CHARACTERISING THE EVIDENTIAL STRATEGY OF MODERN IRISH: AN RRG ACCOUNT

BRIAN NOLAN
TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY DUBLIN

brian.nolan@gmail.com

INTRODUCTION - EVIDENTIAL IN MODERN IRISH

- **This talk is about the evidential in modern Irish**.
  - Scholars who work on evidentiality distinguish between a grammatical evidential system with evidential markers versus evidential strategies, usually coupled with the claim that European languages do not utilise evidential markers (Diewald & Smirnova 2010).
  - Instead, the evidential phenomena in European languages reflect evidential strategies.
- Irish does not have an evidentiality system based around a grammatical category.
- **Irish uses an evidentiality strategy involving a combination of lexical, syntactic and adverbial means to flag:**
  1) knowledge source,
  2) information, and
  3) degree of evidential strength.

THIS TALK PROCEEDS AS FOLLOWS:

1. We discuss the **central characteristic of linguistic evidentiality**
   - How evidentiality is a discrete semantic-functional domain that is different from epistemic modality.
   - The evidential hierarchy is introduced as a tool to explain some of the data within the evidential strategy of Irish.

2. We address the **treatment of evidentiality** within RRG as a clause level operator.

3. We provide an **analysis** of the Irish data as characterised by the evidential strategy.
   - The data has examples of use of lexical verbs of perception and cognition, and indicates a variety of syntactic organisations that support evidentiality.
   - Evidential adverbials are included in this analysis.

4. We conclude with a **discussion** of the characteristics of the evidential strategy of Irish.

WHAT IS AN EVIDENTIAL STRATEGY?

- An evidential strategy can indicate information source through a variety of means
  - Dimensions are: visual, non-visual sensory, inference, assumption, reported speech, and quotative functions.
  - The **choice** of information source signalled may depend on the speaker's perspective of the situation.
- The scope of an evidential is the clause.
- Evidentiality is concerned with knowledge, but in a different way to epistemic modality (De Haan 1999).
  - Evidentiality identifies the **source** of some information or knowledge,
  - Epistemic modality records one's **stance** on some knowledge (Nolan 2008: 147–159)
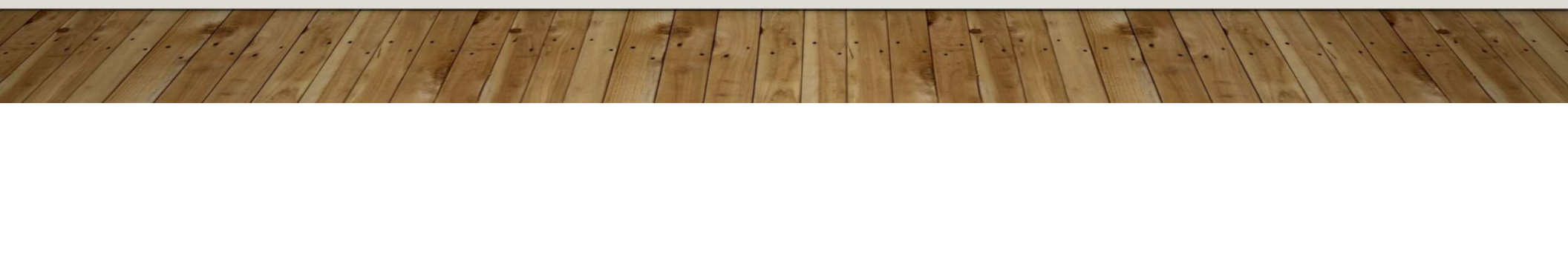
WHAT IS EVIDENTIALITY?

- Evidentiality is understood as stating a **source** (of evidence) for some information, including
  - that there is **evidence**, and
  - specifying the actual **type** of evidence, <u>and also</u>
  - the **new knowledge** or **proposition**.
- For Irish, the means of expressing the **source** of information / knowledge includes
  - **lexical** means, via verbs of perception ('see', 'hear', 'smell') and cognition ('know', 'understand', and so on), and
  - **syntactic** organisation of the clause.
- Evidential adverbials are also used in certain contexts.
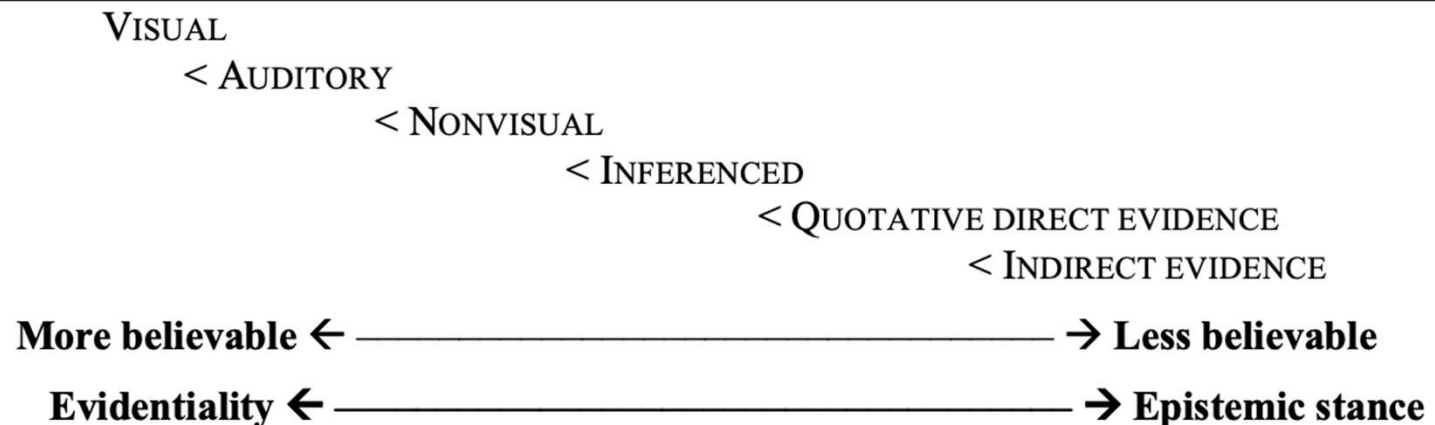
THE TYPES OF INFORMATION SOURCE

- These **verbs of perception and cognition** are used in a **function** that carries the evidential meaning.
    - This function identifies an information source / information channel.

- The **types** of **information source** – and the information channel – *includes* :
    - **VISUAL** – covers information acquired through *seeing*
    - **SENSORY NON-VISUAL** – information obtained through *hearing*, *smell*, *touch* and *taste*
    - **INFERENCE** – based on a visible tangible trigger or result
    - **QUOTATIVE** – for information with an explicit reference to the quoted source author
    - **REPORTED** – for information with no reference to who reported it
    - **ASSUMPTION** – based on reasoning, assumption, or knowledge in common ground

(based on Aikhenvald 2018:57)

THE CENTRAL CHARACTERISTIC OF LINGUISTIC EVIDENTIALITY

- The central characteristic of linguistic evidentiality is the explicit encoding of a source of information or knowledge which the **speaker asserts** when producing the utterance.

- An evidential utterance is an assertive speech act.

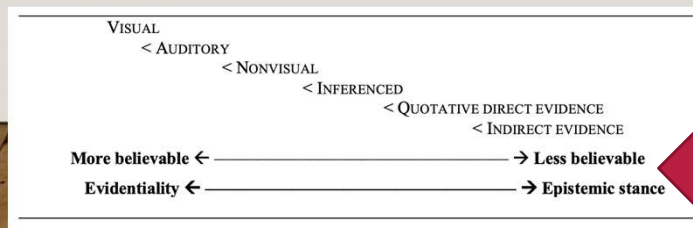- We can distinguish between different degrees of classification within an evidential strategy.

VISUAL
    < AUDITORY
        < NONVISUAL
            < INFERENCED
                < QUOTATIVE DIRECT EVIDENCE
                    < INDIRECT EVIDENCE

More believable ← ——————————————————— **→ Less believable**

Evidentiality ← ——————————————————— **→ Epistemic stance**

Evidential hierarchy – credibility of information expressed

EVIDENTIALITY VS. EPISTEMIC MODALITY

- Evidentiality and epistemic modality differ in their semantics:
  - Evidential **asserts** the information source=evidence and the new information
  - Epistemic modality **evaluates** the speaker's commitment for the utterance.
- Within Irish, evidentiality:
  - **may reflect** a speaker's stance in virtue of the type of construction chosen,
    - **since** the information source / mode of knowing / mode of access to the knowledge,
      - **can** carry an indication of the speaker's attitude and commitment towards the validity of the communicated information.

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Evidentiality ← ——————————— → Epistemic stance

EVIDENTIALITY WITHIN RRG

- In RRG, the clause has a layered structure and the operators on the LSC have different scopes depending on their type.

- An evidential is encoded as a clausal operator, along with Status (epistemic modals, external negation), Tense, and Illocutionary Force.

- Evidentiality outranks modality in the hierarchy posited by Van Valin and LaPolla (1997:49), and Van Valin (2005):

[**CLAUSE**] evidentiality **>** [**CLAUSE**] epistemic **>** [**CORE**] deontic/root
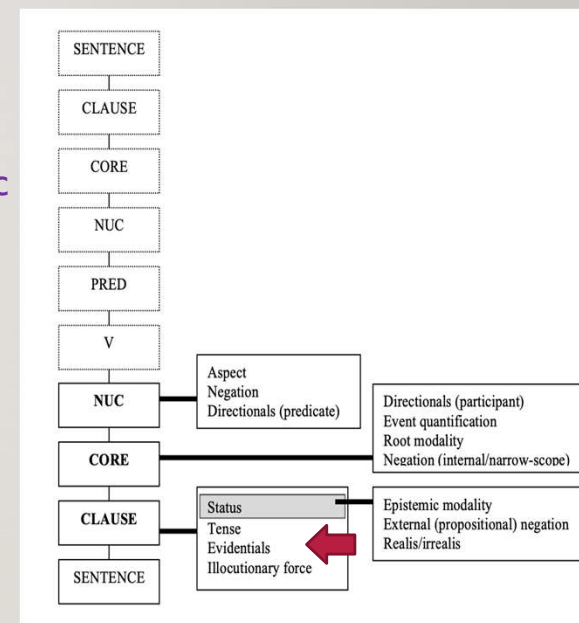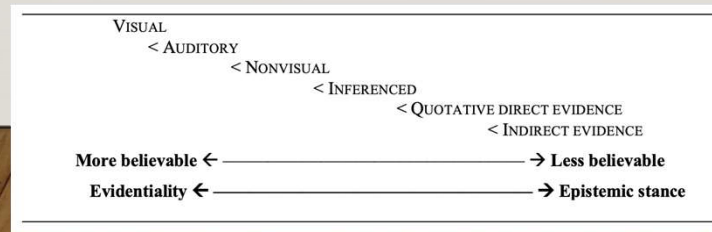
ANALYSIS OF THE IRISH DATA ON EVIDENTIALITY

- The Irish data contains extensive use of **verbs of perception and cognition**.
  - Verbs of perception conveys the evidence delivered via one of the physical senses.
  - Verbs of cognition designate mental processes that involve an actor-experiencer who *senses* or *cognises,* plus an object of knowledge or belief.
    - The human participant *knows*, *thinks*, *feels*, *believes*, and so on, while what is sensed or cognised is typically denoted in the form of a complement clause.

- In Irish, the **main verb** identifies the evidential **channel** (see, hear, etc.), whereas the **clausal complement** describes the information fact / situation / proposition.

- A **change in the complement clause structure** distinguishes between 1) a speaker's commitment to a credible piece of information and 2) a non-evidential hearsay meaning with the status of opinion or rumour.

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EVIDENTIAL ← VISUAL: SEE

Feicim   *Aifric*

see:V.PRS+1SG Aifric

I see Aifric.

see' (1sg, Aifric)

a.   **Feicim**   *Aifric*   *ag*   **snamh**

       see:V.PRS+1SG   Aifric   at:PREP swim:VN

       I see Aifric swimming.

<div style="background:yellow">**Visual: see**</div>

b.   [**Feicim** $Aifric_I$] **information channel** + [$Aifric_I$ *ag* **snamh**] **proposition**

       [I see $Aifric_I$] **information channel** + [$Aifric_I$ is swimming] **proposition**

- Note that the 2nd argument of V1 is shared as the 1st argument of V2

EVIDENTIAL ← VISUAL: SEE

Feicim   *an   fear* *ag*   ***casadh*** *isteach sa*   *chaolsráid.*   **Visual: see**

See.V.PRS +1SG DET   man   at:PREP turn:VN   into   DET   alley
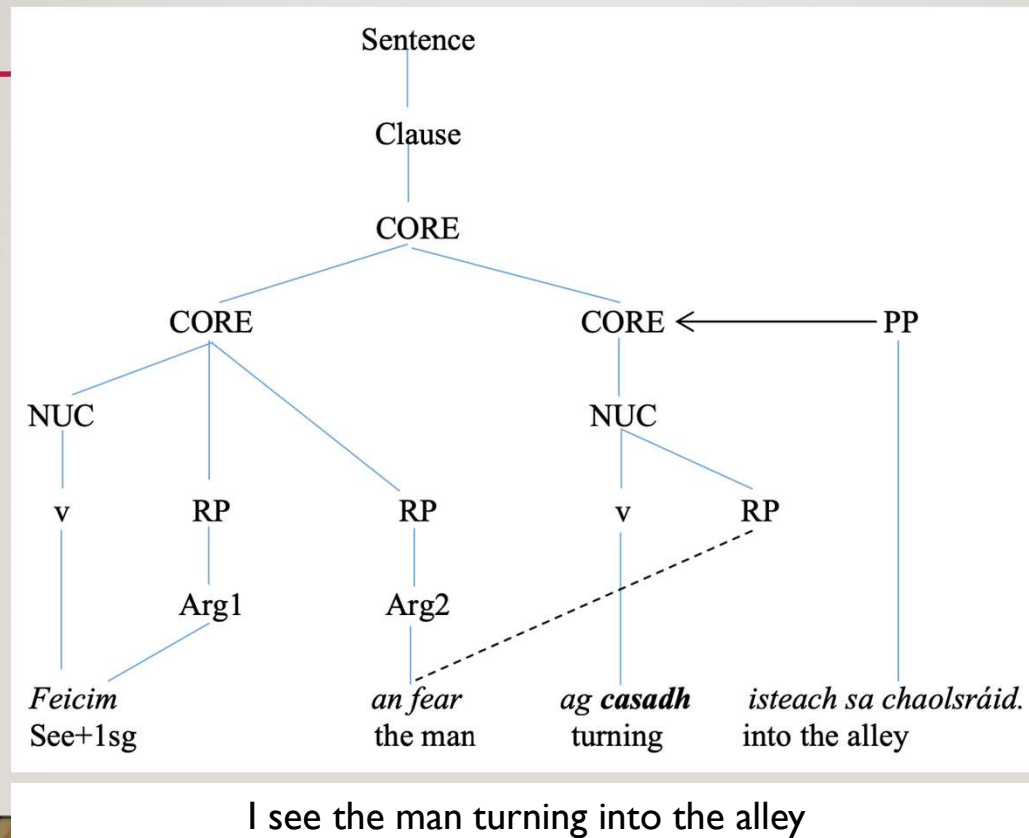
I see the man turning into the alley.

[***Feicim***   *an fear*$_1$] **information channel** + [*an fear*$_1$ *ag* ***casadh*** *isteach sa chaolsráid*] **proposition**

[I see <u>the man</u>$_1$]   + [<u>the man</u>$_1$ **turns** into the alley]

<**EVID**<[**see**'(1sg, [into.the.alley'[**turn**'(the man)]])]>>

- Note that the 2nd argument of V1 is shared as the 1st argument of V2

EVIDENTIAL ← VISUAL: SEE

I see the man turning into the alley

Shared argument between clauses in the LSC

13 EVIDENTIAL ← AURAL:HEAR

Cloisim _anois_ <u>_iad_</u> _ag_ **labhairt** _Rómainise_   **Aural: hear**

Hear.V.PRS +1SG now 3PL   at:PREP speak:VN Romanian

_ar_   _a_   _gcuid_   _teileafóiníní._

on:PREP 3PL.POSS some telephones

I now hear them speaking Romanian on their phones.

<EVID<[**hear'**(1sg, [means: on.their.phones'[**speak'**(3pl, Romanian)]])]>>

[_Cloisim anois_ <u>_iad_</u>] **information channel** + [<u>_iad_</u> _ag_ **labhairt** _Rómainise ar a gcuid teileafóiníní_] **proposition**.

[I hear <u>3pl</u> now]   + [<u>3pl</u> speak Romanian on their phones]

- Note that the 2nd argument of V1 is shared as the 1st argument of V2

ACTUAL HEARING VS. HEARSAY

Cloisim *éan   ag   teacht   isteach*

Hear.V.PRS+1SG bird at:PREP come:VN in:PREP

I hear a bird coming in.

<**EVID**<[**hear'**(1sg, [**come'**(<u>**bird, [be-in'**</u>])])]>>

> **Implies actual hearing**

By changing the clausal complement. a different meaning of the utterance can be revealed

Cloisim   **go**   **bhfuil**   *éan*   *tar éis*   **teacht**   *isteach*

Hear.v.prs+1SG COMP/to:PREP be:AUX.PRS bird   after:PREP come:VN in:PREP

Lit: I hear **that** a bird is after coming in.

I hear that a bird has come in.

> **Implies non-evidential hearsay**

<[**hear'**(1sg, [**that-be'**(<u>a bird has come in</u>)]]>

- Note that no argument sharing occurs with hearsay

Cloisim   *an   cóisir   mhór ag   ceiliúradh*

Implies actual hearing

hear. V.PRS +1SG DET party big   at:PREP celebrating: VN

I hear the big party celebrating.

< EVID <[**hear**'(1sg, **celebrate**'(the big party))]>>

By changing the clausal complement, a different meaning of the utterance can be revealed

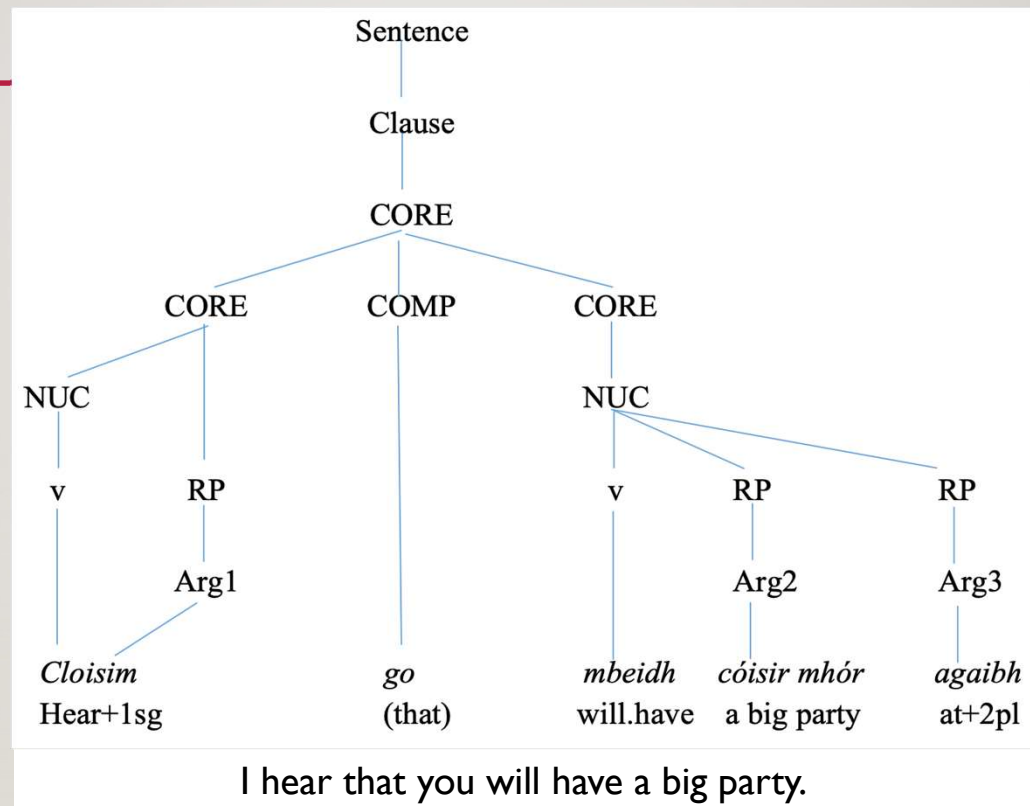*Cloisim*   **go**   **mbeidh**   *cóisir   mhór agaibh   ar   an   Satharn*

hear. V.PRS +1SG COMP/to:PREP be:AUX.FUT   party big   at:PREP+2PL on:PREP DET saturday

I hear **that** you **will have** a big party on Saturday.

Implies non-evidential hearsay

<[**hear**'(1sg, [**that-be**'(**have.on.Saturday**'(2sg, a big party))])]>

NON-EVIDENTIAL HEARSAY

I hear that you will have a big party.

Hearsay (non-evidential) complement structure in LSC

EVIDENTIAL ← SENSE AND COGNITION

Fuair   mé   boladh   uafásach   deataigh

Get.V.PST 1SG   smell   terrible (of) smoke

Lit: I got a terrible smell of smoke.

I became aware of [a terrible smell of smoke]_{RP}

I became aware of a terrible smell of smoke.

<EVID<[perceive'(1sg, terrible smell of smoke)]>>

Cognitive: Aware

EVIDENTIAL ← SENSE AND COGNITION

Bolaíonn muid do chraiceann banana ar chúl an ghluaisteáin   **Sense: Smell**

smell.V.PRS 1PL   2SG.POSS skin   banana on back DET car

We smell [your banana peel in the back of the car]**RP**

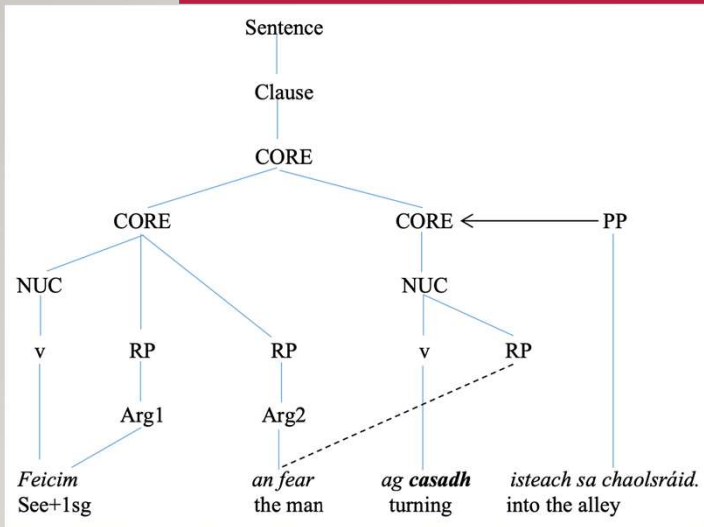We smell your banana peel in the back of the car.

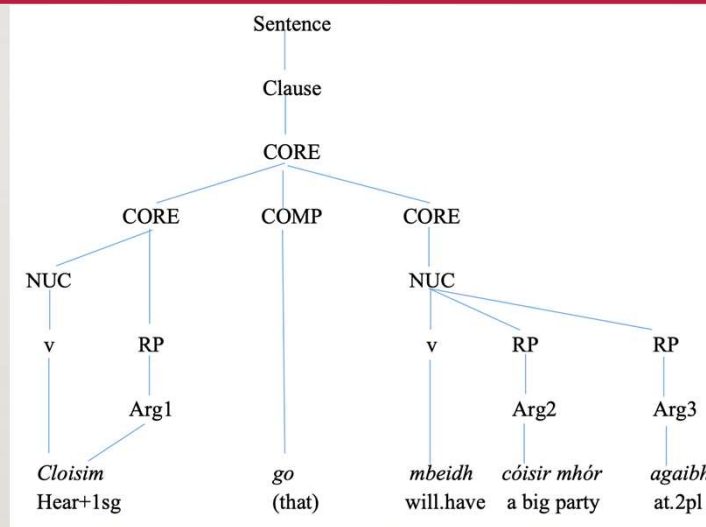<**EVID**<[**smell'**(1pl, (**be-on'**[banana skin, [inside.car']]))]>>
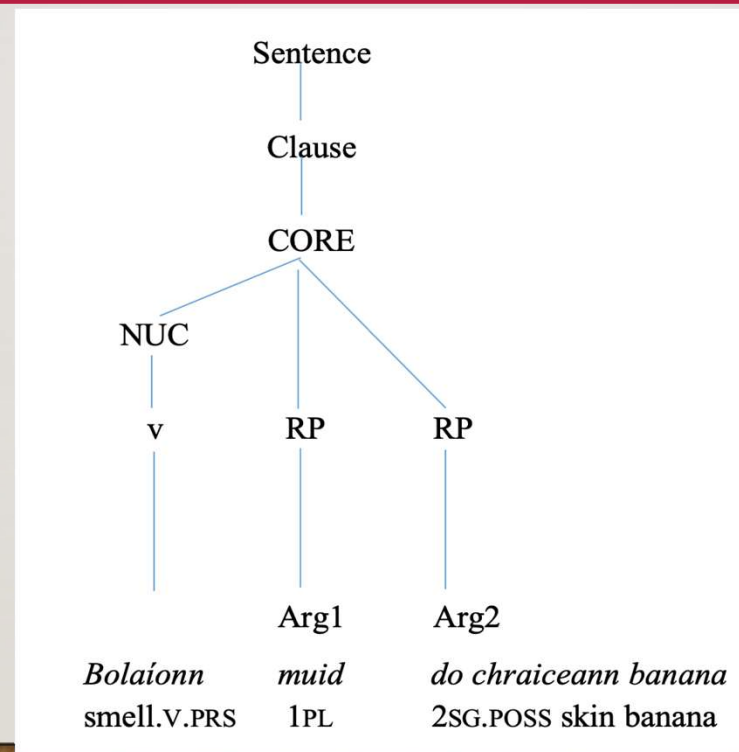
Evidential *sense* and *cognition* structure of LSC
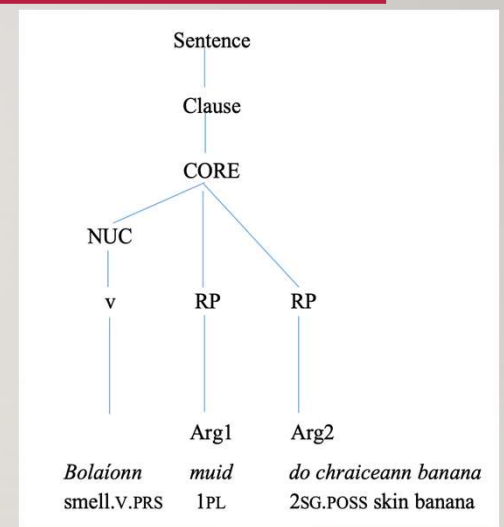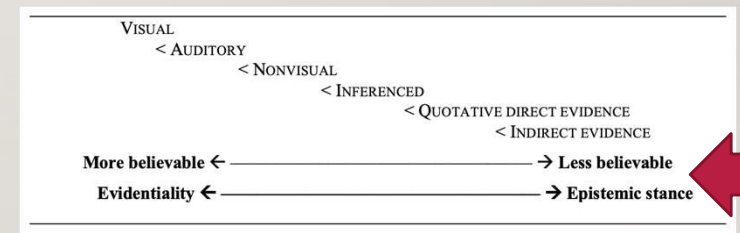
Evidential: Shared argument between clauses in the LSC

Hearsay (non-evidential) complement structure in LSC

Evidential: *sense / cognition* structure of LSC

EVIDENTIALITY AND ADVERBIAL FUNCTIONS

- Some **adverbial functions** are typically concerned with *manner, motion*, a *position or stance*, or the *means* by which an action is carried out.

- Other **adverbial functions** are concerned with qualifying, informing, or providing additional information:

  - *direct perception:* the apprehension of some act, event or situation through the senses,

  - *indirect perception:* the deduction of some act, event or situation from evidence of it,

  - *propositional attitude:* the expression of a participant's attitude, judgment or opinion regarding a state of affairs,

  - *cognition:* an expression of knowledge or mental activity,

  - *indirect discourse:* the expression of reported speech, or

  - *direct discourse:* the direct quotation of a speech event.

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- These adverbial functions reflect adjustments onto the Interclausal Semantic Relations hierarchy.

ADVERBIAL FUNCTIONS AND PARTS OF THE INTERCLAUSAL SEMANTIC RELATIONS HIERARCHY

....

Manner	do' (x, [motion (x)] . . . ∧ [manner.of.motion (x)])
Motion	do' (x, [motion (x)] . . . ∧ [**pred'** (x, (y))])
Position	do' (x, [stance (x)] ∧ [**pred'** (x, (y))])
Means	do' (x, [. . .] ∧ [**pred'** (x, y)])

....

Direct perception	**perceive'** (x, [LS ... y . . .])
Indirect perception	**perceive'** (x, [LS])
Propositional attitude	**believe'** ((x,) [LS])

....

Cognition	**know'** (x, [LS])
Indirect discourse	do' (x, [**say'** (x, [LS TNS ...])])
Direct discourse	do' (x, [**say'** (x, [LS IF ...])])

EVIDENTIAL ADVERBIALS

- In Irish, **evidential adverbials** are used by a speaker to deliver an **indirect evidential** meaning which
    - (for example) the speaker did **not** personally witness, or
    - reflects the speakers **commitment** to the quality of the information reported.
- It has two subtypes:
    - i) **information** which comes to the speaker from another source,
    - ii) **inference**, where the speaker draws the conclusion that a certain action has occurred.
- They are evidential, but allow for possible epistemic readings under a particular context.
    - They may **reflect** the commitment of the speaker towards the veracity of the knowledge.
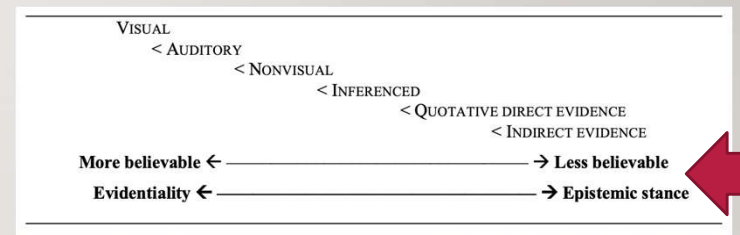   - They may **reveal** a stance in the speaker's commitment towards the information given,

EVIDENTIAL ADVERBIALS

Allegedly

a. *Haiceáladh a guthán, **más fíor.***

Hack:adj 3sg.F.poss phone if true

Allegedly, her phone was hacked.

Supposedly

b. *Le bheith **ag cuidiú a bhí** siad ann, **mar dhea.***

With be:AUX.PST at:PREP help:VN REL be.AUX.PST 3PL DET **supposedly**

Supposedly, they were there to help

EVIDENTIAL ADVERBIALS

Apparently / According to appearances

c.   *Beidh   leabhar **ag**   **teacht** uaithi   gan mhoill, **de réir**   **dealraimh.***

Be.AUX.PRS book   at:PREP come:VN from:PREP+3SG.F soon   according appearances
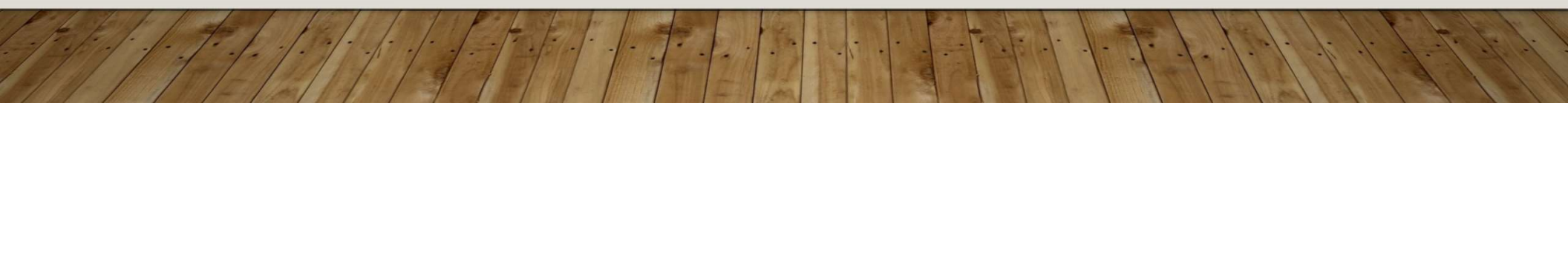
Apparently, she has a book coming out soon.

Apparently / According to appearances

d.   *Ba   eisean an   t-úinéir, **de réir**   **dealraimh.***

COP him   DET owner according appearances

It was him that was the owner, **according to appearances.**

EVIDENTIAL ADVERBIALS

<u>Of the opinion</u>

e. *I mo thuairim féin, tá sé an-stuama*

In:PREP my opinion SELF be:AUX.PRS 3SG.M very-prudent

In my own **opinion**, he/it is very prudent.

f. *Táim den tuairim go mbronntar stádas ró-ard ar an tuairim.*

Táim den tuairim go mbronntar

Be:AUX.PRS+1SG of:PREP+DET opinion to:PREP award:V.IMP-PASS

stádas ró-ard ar an tuairim.

status too-high on:PREP DET opinion.

I am of the **opinion** that one awarded too high a status to the judgement

EVIDENTIAL ADVERBIALS

These evidential adverbials ….

- **Reveal** the possibility that the **information** may <u>not be accurate,</u> or the **source** may be <u>unreliable</u>

- **Reveal** the information source can be the speaker, drawing on their own knowledge resources
  - … and may be <u>contradicted</u>

- May **code** some fact and that the speaker is <u>vouching</u> for that fact

- **Strike a tone in the utterance** that the evidence <u>speaks for itself</u>

- **Suggest** <u>certainty</u> with respect to the evidence of the information source

- **Hedge** on the possibility that the information <u>may not actually be what appears to be the case</u>

- **Suggest** that the information <u>may be contradicted</u>

DISCUSSION-1: EVIDENTIAL STRATEGY

In this study, we have found that:

- Irish employs an **evidential strategy** which uses a variety of means to code evidentiality.
    - Evidentiality: **signalling the source of information**, and the information in that **evidence channel**.

- **The clause complement** type reflects a meaning difference between direct evidential vs. marking of hearsay.

- **Clause structure** is important in the evidential strategy:
    - With **visual and aural modes**, the verb in the **first clause** identifies the information channel, while the verb in the **second clause** identifies the information reported on. Arguments are shared.
    - With the **sense and cognitive modes**, the clause organisation differs from that found in the visual and aural modes. Here, there is **only one clause** and the **second argument encodes an RP** encapsulating the sensed / perceived information.
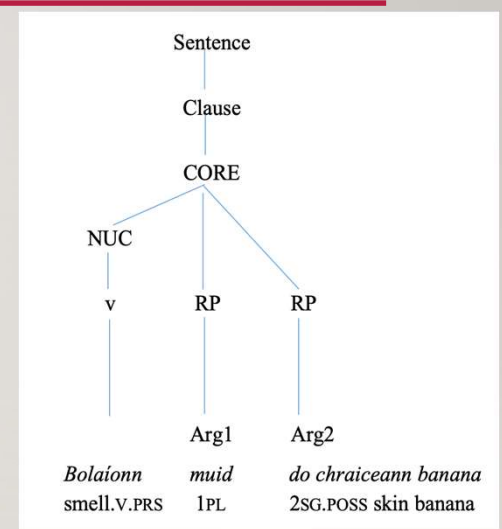
DISCUSSION-2: EVIDENTIAL STRATEGY
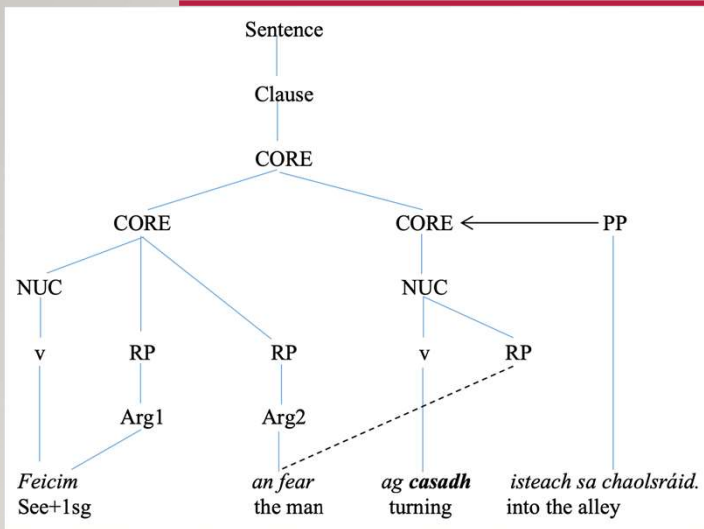
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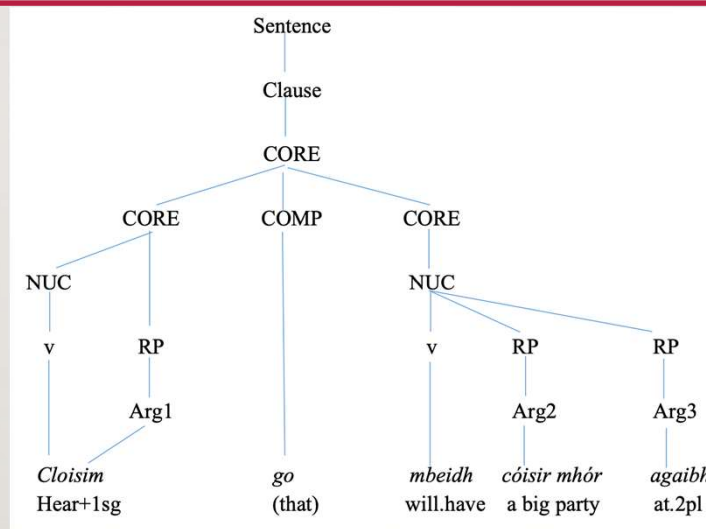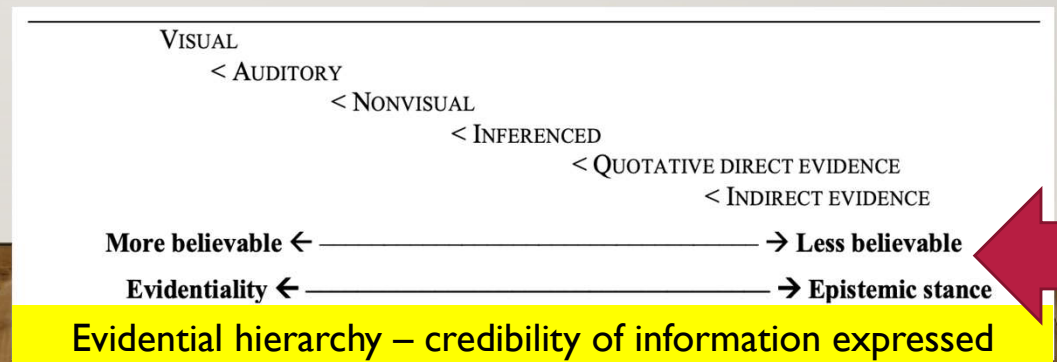
Hearsay (non-evidential) complement structure in LSC

Evidential: *sense / cognition* structure of LSC

DISCUSSION-3: EVIDENTIAL HIERARCHY

In summary, …

- An **evidential hierarchy** accurately reflects the evidential strategy of Irish

  - with **left pole** (VISUAL< AUDITORY: **see, hear**), coding more credibility,

  - towards the **centre** of the continuum with (SENSORY NON-VISUAL: **smell, taste)**, followed by the verbs of cognition (INFERENCE: **aware, know**),

  - then towards the other **rightmost pole**, with **adverbials** coding less believable information.

- The rightmost pole on the **evidential hierarchy**, that with less believable information, overlaps with an **epistemic stance** on the knowledge, reflecting the speaker's commitment on the uttered statement.

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Evidentiality ← ——————————— → Epistemic stance

Evidential hierarchy – credibility of information expressed

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