

## NON-GRAMMATICAL EVIDENTIALITY IN THE BALTIC LANGUAGES

Aurelija Usonienė and Birutė Ryvitytė

Department of English Philology  
Vilnius University  
Universiteto g. 5, LT-01513 Vilnius, Lithuania  
Tel.: +370 5 2687 228

On 5-7 May 2009, the Faculty of Philology at the University of Vilnius hosted a seminar on *Non-grammatical Evidentiality in the Baltic Languages: content, realizations and functions*. The seminar was organised by Professor Aurelija Usonienė and held as part of the research project under the **Programme for Promoting Lithuanian (Baltic) Studies and Research in Foreign Research and Educational Institutions for 2008–2010** funded by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania. On the first day of the seminar, the participants of the project from Germany, Latvia and Lithuania met to finalise their agreement concerning the content and the volume of work during the whole project.

On 6 May, Professor Björn Wiemer from the Institute of Slavonic Studies at Johannes Gutenberg University in Mainz gave a public lecture on *Evidentiality as a Conceptual Domain: defining the functions and linguistic expressions* to the participants of the project and the faculty and students of the University of Vilnius. The professor's opening statement was concerned with the importance and necessity to try keeping the distinction between the conceptual domain of evidentiality and epistemic modality as clear-cut as possible despite the fact that many scholars claim about an overlap between the two domains. However, he also admitted that there existed many cases of ambiguity and it was not always easy to distinguish between evidentials and epistemic modals due to the fact that both meanings (especially reported and inferential) could be often intertwined in one lexical expression. In his lecture, Professor Wiemer provided numerous examples in Lithuanian and many other languages in Europe illustrating various cases of morphological and lexical coding of hearsay and inference, which helped to define the domain of evidentiality as well as evoked questions and comments from the audience.

On the third day, the participants of the project made presentations on the evidentiality in the two Baltic languages. Professor Wiemer presented a study of parenthetical hearsay markers deriving from SAY-verbs in Croatian. Those hearsay markers were retrieved using the following criteria: retrievable (historically and/or synchronically) to SAY-verb; still refers to previously uttered speech acts; author of the original speech act not retrievable; not integrated into clausal syntax. The participants discussed the research methodology used in this study and possible ways of clarifying some ambiguous examples.



Professor Aurelija Usonienė (Department of English Philology, University of Vilnius) gave a talk on *Non-grammatical Evidentiality* by paying special attention to the understanding of the concept of ‘non-grammatical’, which had been chosen to stress the contrast to the grammatical or morphological evidentiality marking in Lithuanian. Traditionally, many lexical verbs of cognition and perception, as well as some speech act verbs when used as controlling verbs which take finite and non-finite complement clauses are regarded as lexical markers of evidentiality (Chafe 1986). The evidential value obtained is a combination of complement type and tense ‘sequence’ (Woodbury 1986, Dik and Hengeveld 1991), which means that the given reading is not purely lexical but syntax-dependent. Thus, in the given research project, the term ‘non-grammatical’ evidentials has been suggested to cover mainly cases of parenthetical use of particles, various forms of verbs, nouns, etc. that are used to denote speaker’s specification of the source of information/knowledge towards the proposition expressed (or towards what they are stating).

The presentation on the *Investigation of Parenthesis in Lithuanian Linguistics* given by Dr. Birutė Ryvitytė from the University of Vilnius overviewed previous research attempted by the Lithuanian linguists in the areas related to what the present project considers to be non-grammatical evidentiality. Associate professor Dr. Vytautas Kardelis (Department of Baltic Studies, University of Vilnius) presented a paper on *Non-grammatical Evidentiality in Lithuanian Dialects*. He claimed that the use of evidential markers in the Standard Contemporary Lithuanian and in Lithuanian dialects was different. The linguistic data collected from the Vilnius area showed that evidential markers were mostly used in narrative genres and that the parenthetical use of *saka* (‘they say/it is said’) predominated in the given data base.

In the second part of the seminar, presentations given by the project partners from Latvia described the research situation in the Latvian language. Liene Kalviša from the University

of Latvia gave a presentation on the *Evidentiality and Its Manifestations in Latvian* based on her research carried out during her MA studies. According to Kalviša, grammatical evidentiality in Latvian is expressed by the oblique mood (*modus relativus*) which serves to indicate that the information spoken about was received from another person, heard, read or learned otherwise. The oblique mood is the only grammatical marker in Latvian, whose main function is to express evidential meaning of hearsay. It is also possible to use the debitive mood and its varieties (relative and optative) as grammatical markers of evidentiality. The lexical realizations of evidentiality found in Latvian include insertions, particles, interjections, as well as several semantic groups of verbs. A frequently used evidential syntactic construction is a complex sentence with the source of information indicated in the main clause.

Baiba Ivulāne, a doctoral student from the University of Latvia, gave a paper on the *Verbs as Lexical Markers of Evidentiality in Latvian*. An attempt has been made to characterise different semantic groups of verbs expressing evidentiality in Latvian. She claimed that these verbs could also be frequently used to mark epistemic qualification. In these cases they function as main predicates taking a complement clause. When used parenthetically (as ‘insertions’), which is the most frequent use of these verbs, they can function as markers of evidentiality. Finally, there are some specific syntactic constructions where these verbs are regarded as more grammaticalized than in the ones mentioned previously. The most typical example of these would be: reflexive verb + indeclinable participle, e. g.:

*Viņi sakās cīnāties par vienlīdzību.*

(‘They say they are fighting for equality’)

Associate professor Dr. Ilze Lokmane’s (University of Latvia, Department of Latvian and General Linguistics) paper on the *Direct and Indirect Speech Reporting in Latvian* dealt with evidentiality from the syntactic point of view. She briefly overviewed basic constructions with reportive function and further focused on the syntactic realizations of some reportive markers in Latvian.

Associate professor Dr. Andra Kalnača (University of Latvia, Department of Latvian and General Linguistics) devoted her paper to the investigation of the interjections and non-grammatical evidentiality in Latvian. She claimed that interjections were connected with the direct observation and evaluation of different spoken or written situations when the author of the text expressed his or her opinion immediately by the instrumentality of interjections. Thus, interjections can be said to function as lexical, syntactical and partly phonetic indicators of modality. However, evidential meanings are not characteristic of all interjections. Volitive interjections are usually linked with deontic modality as they express obligation, recommendation, prohibition etc. On the contrary, emotive and cognitive interjections and, in some cases, onomatopoeias would be connected with evidentiality.

The final session of the seminar was devoted to the discussion of the structure of the database of non-grammatical evidentiality markers in the Baltic languages and the negotiation of the dates for the next seminar.