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Evidentials as a mark of genre

A study of four oral and written genres

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This paper aims to study the different types and pragmatic functions of the Spanish evidential forms found in four discursive genres, in order to observe if any restrictions apply. All the evidentials are studied in a corpus containing 100,000 words, evenly distributed over colloquial conversations, press news, academic papers, and parliamentary debates. Specifically, together with the pragmatic functions of these evidentials, the four dimensions *mode of knowing*, *type of source*, *accessibility*, and *degree of precision* are analysed. The results reveal different tendencies in the use of evidentials, depending on the genre, and support the claim that the behaviour of evidentials is conditioned by the specific characteristics of each genre.

Keywords: evidentiality, discourse genre, pragmatic functions, Spanish

1. Introduction¹

In accordance with the topic of this special issue, the present paper analyses the behaviour of evidential mechanisms in different discursive genres. In languages that are typologically non-evidential, evidential mechanisms are not mandatory from a grammatical point of view (Aikhenvald 2004); therefore, they are freely used according to the speakers' communicative needs. In this line, the hypotheses of the present paper are the following: (1) evidential expressions, apart from expressing the source of given information, play different pragmatic roles, depending on the discursive circumstances where they are uttered; (2) the communicative needs of the speakers lead to the use of different evidentials; and as a

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consequence, (3) since genres are conventional moulds that bring together different communicative circumstances and needs, genres condition both the selection and nature of evidentials as well as their pragmatic functions.

In order to test these hypotheses, this paper intends to carry out a corpus analysis for different genres that compares their (distinct) use of evidentials. Four genres have been selected, namely (a) colloquial conversations, (b) press news, (c) academic papers, and (d) parliamentary debates. The choice of these four genres is intended to be representative of several discourse variants (oral vs written, monologic vs dialogic, formal vs informal, and transactional vs interpersonal), and also of different textual types (informative-expositive vs argumentative). These genres have been searched for on the one hand, to retrieve the evidential forms used and to analyse their intrinsic characteristics, and on the other, to analyse the pragmatic functions of these evidential forms in each particular context.

Following the seminal work by Chafe (1986), the influence of genre in evidentiality has been addressed in several studies (Marcos 2006; Alonso-Almeida 2014; Estellés and Albelda 2014, 2017; González-Condom 2015, among others). Nevertheless, a study from an internal perspective is still needed, i.e., one that considers the different dimensions of evidential expressions beyond their mode of knowing (*accessibility, type of source, degree of precision*).

Discourse genres entail a series of conventions in communicative behaviour, which can be regarded as consequences of their defining traits. These conventions are mainly determined by the set of communicative purposes of the genre (Swales 1990, 2004) as well as by factors, such as the number of participants, channels, and registers; the public/private context; the external structure of interactions and discourses; and finally, the sphere of human activity in which they occur (Swales 2004). The combination of these latter factors leads to a variety of possibilities, and as a result, genres are understood as contextual environments which are highly idiosyncratic, and where linguistic usage is subordinated to communicative demands.

In the field of evidentiality studies, the written genres (i.e., academic papers and press news) have received the most attention (e.g., Hyland 2000, 2005; Marín-Arrese 2004; González Ramos 2005; Marcos 2006; Estrada 2008; Dehkordi and Allami 2012; Alonso-Almeida 2014, 2015; Kotwica 2013, 2015, this volume). Studies on oral genres, such as parliamentary debates and conversations, are scarcer, though with some exceptions (e.g., Cornillie 2007; Brenes 2010; Cornillie and Gras 2015; Estellés and Albelda 2014; González-Condom et al. 2017; Estellés, this volume). All these studies, however, only focus on one genre, and there are hardly any that cross-study genres.

With regard to evidentiality, the present paper adopts a functionalist perspective (Cornillie 2007; Cornillie and Gras 2015; Squartini 2008; Boye and Harder

2009; Boye 2010; Hassler 2010; Diewald and Smirnova 2010; Kotwica 2015; Figueras 2015). Thus, evidentiality is considered a semantic domain expressing the ‘source of information’ of the utterances through different linguistic forms and constructions (verbal tenses, verbs of perception and report, discourse markers (DMs), prosody, etc.). Apart from being expressed by a finite number of expressions with core evidential meanings (DMs like *al parecer*, *por lo visto*, etc.), evidentiality can also be expressed by multifunctional forms and mechanisms, whose evidential values are not intrinsically bound. Consider the verb *ver* (‘to see’) in (1):

- (1) [Talking about the cloud created by the explosion of a volcano in Iceland]
 R: pero eso ya tendrá que terminar↑ ¿no?// ¿cómo va a durar un mes?
 A: pues ya /pero si no se trata solo de lo que es la nube / sino de las partículas que suelta↑/ que deja eso en la atmósfera↑/ que **se ve que** puede modificar↑ el funcionamiento de los motores de los aviones
 (Corpus COGILA, conversation 5)
 R: but this must come to an end, right? How is it gonna last for a month?
 A: Yeah, well, but it is not only the cloud itself, it is also the particles it releases, it leaves these things floating in the atmosphere, and that, it **seems**, can alter the functioning of the engines in aircrafts.

In (1), the information that ‘(the cloud) can alter the functioning of engines in aircrafts’ is introduced by a construction referring to the source of the information (*se ve*). In another example, *En el cuadro se ve una torre medieval*, the same construction ((*se ve*; lit. ‘in the picture, it is seen a medieval tower’), is not expressing the source of information, but literally the physical action performed by the eyes.

Spanish uses also other constructions, less conventionalised and more free, to express the origin of what has been said. This is the case for the reported evidentials found in (2) and (3), extracted from two major Spanish newspapers:

- (2) *El Mundo*
Fuentes sanitarias palestinas informaron esta tarde de que un palestino, de 27 años, murió por disparos del ejército israelí en los enfrentamientos en la zona de Belén.
 (*El Mundo*, 13/10/2015)
Medical sources from Palestine reported this afternoon that a Palestinian man, aged 27, was killed by Israeli army gunfire during the clashes in the Bethlehem area.
- (3) *El País*
El informe elaborado por Crédit Suisse apunta que el 55,8% de la población española se considera clase media, lo que equivale a un total de 20.948.000 individuos.
 (*El País* 13/10/2015)

The report by Credit Suisse points out that 55.8% of the Spanish population considers itself middle class, which is equivalent to a total of 20,948,000 individuals.

Taken in isolation, the semantic condition of expressing ‘source of information’ is not a clear enough criterion to recognise evidential elements. In the literature, other criteria are mentioned that may help to detect when speakers encode evidence. There seems to be a consensus about two tightly interrelated criteria: one, the fact that evidentiality is a deictic category (Frawley 1992; Mushin 2001; De Haan 2001; Bermúdez 2005; Hassler 2010; Whitt 2011) and two, the fact that evidentiality has a propositional scope² and, thus, does not affect the state of affairs or the speech acts involved. In other words, the purpose of evidential mechanisms is to *point out* that an evidence exists regarding information; in this sense, in line with Boye (2010: 11), evidential elements affect propositions in that they possess some feature (a truth value or referring status) that connects them to the world. Even so, evidential elements do not contribute to the truth conditions of the utterance; thus, the sentence *En el cuadro se ve una torre medieval* (lit. ‘In the picture is seen a medieval tower’) provides information about the object of our vision (the medieval tower), but not about its being evidence (it does not refer to the fact that this information comes from a source). The phrase *una torre medieval* (‘a medieval tower’) does not represent a fact, but a state of affairs; therefore, it cannot be assigned a truth value. On the other hand, in Example (1) (*Se ve que (la nube) puede modificar el funcionamiento de los motores de los aviones* (‘It seems that the cloud can alter the functioning of engines in aircrafts’), *se ve que* introduces a proposition over which “the cloud” has scope. The proposition thus establishes a reference in the world between the argument (“the cloud”, the syntactic subject) and its predication (“can alter the functioning of engines in aircrafts”); so it can be assessed as true or false (Albelda 2016).

2. Methodology

2.1 Parameters of analysis

The analysis of evidential elements has been carried out from an onomasiological perspective. Discursive samples have been analysed from the four genres selected, and all the evidential mechanisms have been retrieved. The identification of evidential elements is still a complicated task, and their recognition (or lack of recog-

2. According to Boye (2010: 5), ‘proposition’ is understood as “either as a meaning unit with a truth value or as a conceptual representation construed as referring”.

nition) can vary depending on the theoretical approach adopted. In this paper, two kinds of evidential mechanisms have been identified and considered: (a) grammaticalised evidentials, whose basic core values are specifically evidentiality, for instance, discourse markers (DMs), such as *al parecer*, *por lo visto*, *según parece*, ('apparently', 'seemingly'); and (b) multifunctional evidential forms, the recognition of which has been carried out according to the following four criteria:

A linguistic form or structure expresses evidentiality if:

- It signals the source of information. (Aikhenvald 2004)
- It operates over a propositional scope. The indication of the source of information must be given, not for states of affairs but for propositions. (Boye 2010)
- Evidence must be a “justification for a factual claim which is available to the person making that claim” (Anderson 1986: 274). Hence, when evidentiality is expressed by verbal forms, for direct and inferred evidences, verbs in second and third person are excluded; for reported evidence, verbs in the first person are discarded.³
- Related to the previous condition, evidentials should refer to any factual situations that take place in the *real* world. In this sense, Anderson (1986) considers that evidentials are *realis* clauses.

Following these criteria, a number of forms and structures that work as evidentials in the contexts analysed have been retrieved. Together with the above-mentioned DMs, other evidential forms were found, such as certain specific verbs (verbs of perception, *verba dicendi*, etc.); direct reported discourse (DRD); morphemes (in particular, conditionals of rumour); and certain syntactic phrases (NPs, VPs, PPs). Among the latter, constructions with *según*, *por* and *como* were especially relevant: *según revelan fuentes policiales* (lit. 'as police sources reveal'), *por lo que hemos oído* (lit. 'from what we have heard'), *como todo el mundo sabe* ('as everyone knows').

In order to detect possible differences in the behaviour of evidentials in each genre, the following dimensions of evidentiality have been analysed:

1. The mode of knowing (Cornillie 2007; Squartini 2008); i.e., the process leading to the acquisition of the information) can be *direct* (sensorial evidence) or *indirect* (inferential or reportative).

3. In other words, according to the notion of evidentiality, the source of information is provided by the person who formulates the utterance. Therefore, a given fact is not evidence for the speaker if the individual has not witnessed or inferred that fact. Likewise, it would not be legitimate to consider that evidence is reported if the speaker uttered the reported words. For a critical view on this latter point, see Estellés (2015).

2. The *type of source* of information; i.e., the locus where the information is acquired (Squartini 2008), either *self* or *others*; in some genres, it has also been useful to distinguish two subtypes within the category *others*, namely *people* and *data*. Moreover, in dialogic genres, the sub-category *others/people* has been subdivided into second person and third person.
3. The *accessibility* of the evidence (Bermúdez 2005); i.e., who can access the source of information. Evidence can be *privative* (accessible only to the speaker), or it can be *universal* (anyone can access the source).
4. The *degree of preciseness* of the source (Dehkordi and Allami 2012:1901; Kotwica, this volume) is a dimension of evidentiality that has been scarcely considered in the literature; however, it has been revealed as being central in characterising evidentiality in our corpus. Three degrees of preciseness have been established:
 - *Precise*: When the source is identified unequivocally or very accurately, *María me ha contado que...* ('Mary told me that...'); *Según Morin (2010: 20)* ('According to Morin (2010: 20)'); *Los datos presupuestarios disponibles señalan que...* ('The budgetary data available reveal that...'), etc.
 - *Semiprecise*: When the source is identified, but some more data are still needed to establish it unequivocally. The evidential form generally refers to the class or membership to which the source belongs: *he leído en una revista...* ('I read in a journal ...'); *los profesores (como colectivo) dicen que...* ('the teachers (as a group) say that...'); *según un informe internacional* ('according to an international report'; etc.
 - *Imprecise*: When the source cannot be identified because no specific data are provided: *dicen que* ('it is said that' [lit. 'they say that']); *he oído por ahí* ('I have heard somewhere'); *como todo el mundo sabe* ('as everyone knows'); *al parecer* ('apparently'); *por lo visto* ('apparently' [lit. 'from what is seen']); etc.

Finally, the contextual, pragmatic effects of each item (or the lack of effects) have also been analysed. More specifically, two functional aspects have been considered:

- a. Regarding the relationship of the speaker with the source of information, three possibilities exist:
 - i. The speaker aligns with the source of information;
 - ii. The speaker does not align with the source of information;
 - iii. No pragmatic effects apply to the relationship of the speaker and the source.

- b. Regarding the relationship of the speaker with the message, three possibilities exist:
- i. The speaker agrees with/identifies with the message (i.e., supports the content);
 - ii. The speaker distances him/herself from the message, even criticising its content;
 - iii. No pragmatic effects apply to the relationship of the speaker with the message.

The combination of these possibilities results in the following pragmatic functions:

		Speaker vs Message		
		Alignment	No Alignment	Not Relevant/Neutral
Speaker vs Source	Alignment			
	No Alignment			
	Not Relevant/Neutral			

2.2 Corpus

The corpus consists of 100,000 words, evenly distributed over four genres: colloquial conversations, press news, academic papers, and parliamentary debates. Colloquial conversations have been obtained from the COGILA corpus (Barros et al. 2012), a compilation of video recorded conversations among young (18 to 25 years) university students from Granada (Spain) in a casual, familiar environment.

The press news was obtained from the online version of two national newspapers in Spain: *El País* (elpais.com) and *El Mundo* (elmundo.es). A random selection was made of news posted during four days in October 2015. The news extracts were gathered from different sections of the papers: local news, national news, international news, business, *sucesos*,⁴ entertainment, and sports. In total, there are 44 news items (22 from *El Mundo* and 22 from *El País*).

For parliamentary debates, parliament proceedings have been consulted from 2011, 2012, and 2013; for each year, three days of debate were selected. Only plenary sessions have been considered.

The subcorpus of academic articles comprises six research articles from different scientific disciplines, published in Spain between 2014 and 2015, and written by Spanish authors. The scientific articles belong to the following disciplines:

4. This section does not exist as such in English newspapers. It contains accident and crime reports (see Rodríguez 2011 for a thorough explanation).

history, education, communication and journalism, botany, veterinary science, and architecture.⁵

3. Results and discussion

3.1 Quantitative analysis. Total number of evidential resources in the corpus

Table 1 shows the number of evidentials found in each genre and the number of occurrences per 1,000 words.

Table 1. Distribution of evidentials in each genre

	Colloquial conversations	Press news	Academic papers	Parliamentary debates	Total
Number of words in the corpus	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000	100,000 words
Occurrences in each genre	62	154	212	25	453 occurrences
Occurrences per 1,000 words	2.48	6.16	8.48	1	

According to the data displayed in Table 1, the written, monologic genres (i.e., academic papers and press news) are more prone to using evidentials. Parliamentary debates, in contrast, show the lowest number of occurrences (1 per 1,000), followed by colloquial conversations (2.48 per 1,000 words).

5. The subcorpus of academic papers contains the following articles: De Bernardo (2015: 'Nueva Francia y Nueva Inglaterra en el contexto de los Tratados de Utrecht'. In *Anuario de Estudios Americanos*, 72, 1, pp. 23–56); Cechini et al. (2015: 'Perfiles contextuales y su relación con las variables disposicionales en el aprendizaje del alumnado de Educación Secundaria'. In *Estudios sobre Educación*, 28, pp. 29–50); Mayoral, J. & C. Edo (2015: 'Hacia una nueva narrativa audiovisual: análisis de cinco cibermedios españoles'. In *Communication & Society* 28(1), pp. 145–164); González-Bueno, J. et al. (2015: 'Un par de pliegos enrevesados de Miguel Barnades Mainader y Esteban de Prado en el Herbario del Real Colegio Alfonso XII de San Lorenzo de El Escorial (Madrid)'. In *Botanica Complutensis* 39, pp. 115–119); Carhuapoma D. et al. (2015: 'Niveles de harina de algas en el incremento de peso vivo en cuyes destetados'. In *Revista Complutense de Ciencias Veterinarias* 9(2), pp. 1–6); Lozano et al. (2014: 'Disminución de la probabilidad de atascos por la presencia de un obstáculo cerca de la salida'. In *Revista de Edificación y Arquitectura*, 41–42, pp. 103–107).

3.2 Characteristics of evidentials in conversations – Theoretical implications

In the conversations obtained from the COGILA corpus, 62 evidentials have been retrieved and distributed in the linguistic structures shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Linguistic evidentials in colloquial conversations

Linguistic mechanisms	(Source) + (reporting verb) + <i>que</i> (IRD)	(Source) + (reporting verb) + DRD	<i>Por lo visto</i>	<i>Se ve que</i>	<i>Parece ser</i>	<i>Parece que</i>	<i>Según</i>	Folklore
Number of occurrences	26	14	10	4	2	2	2	2
Percentage in conversation	42%	22.6%	16.1%	6.4%	3.2%	3.2%	3.2%	3.2%

The label *reporting verbs* includes different verbs: *decir*, *contar*, *leer*, *escuchar*, etc. ('say, tell, read, listen'), and also the use of the quotative *que* ('that') without any introductory verb. The DRD is sometimes introduced by reporting verbs and sometimes by deictic elements (*en plan eso tía// es que párate y piensa que hay mucha gente que está mucho peor que tú*; 'she was like that girl// just stop and think that there are lots of people who are in a situation far worse than yours').⁶ In both cases, the source (generally the subject of the verb) can be explicit or be recovered contextually. In conversation, unlike in other genres, evidential DMs are quite frequent, especially *por lo visto* (16%).

Regarding the evidential dimensions analysed, none of them seems to clearly distinguish conversation from other genres. According to their *mode of knowing*, most evidentials in conversation are *reportative*, and only four are *inferential*. Regarding *accessibility*, there are more cases of *universal* than of *privative* access (40 vs 22). Closely related to the results in the category *mode of knowing*, the most frequent *type of source* in conversation is *others* (only four instances are *self*, all of them *inferential*). In 9 cases, *others* is not a human or personal source but a

6. In this example *eso* ('that') is a cataphoric pronoun that introduces a direct reported utterance, and it is shown in boldface. Here, *eso* points abstractly to what the reproduced voice allegedly said.

dataset, generally *semiprecise* or *imprecise* (*he escuchado en la radio* ‘I heard on the radio’; *según la broma que circuló por la clase* ‘according to the joke that circulated among the students’; *no sé dónde leí que...* ‘I can’t remember where I read that...’, etc.) The degree of preciseness of evidentials is not significant in conversations either, since all three degrees have been found in quite similar proportion: 22 *imprecise*, 22 *precise*, and 14 *semiprecise*.

In general, three pragmatic functions are found, all of them guided by an omnipresent interactive goal and related to relational-work (Locher and Watts 2005, 2008). First, more than a half of the evidentials (34 of 62) introduce new information to enrich the conversation and to obtain the conversationalists’ adhesion. Moreover, in many of these instances, the evidence serves the speaker as a means to reinforce the utterance (Example (4)). Second, in 18 out of 62 cases, the evidential can be attributed to the intention of protecting the speaker’s image (Example (5)). Here, the relationship of the speaker with the source is neutral, and the relationship with the message is either neutral or sceptical. Third, in 10 cases, the information introduced by the evidential is criticised; the speaker dissociates from the source, from the message, or from both, as the *type of source* in all of them is *others/people/third person*. In other words, no instances were found where the second person source (*tú/usted*) is criticised (Example (6)).

In (4), Speaker Z adheres to the message and the source of the evidential *dicen que* (‘it is said that...’ lit. ‘they say that’). The function here is socialising, related to the relational work, in the sense that Z is trying to protect I’s image.

- (4) I: el médico me manda rehabilitación pero es que/ ¿cuándo?/ si es que no hay horas
 Z: eso de la tendinitis **dicen que** es bastante complicado que se quite ¿no?
 (Corpus COGILA, conversation 1)
 I: The doctor sent me to rehabilitation, but, when? There is no time.
 Z: This thing, tendinitis... **it is said** to be complicated to cure, right?

In (5), both evidentials (*salió en las noticias* ‘it was on the news’ and *por lo visto* ‘apparently’) aim to protect Speaker I’s self-image, which is threatened when Speaker Z considers *un poco exagerado* (‘a bit exaggerated’) the claim that the axis of the Earth has moved. The speaker here is neutral towards the source (I), but neutral/sceptical (not blatantly critical) towards the message.

- (5) I: no sé si eso lo habéis escuchao/ **salió en las noticias**/ porque yo no sé por qué había sido si por los terremotos que s’había ido la tierra un poquillo de su eje
 Z: eso me parece un poco esagerao/ que digan que se ha salido la tierra de su eje
 I: (RISAS)

- Z: me extraña un poco/ [pero güeno]
 I: [un poquillo]/ **por lo visto** sí
 N: sí pero/ la gente sigue todavía ahí con los mitos y todas esas historias
 (Corpus COGILA, conversation 1)
- I: I don't know if you have heard this, it was on the news, that the earth (I don't know why it happened, if it was because of the earthquake or what) it has moved a little bit from its axis.
 Z: That seems a little extreme to me, saying that the earth has moved from its axis.
 I: (LAUGHTER).
 Z: I'm a little astonished, but anyway...
 I: A little bit, **apparently it has** [moved].
 N: Yes, well... people still keep believing in myths and all this stuff.

In (6), Speaker A dissociates from (and criticises) the message introduced by the evidential (a rude gesture made by a football player and addressed to the supporters of the Almeria Football team), but stays neutral towards the source:

- (6) (About a famous football player)
 R: es que es un egoísta tío↑/ solo piensa en él↑
 A: pues **parece ser** que el otro día le hizo un mal gesto a la afición del Almería↑// es que tú no sabes la que le estaban liando en el hotel
 (Corpus COGILA, conversation 5)
- R: He is so selfish that guy, he only thinks of himself.
 A: Well, apparently, the other day, he made a rude gesture to the supporters of Almeria... and you cannot imagine the mess they were making in his hotel afterwards...

In summary, it cannot be said that there are any systematic tendencies to use one particular kind of evidential in conversations or any special behaviour regarding the dimensions of evidentiality. The only fact that is consistently found in conversation is that, regardless of the nature of the combination, evidentials always serve the social and interactive goal pursued by the speakers in conversation.

3.3 Characteristics of evidentials in press news – Theoretical implications

Journalism is a typical breeding ground for evidential mechanisms. The journalistic genre is ranked second with regard to the observed frequency of evidentials. On the basis of the corpus data, this genre demands a *reportative* mode of knowing; only one inferential and two direct evidentials have been found among the 154 evidential mechanisms in this subcorpus. The rest of them (151 cases, 98%) are reportative.

Table 3 summarises the typology of linguistic manifestations of evidentials in this subcorpus of press news.

Table 3. Linguistic evidentials in press news

Linguistic mechanisms	Source + DRD	Source + reporting verb + IRD	Según + source	Al parecer	Oír (direct evidential)	Conditional of rumour
Number of occurrences	72	34	34	10	2	2
Percentage in press news	46.7%	22%	22%	6.5%	1.3%	1.3%

Verbatim quotations abound in this genre (nearly 47%), followed by indirect reports (22%). Unlike conversations, when DRD (Estellés 2015) or indirect reported discourse (IRD) is used, the source is always explicit (as when Spanish Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy is quoted as saying in the UN: *Muchas veces en un conflicto es más peligroso ser mujer que soldado*, ‘Often, in an armed conflict, it is more dangerous to be a woman than a soldier’). The DRD is generally introduced either by a reportative verb or a colon. The construction ‘según + X’ is also present in 22% of the cases (34). *Según* can have human sources (28 cases: *según los investigadores*, ‘according to the researchers’) or its source can be data (6 cases: *según el Informe de Riqueza Mundial*, ‘according to the World Wealth Report’).

The rest of the mechanisms add up to 9% of the total in this subcorpus, namely the DM *al parecer* (‘apparently’, 6.5%), the verb *oír* (‘listen’, 1.2%, provides direct evidence obtained by the journalist: *Se ha podido oír a las puertas del Palacio de Justicia el lema fuera, fuera la Justicia española*; ‘At the gates of the Palace of Justice, one could hear the slogan “down, down with the Spanish Justice”’) and the conditional morpheme with a sense of ‘rumour’ (*Fuentes consultadas por el diario holandés ‘Volkskrant’ han señalado que los misiles BUK son fabricados en Rusia, por lo que los rebeldes no utilizarían este armament*; ‘Sources consulted by the Dutch newspaper *Volkskrant* pointed out that the Buk [Russian for ‘beech’; ed. note] missiles are manufactured in Russia, so therefore the rebels would not be using this weapon’).

With regard to the *degree of accessibility*, 80% of the instances have *universal* access (122) and 20% *privative* access. Out of 32 instances of privative access, only two cases of *genuine* privative access have been found (i.e., cases where information has been obtained by one particular journalist). The remaining 30 cases are statements addressed to the editorial office (*La noticia ha sido confirmada a este periódico por fuentes cercanas a la operación* ‘the information has been confirmed to this journal by sources close to the operation’). Finally, press news show a high

degree of preciseness regarding the source: 77% are *precise* (118), 15% *semiprecise* (24), and 8% imprecise (10).

Hence, a strong tendency is observed to prefer universal and accessible sources. This relates to the fact that newspapers pursue the communicative goal of being a reliable source, worthy of all credibility. Therefore, presenting oneself as an objective source of information is achieved by using *objective* methods of transmitting the information, such as sharing the sources with readers and identifying the sources as much as possible, while always observing the code of ethics.⁷

3.4 Characteristics of evidentials in academic papers – Theoretical implications

Academic papers contain the highest proportion of evidentials, 212 instances in 25,000 words analysed. The specific evidential mechanisms as well as the number of hits are provided in Table 4.

Table 4. Linguistic evidentials in academic papers

Linguistic mechanisms	Only footnote (no reference in the body)	Only reference in brackets	Source (author) + reporting verb + reference	Source (data/ table) + <i>muestran/ indicant ('show')</i>	<i>Para / Según / De acuerdo con</i> + source	<i>Ver/ observar</i> ('To see, to observe; direct evident.)	Literal quotation (= DRD) + reference	Source (quoted data) + reference + <i>muestran/ indican</i>
Number of occurrences	76	53	32 (20 + IRD; 10 + DRD; 2 + Agent in passive)	20	17 (14 +IRD; 3 + DRD)	6 (3 bibliogr. references; 3 graphics)	5	3
Percentage in academic papers	35.8%	25%	15.1%	9.4%	8%	2.8%	2.36%	1.4%

7. Therefore, the dimensions *accessibility* and *degree of preciseness* are intricately connected.

In academic papers, the evidential mechanisms employed are very accurate in identifying the source. Indeed, all of the instances retrieved in this genre are catalogued as *precise*. As a matter of fact, no DMs – intrinsically imprecise – have been used in any of the articles analysed. In most cases, the source is the author's own research or the research carried out by a group of experts. The source is recovered by mentioning the author's name and work (paper, book, etc.).

The way to express the source of information is highly conventionalised in this genre. There is a set of varieties from which writers can choose, but the stylistic possibilities are indeed very limited, mainly consisting of footnotes and references in the body of the text. In addition, a particular characteristic of academic papers (due to the written channel) is the possibility of referring to the source of information not only explicitly (i.e., linguistically) but also paralinguistically by means of typographic conventions.

The explicit, linguistic references are mainly *reportative* forms (*verba dicendi*), and – less frequently – inferential or direct evidentials (*ver* 'see', *observar* 'to observe'). *Reportative* forms usually have the structure SOURCE (AUTHOR) + REPORTING VERB, or *for/according to*/AUTHOR, X (as shown in Table 4), whereas *direct* or *inferential* evidentials usually refer to the experiment or data (*La tabla/el gráfico muestra X* 'The table/the figure shows X' or *Los datos muestran X* 'The data show X') as well as to the physical actions of seeing, observing, etc. (*Se observa que X* 'it is observed that X').

Nevertheless, the written nature of academic papers allows researchers to use 'shortcuts' by which the evidentiality is conveyed by means of the typography. Thus, the author achieves a double goal. On the one hand, he/she provides the source of a given idea or information, and on the other, he/she does not interrupt the flow of writing. This is done by adding typographic symbols that refer to another section of the article (the reference section, footnotes, etc.), which are entirely devoted to providing specific details of the source. In the body of the text, the only mark of evidentiality is a graphic sign, be it parentheses, a superscripted number, etc., accepted conventionally as a sign pointing to the place where more information can be found – understood as a promise that the incomplete information provided (either nothing at all, in superscripted references, or a minimal reference to an author and year) is completed somewhere else in the article. The examples where evidentiality is typographically signalled represent 60% of this subcorpus. The evidentiality conveyed by typographic means is reported⁸ as well as in most cases with an explicit mention of

8. Aikhenvald (2007) refers to those samples with a quoted source as *quotative* (see Kotwica, this volume).

the evidence. In total, 89% of evidentials in academic papers are *reportative*, 8.5% are *direct* (visual), and 2.5% are *inferential*.⁹

In academic papers, evidentials play a double role, expressing the source of information, but also serving the rhetoric-argumentative function of transmitting science and advancing it. Therefore, depending on the contexts where the evidence is used, the information cited can be supported by the author, but it can also be criticised or doubted. In our corpus, 92% of evidentials in academic papers do not criticise (Example (10)) or explicitly support (Example (11)) the information they introduce, while only 8% are found in situations where the referred information is criticised (Example (12)). Examples such as (10) represent 37% of the subcorpus. They provide new information and make the discourse progress. The author agrees or, at least, does not disagree with the information, but he/she uses it with an explanatory purpose and argumentation or theoretical positioning is not intended (Example (10)).

- (10) **Nirajan et al.**⁵ **estudian** cómo varía el tiempo de evacuación de hormigas en pánico en presencia o ausencia de un obstáculo antes de la salida. (⁵=footnote 5 with the complete reference). (Lozano et al., *Edificación y Arquitectura*)
Nirajan et al.⁵ **study** the extent to which the time of evacuation of panicking ants varies depending on the presence or absence of obstacles before the exit (⁵=footnote 5 with the complete reference).

More than a half of the corpus (55% of the occurrences) are used with an argumentative purpose to adhere to the referred information; quite often this information is presented as a way to support the author's own research. This is the case in (11).

- (11) Para comprender el tiempo corto de los tratados de Utrecht de 1713 es imprescindible tener muy en cuenta sus causas, que nos obligan a retrotraernos a un período anterior, que se debe remontar hasta 1661.⁷ (⁷=Gerard, 1885).
 (De Bernardo. *Anuario de Estudios Americanos*)
 In order to understand the short delay with which the 1713 treaties of Utrecht were signed, it is necessary to bear in mind its causes; therefore, we must go back to an earlier period that has to extend backwards to 1661.⁷
 (⁷=Gerard, 1885)

Finally, 8% of the examples criticise the information. All of them need to add an explicit counter-argumentative structure to the evidence. Therefore, in this

9. In general, inferential evidentials in academic discourse are formally disguised as visual direct evidentials, due to the restrictions of a genre that expects evidence to be objective, universal, and precise; by contrast, inferential evidentials relate to the 'self' and are, by definition, only privately accessible. See Estellés and Albelda (2018).

academic corpus, by default, when an author cites information, it is considered that the author agrees with it; if he/she does not, it is explicitly marked by a counter-argument, generally expressed by an opposite structure ‘X (= QUOTED INFORMATION) BUT Y’ which can be expressed with diverse formal variants (12).

- (12) Alguna vez se ha argumentado (Mark Deuze 2003) que el uso de distintos códigos narrativos aumenta la riqueza expresiva del periodismo online, **pero** no llega a conformar un rasgo distintivo de los nuevos medios digitales.

(Mayoral and Edo. *Communication & Society*)

On some occasions, it has been argued (Mark Deuze 2003) that the use of different narrative codes increases the expressive richness of online journalism, **but** this is not yet a distinctive trait of new, digital media.

(Mayoral and Edo. *Communication & Society*)

3.5 Characteristics of evidentials in parliamentary debates – Theoretical implications

Parliamentary debate registers the lowest number of evidentials (25 occurrences in 25,000 words). The concrete linguistic evidential mechanisms found and their frequencies are depicted in Table 5.

Table 5. Linguistic evidentials in parliamentary debates

Linguistic mechanisms	Evidential discourse markers	<i>Según + X; de acuerdo con + source</i>	Source + reporting verb (<i>decir</i>) + <i>que</i> (IRD)	Data muestran ('show')	<i>Ver</i> ('to see', inferential)	Quotations of Relevant Authorities
Number of occurrences	7 (3 <i>por lo visto</i> , 2 <i>al parece</i> , 1 <i>según parece</i> , 1 <i>parece ser</i>)	7	5	3	2	1
Percentage in parliamentary debate	28%	28%	20%	12%	8%	4%

At first sight, the preferred linguistic structures in this genre differ from other genres. In the parliamentary debates in our corpus, reporting verbs are scarce, and

no cases of DRD are found. The most frequent forms are DMs (hardly found or not found at all in the other genres) as well as constructions headed by a preposition (generally *según*).

The evidential dimension that appears to be more important in parliamentary debates is the *type of source*, since only 8% of the instances are *self*, while 92% are catalogued as *others*. When the source is *others*, it is relevant to distinguish between *others/people* and *others/data*, and within *others/people* also between second person (i.e., interlocutors in the parliament) and third person (people not present in the context). On the other hand, in the parliamentary debate, the type of source is closely related to the pragmatic function of the evidentials. In this genre, evidentiality performs two functions: dissociating from the interlocutors (deputies) and from rival political parties (15 occurrences, 60%), and presenting one's own discourse as 'objective' in order to reinforce it argumentatively (10 occurrences, 40%). When the function is *dissociation*, the source of evidence is *people* (either the speaker him/herself, the interlocutors *in praesentia* or third parties, not present in the situation). When the function is *reinforcing*, all the instances found in the corpus are data (*de acuerdo con la última encuesta de población activa* 'according to the last labour force survey'; *según el barómetro del CIS* 'according to the barometer of the CIS [the Spanish Centre for Sociological Research]'; and, on a few occasions, quotations of relevant authorities (*la frase de Keynes* 'Keynes' expression...').

Let us take a closer look to the most frequent function, dissociation. At present, the general discursive tone in the Spanish Parliament is highly confrontational (see Estellés, this volume). Interlocutors are present in the same physical space, just as in colloquial conversations, but the speaker's interventions are mainly meant to attack the members of the rival parties (Blas 2009, Fuentes 2012) in order to gain votes. The rival's proposals are criticised by reporting their own words and, in most cases, also criticising the speakers who originally uttered those words or ideas (the political rivals themselves and, metonymically, their whole political party). The 'directness' of the attack depends on many factors. For instance, Example (13) shows an utterance directly accusing a second person (*tú/usted/vosotros/ustedes*) and distancing the speaker both from the source and from the message (*ustedes dijeron que iban a hacerlo pero no lo hicieron* 'you said you were going to do it, but you did not'). The attack can be perceived as less direct if imprecise or inferential evidentials are used (*al parecer, según parece, por lo visto*, or the verb *ver*). In such cases (Example (14)), the evidence is also a critique of the rival's words (i.e., the message); however, unlike in (13), the source is not a speaker's interlocutor in the parliament, but an external source from which the information has been obtained (for instance, a newspaper) or, as it happens in (14), inferences based on words attributed to the interlocutor.

- (13) JOAN SAURA: Ahora bien, **ustedes dijeron** muchísimas veces que cuando llegaran al Gobierno el problema económico se resolvería, que iba a haber recuperación económica. Sin embargo, ahora lo aplazan a meses y a años.
[JOAN SAURA: Well now, you [plur.] said countless times that when you came to power, the financial problem would be solved, that the economy would recover. Nonetheless, now you postpone that for months and years].

In (13), Joan Saura, deputy of the ICV party,¹⁰ indirectly reports some words allegedly uttered some time ago by his interlocutors from the PP,¹¹ the now ruling party, at a time when the latter were in the opposition. Example (13) is a typical example of a direct accusation, since both the message (the words) and the source (the person/political party who uttered them – currently the speaker's parliamentary interlocutor) are criticised.

- (14) PILAR LUCIO: Gracias. **Veo**, señora ministra, que confían al crecimiento económico la generación de empleo. Para eso no hubiera hecho falta una reforma laboral de la magnitud de la reforma laboral que han hecho ustedes ahora mismo.
PILAR LUCIO: Thanks. I see, Madam Minister, that you entrust job creation to economic growth. In that case, a labour reform such as yours, of this magnitude, would not have been necessary.

In (14), the socialist deputy Pilar Lucio (PSOE)¹² addresses the minister for employment (Fátima Báñez [PP]), who had intervened immediately before. Here, the evidential expression *veo* ('I see') is inferential; the source of the evidence is the inference made by the speaker Pilar Lucio from the words just uttered by the minister; that is to say, the minister has not uttered the exact words reproduced in (14), rather the fact of making the generation of employment dependent on the economic growth is what Lucio infers from Báñez's previous words. The evidential *veo* in (14) also dissociates from the message, but the accusation is perceived as less direct, due to the inferential (not genuinely reportative) nature of the evidential, becoming less confrontational because the source is not Báñez, but Lucio herself. In both (13) and (14), the dissociation is expressed in the second part of the intervention.

With respect to other dimensions of evidentiality, it suffices to note the higher proportion of traits related to the speakers' desire to disguise their real argumentative intentions as objective reasons. In the parliament corpus, 75% are reportative

10. ICV: 'Iniciativa per Catalunya/ Els Verds'. It is a left-wing Catalan party.

11. PP: 'Partido Popular'. Right-wing party, currently ruling the country.

12. PSOE: Partido Socialista Obrero Español. Left-wing, socialist party. It was the main party in the opposition at the time the corpus was compiled.

evidentials and only 25% are inferential. The accessibility is universal in 80% of the instances and is privative only in 20% of the cases. As for the degree of precision of the evidence, 68% of the occurrences are either *precise* or *semiprecise*, while 32% of them are *imprecise*. However, some *imprecise* examples are used strategically as examples displaying a *universal* degree of accessibility. In parliamentary debates, the speakers intend to blur the origin of their accusations when it is themselves who do the accusing. This blurring effect is achieved by using *imprecise* evidentials. If this happens, however, the context helps to reveal the identity of the source.¹³

4. Conclusions

As analysed for the four different genres, the data reveal differences in the evidential forms and constructions used, in the importance of some evidential dimensions above others, and in the functions played by evidentials in each genre.

As for the forms and structures used in each genre, the following facts are of interest:

- Reportative evidentials are the most frequent, taking the corpus as a whole.
- In oral genres (conversations and parliamentary debates), no direct evidentials have been found.
- In oral genres, the proportion of evidential DMs is higher than it is in written texts: DMs represent 30% of evidentials in conversations and 28% in parliamentary debates. In our data, DMs are absent from academic papers and represent only 6.5% of the occurrences in the journalistic subcorpus (where only *al parecer* is used). The difference can be explained by the low degree of preciseness conveyed by DMs, as imprecision is not preferred or is even banned in written genres, which intend to appear objective, universally accessible, and as precise as possible.
- There are some peculiarities and some strong tendencies of use in each genre. For instance, *se ve que*, *por lo visto* and some folklore expressions are only used in conversations (see, however, González Ramos 2005; Marcos 2005; Cornillie and Gras 2015; Estellés and Albelda 2017). Unlike what is the case in the other genres, no instances of DRD appear in the parliamentary subcorpus collected.

13. On the other hand, when the goal of the evidential is to objectify what is being said in order to reinforce the argument, it is possible to make the addressees believe that the access to information is universal, even though it is the speaker, privately, who reaches that conclusion. These are also examples of evidential indirectness, which are not dealt with in the present paper, but are addressed in Estellés and Albelda (2018).

Moreover, the academic genre has some particularities, such as the conventional use of typographic elements (parentheses, superscripts, etc.) as evidentials. This is an exclusive feature of written genres; in our corpus it was only found in academic papers. Finally, the so-called conditional of rumour has only been found in newspaper articles (Abouda 2001; Vatrican 2010).

Patterns are also found in the internal dimensions that characterise evidentials (see Section 2.1). In some genres, the strong tendency of a given dimension to be expressed only in one sense (for instance, *mode of knowing* is overwhelmingly *reportative* and scarcely *direct* or *inferential*) points to the fact that this dimension is relevant for the definition of the genre. The only exception is colloquial conversation, where no dimensions have been revealed as being more important than others. The reason behind this lack of specificity lies in the basic and prototypical nature of conversation, which is somehow a *macro-* or *super-genre*, in the sense that it can include any traits and styles, from any genre (Briz 2001) due to its lack of restrictions.¹⁴

The other genres show the following tendencies:

- In press news, the *mode of knowing* is practically always *reportative* (98% of the occurrences). This fact points to the fact that, in journalism, the information reported by indirect (external) sources is the most valuable and is maximally adequate to be transmitted to the readership.
- In academic papers, 100% of the evidentials were *precise*, and 98% had *universal* access, thus confirming the importance of the dimensions *degree of preciseness of the source* and *accessibility*. This importance is related to the fact that, according to scientific method, specifying the sources consulted and sharing them with other researchers are ways to legitimise a research (see Kotwica, this volume).
- In parliamentary debates, the *type of source* is the most outstanding dimension. Speakers tend to show that the sources of information are *others* (92%), not themselves (8%). This tendency also correlates with the functions of evidentials in this genre. In the rhetorical game of attacking, criticising, and accusing, typical for Spanish parliamentary language, it is argumentatively useful to use the words uttered by deputies from rival parties as weapons that may be used to make the others' contradictions and inconsistencies visible for everyone. The occurrences where the type of source is *self* are associated with

14. This does not mean that this genre can be regarded as equivalent to any other genre, neither that the conversation does not have its particular traits. Rather, it opens the possibility that colloquial conversation is capable of containing and mixing characteristics of other genres.

inference, an obstructive form of knowledge in a parliamentary discourse that is supposed to pursue objectivity.

Considering all four genres together, the pragmatic functions of evidentials perfectly fit the defining traits of each genre.

- In conversations, the three functions found more frequently are related with the intrinsic interpersonal and socialising nature of the genre (Briz 2001; Hernández-Flores 2004; Locher and Watts 2008). These functions are the following: (1) introducing new information that makes the conversation flow and helps speakers gain their conversationalists' acceptance; (2) protecting the speaker's self-image; and (3) criticising the information obtained from other sources, always protecting the images of the conversationalists.
- In the current corpus, press news do not seem to have any further pragmatic function beyond the mere expression of the source of information. Therefore, the evidentials found in this subcorpus have been considered functionally neutral. This neutrality matches the ideal purpose of news, that is to say, the journalist must ideally set out the facts as they were given to him/her by the source without having, in principle, any further communicative aim (Garrido 2007; see also Albelda and Estellés, 2017).
- In academic papers, the main functions of evidentials correspond to the communicative needs of the genre: arguing in favour of, or criticising the cited references (in this case, the bibliographic sources; see Hyland 2005). Therefore, evidentials perform rhetoric-argumentative functions.
- In parliamentary debates, there is a complex system of pragmatic functions subsumed under two big categories: a relational work-related function (attacking the political rivals' images and their messages) and a rhetoric-persuasive function aiming to win a political or electoral battle (Ilie 2001, 2010). Evidentials serve these two functions: politicians use them to let their (potential) electorate know that they dissociate themselves from the ideas of the rival parties while, on the other hand, they use them in order to make their own discourse seem more objective and, therefore, more reliable and argumentatively more powerful, aiming to gain as many votes as possible.

Finally, the results obtained from the corpus support the hypothesis that genres condition the type, frequency, nature, and functions of the evidentials used. However, a complementary consequence also follows: evidentials help to characterise the different genres. The systematic behaviour of evidentials in the different genres (their internal dimensions and the functions performed by them) reflects some defining traits of these genres.

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