early Kurban day(IV) IV-do-PRS=QUOT
niso-na
say-PFV.CVB
‘[*They*] say, the Kurban holiday is celebrated in
Makhachkala one day earlier than in Bezhta.’
(**Khalilova 2011**: 44) Bezhta

Hearsay with a quotative

- (20) [hugi biʎoɣa Ø-ẽʎ'-eyo]-ʎo
he house.near I-go-PST.W-QUOT
'He went home, *they said*.'

(Khalilova 2011: 44)

Bezhta

Hearsay marker

- (21) zini hiλ'a b-ukɿ-u=χ^wata
 cow down N-fall-AOR=REP
 'A cow fell down, *it is said*.'

Hearsay marker

- (21) zini hiλ'a b-ukɿ-u=χ^wata
cow down N-fall-AOR=REP
'A cow fell down, *it is said*.'
- (22) zini=χ^wata hiλ'a b-ukɿ-u
cow=REP down N-fall-AOR
'A COW fell down, *it is said*.'

(Personal fieldwork 2018)

Botlikh

Hearsay

- ▶ Botlikh has a separate morpheme *tal*u for quotation
- ▶ *tal*u always appears at the right-edge of the quotation and cannot be moved to mark focus

Hearsay

- ▶ Botlikh has a separate morpheme *tal* for quotation
- ▶ *tal* always appears at the right-edge of the quotation and cannot be moved to mark focus
- ▶ Dedicated hearsay markers are relatively rare: attested in only 7 languages so far (cf. indirect evidential perfects in 24)
- ▶ Probably due to a descriptive gap!

Diachronic source

- ▶ Common source of reported speech markers are speech verbs (converbal forms)
- ▶ In some languages full verbs are used as reported speech particles, e.g. *bik'ul* 'saying' and *haʔible* 'having said' in Sanzhi Dargwa (Forker 2019)
- ▶ Unclear if the hearsay and quotative markers are diachronically related
- ▶ This could also be a Turkic contact feature (Kehayov & Boye 2016: 830–833)

Indirect evidential particle

- ▶ Kryz copied the clitic *-miš* from Azeri (< copula *-(i)miş*), see ([Authier 2010](#))
- ▶ Attaches to different verb tenses and marks general indirect evidentiality
- ▶ Also attested in Tat (Iranian, same area) ([Boeder 2000](#): 284)

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- ▶ Attaches to different verb tenses and marks general indirect evidentiality
- ▶ Also attested in Tat (Iranian, same area) ([Boeder 2000](#): 284)
- ▶ So far the only known case of evidential matter borrowing in East Caucasian!

Evidentiality

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Evidentiality

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- ▶ Udi

Evidentiality

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- ▶ Udi → not due to a lack of description (see [Алексеев et al. \(2008\)](#) and many more sources)

Evidentiality

- ▶ One East Caucasian language positively lacks any type of evidential marking:
- ▶ Udi → not due to a lack of description (see [Алексеев et al. \(2008\)](#) and many more sources)
- ▶ No evidence for evidentiality in Caucasian Albanian (v-vi centuries) either (see [Gippert et al. \(2008\)](#))

Summary

- ▶ The East Caucasian languages are fairly typical of the general area (at least in this respect)
- ▶ Evidentiality as part of the tense system originates from the perfect, which marks indirect evidentiality
- ▶ This feature is wide-spread among the languages of the family, but not universal
- ▶ Notably absent in the south
- ▶ Tendency to preserve the current relevance function of the perfect alongside evidentiality

Summary

- ▶ Dedicated hearsay/evidential particles seem relatively rare (likely due to a descriptive gap), and show no clear areal signal
- ▶ Specialized auxiliaries from lexical verbs like ‘stay’ and ‘find’ are also attested

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- ▶ Specialized auxiliaries from lexical verbs like ‘stay’ and ‘find’ are also attested
- ▶ This inventory includes three types of forms with overlapping semantics!

Баркала!



Abbreviations I

1	first person	28, 59
3	third person	28
AOR	aorist	28, 55, 62, 63
CERT	certainty	3
COP	copula	7, 8, 27–29, 55
CVB	converb	7, 8, 29, 50–53, 55, 59, 60
DAT	dative	28, 51, 59
DEM	demonstrative	26, 30, 31
DISTR	distributive	59
ERG	ergative	7, 8, 24, 25, 27–29, 52, 53, 55, 59
EVID	evidential	3
F	feminine	26, 30, 31
FUT	future	52, 53, 59
GEN	genitive	31, 59
I	first noun class	50–53, 59, 61
III	third noun class	51
IN	in locative	60
INANI	inanimate	1 31
INFER	inferential	3
INT	intensifier	31
IPFV	imperfective	51–53, 55

Abbreviations II

IV	fourth noun class 60
M	masculine 29, 55
N	neuter 7, 8, 28, 62, 63
NEG	negative 55
NPL	nonhuman plural 27, 28, 52, 53, 55
OBJ	object 3
OBL	oblique 51–53, 59
PFV	perfective 7, 8, 27, 28, 50–53, 59, 60
PL	plural 27, 28, 52, 53
POSS	possessive 59
PRET	preterite 27, 28
PRF	perfect 23–26, 30, 31, 40–42
PRS	present 3, 27, 28, 59, 60
PST	past 3, 51, 61
PTC	particle 28
QUOT	quotative 59–61
REP	reportative 62, 63
SENS	sensory 3
SG	singular 28, 59
SUP	super locative 28, 31
UW	unwitnessed 51
VS	verbal suffix 3
W	witnessed 61

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