

**Ways of manifesting the evidentiality attitude.
Case study: Perception verbs in the Romanian contemporary language**

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***Résumé.** La catégorie sémantico-pragmatique de l'évidentialité existe dans presque toutes les langues et est récemment devenue un sujet de recherche auquel une attention particulière est accordée en linguistique internationale. La preuve est un concept complexe, et une définition unanimement acceptée se réfère à l'indication de la source sous-jacente aux informations transmises par le locuteur dans son discours. Dans la littérature, la distinction la plus reconnue est faite entre les preuves directes et indirectes. Notre article vise à analyser la catégorie de l'évidentialité à travers les évidentialités perceptuelles, dans une tentative d'expliquer de cette manière les glissements sémantiques fréquents des perceptions physiques propres aux significations probantes et épistémiques. Par la nature du corpus choisi dans cet article, nous nous limiterons donc à la description et à l'analyse des preuves directes, à travers lesquelles le locuteur indique les preuves sensorielles qui génèrent ses informations, autrement dit, le fait que les informations affirmées dans la déclaration ont été acquises par la vue, l'ouïe, le toucher. , afin de créer une impression de crédibilité ou de prendre une distance optimale avec ce qui est dit. Les résultats obtenus sur la base du corpus soutiennent l'idée selon laquelle, en roumain, la preuve constitue "une classe hétérogène et instable" [Zafiu 2002: 127], pouvant parler plutôt de «stratégies de preuve [Zafiu 2002: 127], respectivement des formes et des catégories qui acquièrent des significations secondaires se référant à la spécification la source des informations transmises par une déclaration. En utilisant un corpus riche, qui comprend la période entre le XVIe siècle et le présent, je vise à étudier les types de structures dans lesquelles se produit le transfert sémantique concret-abstrait dans le cas des verbes perceptifs et à expliquer les procédures qui conduisent à de tels changements de sens.*

***Mots-clé:** évidence directe, verbes de perception, langue roumaine contemporaine*

Introduction

In general, the evidentiality (borrowed from English, evidentiality) is a semantic category, more or less grammaticalized. The first publication devoted entirely to the subject was "Evidentiality: The linguistic Coding of Epistemology" edited by Chafe / Nicholas in 1986. Since then, the evidentiality have received more and more attention, being researched by many linguists. As a

fairly new field of investigation, it is defined differently. In the literature, the analyses focus either on the inter-linguistic study of the theme or on individual languages, because languages encode evidentiality in different ways: there are languages with a morphosyntactic-marked evidentiality system, such as languages in America or in certain regions of Asia. Other languages do not express evidentiality using only verbal affixes, but also clitics or particles. English, for example, frequently uses lexical evidentialities, such as adverbs or modal verbs [Chafe/ Nicholas 1986]. They state about evidentiality that *it express the speaker's attitude about the knowledge presented in the sentence* [Chafe and Nicholas 1986: 261-272] Other linguists, such as Aikhenvald [2003] or Haan [2005] consider that *the evidentiality* can also be interpreted as part of the modal system. Although a language does not have a clear system of evidentiality, there are various ways to emphasize the source of the message transmitted. With regard to the Romanian language, *evidentiality is the marking in speech of the types of sources from which the speaker obtained the information transmitted by his statement, indirect expression of a degree of credibility and the extent to which he assumes the content of the statement.* [Zafiu 2002:127]. Even if the representation of evidentiality differs from one language to another, there seem to be several consensuses regarding its semantic definition: the evidentiality essentially provides the source of the information, as an indication of how those were obtained in the subsequent statement.

As regards the typology of this field, the most common distinction in the literature is between *direct and indirect evidentiality*. *Direct evidentiality* refers to sensory perception (visual, auditory, tactile, tasteful, olfactory), while the semantic category of *indirect evidentiality* includes two other types of sources, namely inference and account. The meaning of the evidentiality marks depends to a large extent on the evidentiality system that each linguistic system has. For example, in the following statements:

- 1) a. Mărul se simte moale. (direct evidentiality)
“The apple feels soft.”
- 1) b. Mărul este copt. (inferential evidentiality)
“The apple is ripe.”

This expresses a direct perception, in which the *soft rating* refers to a tactile quality of the fruit, which is directly perceived by touch. Therefore, the use of the verb denotes a direct sensory perception. On the other hand, (1b) does not specify a tactile quality of the apple, because *the quality of baking* is inferred from the way the apple looks. The statement in (1b) is based on the observation that there is a correlation between the maturity of an apple and the sound it produces when it is hit: if it feels soft, it is usually ripe. Comparing (1a) with (1b), as opposed to (1a), the verb in (1b) does not express the type of sensory evidence from which the specified property is inferred, that of *being baked* and

therefore the sentence can be considered as an inferential structure. *Direct evidentiality* thus encompasses situations where the speaker presents the information transmitted in the statement as a result of his visual, auditory or olfactory experience. The main markers of this type of *direct evidentiality* are: verbs of perception (*a vedea, a auzi, a mirosi, etc.*) (*to see, to hear, to smell, etc.*), deictics (*aici, acum, aceasta*) (*here, now, this*), presentatives (*iată, poftim, uite*) (*here, look*). In this paper, I will sum up to analyze one of the categories of these markers, on the *verbs of perception*.

1. Verbs of perception and evidentiality

2. 1 Perception verbs vs. Cognition verbs

In recent years, the verbs of perception have aroused the interest of foreign specialists [Grezka 1990, Franckel, Lebaud 1990] and romanian ones [Nicula 2010, 2011], trying to describe as complete as possible the syntactic behavior and semantics of these verbs. The categorizations in Romanian linguistics concerned the subgroup of perception verbs, classified according to the receiving organs of physical stimuli in a) verbs of visual perception: to see, to look, to show, b) verbs of auditory perception: to listen and to hear, c) verbs of tactile perception: to feel and touch, d) verbs of taste perception: to taste, and e) verbs of olfactory perception: to smell [Nicula 2010: 44–47], depending on the perception classes of three groups: non-intentional/non-agentive perception verbs, intentional/agentive perception verbs and evidentiality verbs [Nicula 2010: 44–47]. The verbs of perception were thus separated from those of cognition, although the conclusions of those studies [Nicula 2010, 2011] revealed numerous overlaps or semantic extensions between the two classes.

Within the second category, cognition verbs tend towards the adoption of the name of cognitive verbs or cognitive attitude verbs (*cognitive verbs, verbs of cognitive attitude, fr. verbes cognitifs*), by renouncing sub-categorization into mental and/or sensory operations, now considered unitary. For example, for English being inventoried 25 such verbs by Gloria Cappelli [2008: 531]: *assume* / „a presupune”, *believe* / „a crede”, *bet* / „a paria”, *conjecture* / „a presupune”, *consider* / „a considera”, *doubt* / „a suspecta”, „a se îndoii”, *expect* / „a nădăjdui”, *fancy* / „a socoti”, „a presupune”, *feel* / „a simți”, *figure* / „a-și închipui”, *gather* / „a bănuî”, *guess* / „a-și închipui”, „a fi de părere”, *imagine* / „a-și imagina”, *judge* / „a aprecia”, „a considera”, *know* / „a ști”, *presume* / „a-și închipui”, „a bănuî”, *reckon* / „a crede”, „a presupune”, *see* / „a vedea”, *sense* / „a înțelege”, „a pricepe”, *suppose* / „a presupune”, „a-și închipui”, *surmise* / „a bănuî”, „a suspecta”, *suspect* / „a bănuî”, „a suspecta”, *think* / „a gândi”, „a înțelege”, *trust* / „a spera”, „a nădăjdui”, *wonder* / „a se întreba”. Therefore, in

English, this category of verbs forms a complex, dynamic system and as can be seen by the translation into the Romanian language, it is characterized by two peculiarities: epistemicity and evidentiality (Gloria Cappelli 2008:531), being arranged on the cognitive axis between two poles: to know and not to know, encoding different types of data derived from perception, knowledge (inference) or from affectivity (impressions, beliefs) [Gloria Cappelli 2008:531]. On this axis there are no fixed, punctual positions, but only values that vary according to the semantic or pragmatic context [Gloria Cappelli 2008:531]. In other words, in certain contexts, the above verbs have the ability to give the speaker the opportunity to epistemically evaluate a state of affairs [Cappelli 2007:178].

From the point of view of the perspectives of analysis, the problem of perception verbs is closely related to that of discursive markers, in pragmatism, and to the problem of incident and comment structures, in syntax. Traditional grammars systematically avoided the subject of verbal discursive markers because they could not receive "canonical" grammatical descriptions, rather having the effect of "damaging" the syntax and being present exclusively in oral communication, thus "nonstandard". In general, verbal markers have been denied grammatical status because they are not mandatory [Waltereit 2002], are very much related to the interpersonal dimension [Manili 1989], but also to the regional or content variation of the statement [Benjamin 2010: 254].

In recent Romanian language works, these aspects can be found – piecemeal – in chapters dedicated to the frastic and trans-frastic connectors, with particular reference to the expressions: *așa cum ai văzut/as you saw*, *după cum vezi/as you see*, *după cum se vede/as you can see*. [GALR: 735].

It was observed that the incidental sequences of glossing of mental actions, verbal, sensory, in a narrative, are inserted by verbs such as declarants, cogitandi, sentiendi: *a zice/to say*, *a spune/to say*, *a striga/to shout*, *a începe/ to begin*, *a repeta/to repeat*, *a auzi/to hear*, *a se gândi/ to think* [Gabrea, 1965] and that the call to the receiver is made by tics – false vocative/imperative/interrogative–coming from the automation of initial-called sequences: *mă-nțelegi/you understand me*, *îți închipui/you imagine*, *știi/you know*, *auzi/you hear*, *frate/brother*, *domnule/sir*, *drept să vă spun/ just to tell you*, *vezi bine/ you see well* etc., with a fatic role [Pop 1991: 81].

Between the verbs of perception appear a series of "gliders" or overlaps of meaning, especially in the case of him see (etymologically motivated by the Indo-European root *weid-, which designates, in a general manner, the knowledge and the view of the particular knowledge: to hear to "find out" or "to be rumored" and to see to "find, observe". Romanian frequently allows such "swipes", also signalled by other authors (e.g. seeing with the meaning of hearing or perceiving with taste),

explained by the interdependence between different sense organs, which work "together and bound" [Cazacu 1950: 259]:

„Ia să vedem ce spune N”
 „Să-l vezi ce vorbește și apoi să-ți dai părerea despre el.”
 „Caut dzama să văd sărată-i?” [Cazacu 1950: 259]

“Let’s see what N says”
 “See what he’s talking about and then give your opinion about him”
 “I’m looking to see how salty it is”

As I have shown above, direct evidentiality refers, in most cases, to visual evidence, but in fact it includes any type of sensory evidence, i.e. evidence obtained from the senses: sight, hearing, touch, smell or sensation. Visual evidence is used for events that have been seen (personal witness) by the speaker, thus expressing a high degree of truth on what is reported. On the other hand, depending on the context, they may also become marks of the expression of doubt, in this case marking indirect evidentiality, covering the area of inference based on sensory and visual evidence, but used to refer to states, feelings, knowledge. There are thus some general typological characteristics of perception verbs before examining how these verbs can be used as evidentialities and how they can assume various nuances of subjective meaning. Evidentiality marks of this type vary in their semantic extension, depending on the system and structure. First-hand visual evidence works and then other sensory evidence that can be expanded to indicate direct participation, control and volitivity of the speaker. Verbs involving the experience of the reported ones refer strictly to sensory perception, without any epistemic meaning whatsoever. In three- or more-term systems, as is the case with the Romanian language, perceptual evidentialities cover information acquired through observation and can be extended to indicate and assume the certainty of the information in the assertion.

THE VERB	THE ACTIVITY	THE EXPERIENCE
<i>A vedea/ See</i>	Maria vede că îi e foame. (deducts) “Maria sees she is hungry”	Maria vede fulgerul. (herself) “Maria sees the lightning”

2. 2 Analysis of the verb a vedea/to see

In this paper, for objective reasons, I propose the analysis of a single

verb of perception (see) with relatively high frequency in the language Romanian contemporary, most of the contexts exacerbated to identify semantic-functional behavior, thus being able to explain the frequent semantic "glycations" from the physical perceptions themselves towards the epistemic meanings. The corpus on which our analysis was focused is extracted from the literary language, taken from various lexicographic sources.

2. 2. I „(...) .a vedea vb .II intr.1.A avea simțul văzului; a avea capacitatea sau posibilitatea de a-și crea imagini vizuale pentru obiecte și fenomene. 2. A percepe cu ajutorul văzului; a avea reprezentarea (clară sau vagă) a ceva; a remarca, a observa, a analiza cu privirea./see vb.II in.1.To have a sense of sight; to have the ability or ability to create visual images for objects and phenomena. 2. To perceive with the help of sight; have the representation (clear or vague) of something; to notice, observe, analyze with the gaze

The verb to see has an informational function, but in addition to other verbs that designate direct perceptions, it is complex, marking, first of all, the transmission of information on object attributes, its meaning being strongly dependent on context. The syntactic variety in which perception verbs are involved correlates with the diversity of stimuli that can be perceived. In the case of visual perception, visual stimuli include: concrete entities, but on the other hand, punctuated events, processes and lasting states. Depending on the context, as I said above, but also on the distance from the observed object, the verbs of perception can express both *direct perception* and *indirect perception*.

2. a. „Vede toți mâncătorii de pâine, Încă și pe cei cu cap de câne.”
(Budai-Deleanu, Ion, *Țiganiada*). / “He *sees* all the bread eaters, even the ones with a dog’s head”.

Depending on the position of the verb in the assertion, it selects concrete or abstract references, the two possibilities, at the beginning of the sentence (2.a) or in the middle of it (2.b), trigger a different semantic interpretation: physical, *direct perception*, in (2.a) and cognitive, *indirect perception*, in example (2.b).

In (2.a), on the basis of syntactic configuration, the physical direct perception of an ongoing process is expressed, and a visual record is used, the speaker recounts through the prism of his own senses that the information set in the statement presents a high degree of truth. In this context, the verb is used with its own meaning, that of *observing*, of *noticing* those who eat bread and especially those who have the head like the dog’s, creating a visual image of their own. From the point of view of the completeness of reflection, here we can talk of a multimodal reflection- reporting to several analyzers that allow the identification of complex attributes, such as: movement, the shape of people, their size. In this structure, the meaning of the verb to see can be presented in terms according to the semantic area as follows: *vedea/see (I)* – perceive

through visual senses [+ visual], [+concrete], *vedea/see* (2) – imagine[+ visual], [-concrete], *vedea/see* – understand [-visual], [-concrete].

2. b. „Știi cum *văd* eu diferența dintre omul politic și cel economic?” (Petrescu, *Jurnal cu Petre Țuțea*) / “Do you know how I *see* the difference between the politician and the economic man?”

2. c. „*Văd* că ați făcut ordine...așteptați pe cineva?” (Cimpoșu, *Simion liftnicul*) / “I *see* you've been tidying up... are you waiting for someone?”

Thus, comparing with (2.a), in (2.b) the indirect value of perception is rendered by the meaning of imagining, the verb denoting cognitive representations, assimilated to the predictions *to understand, to intuit*.

On the other hand, in (2.c), the verb acquires inferential value, by the meaning it expresses in the context of the assertion, that of *believing*, of *inferring* that a guest would have waited, thus the statement acquires a dubious character, so an *indirect physical perception* is expressed, because what is perceived are certain indications that lead to the observation that someone is coming to visit.

All the examples given offer various semantic interpretations, so, according to Haan's theory, the speaker must keep in mind a clear distinction between direct access to a source of information (2.a) and indirectly (2.b), (2.c). The difference in interpretation between contexts (2.a) and (2.c) is explained by the semantico-syntactic structure of the subordinate sentence: in (2.c) the perception of an event in which the collector did not take part (the verb in the subordinate is [+Perfectiv], compared to the verb in the matrix, [+Present]).

In (2.a), the speaker recounts, through his own senses, visually, through the mark of *direct evidentiality* – *sees* – what has happened, so the asserted information enjoys great credibility, referring to the fundamental stage of acquiring information, so in this case, *direct perception* (through the senses) is excluded as an epistemic way.

The statement (2.b) and the statement (2.c) have two types that differ in relation to volitivity. Activity-type verbs, the statement (2.b) and (2.c) refer to volitive perception, while verbs in the statement (2.a) appeal to experience.

In the Romanian language, the verb *see* introduces configurations with three prototyping complements: *că/that*, *să/to*, *dacă/if*, and the selection of the complement is routed semantico-syntactic as follows: it depends on the speaker's commitment to the certainty of the subordinate clause and, at the same time, is associated with the selection of the provision: *să/to* for the subjunctive, *ca/that* for the indicative, *dacă/if* for probabilities.

The configuration with the verb *see* followed by *that* expresses: *direct perception*, as it is in the example (2.d), the first position; *indirect perception* in the second position, thus, here, the verb functions as a verb of cognition, transiting to the epistemic zone.

2. d. „*Văd* că există mari investiții, dar mai *văd* că există anumite dezechilibre.” / “I *see* that there is a lot of investment, but I also *see* that there are certain imbalances.”

A vedea/See + să/to – this pattern appears in imperative contexts, in which the verb makes agentive sense. The effect of using the subjunctive after the verb of perception is to alleviate the meaning of mandatory act of speech directive.

2. e. „*Vezi să n`aduci arderile tale de tot în toate locurile pe cari le vei vedea;*” (*Deuteronomul*, Cap. 12) / “Make sure you don't bring your concerns to all the places you will see”.

In (2.f), the verb *to see* has the value of an indirect interrogation and expresses a cognitive perception (transmits the meanings of *finding, verifying, thinking*), having a metaspeech function, expressing the doubting, disbelief of the speaker towards the content.

As a result of the demonstration, perception verbs of this type focus on the phenomenon, and this property makes verbs of this type suitable for evidentiality use.

2. f. „*Vezi dacă ai nevoie de declarație și cum poți parcurge drumul fără probleme.* / “*See if you need a statement and how you can walk the road smoothly.*”

Conclusions

In the Romanian language, as in other Romance languages, perception verbs develop, in certain syntactic contexts, meanings from other conceptual fields and focus on a few problems: the link between semantics and the syntax of perception verbs; the mechanism of associations between physical meanings and abstract meanings; the strict correlation between certain conceptual areas (there are clear correlations in this regard – for example, the expression of a process in the cognitive-intellectual area with the verb *see*: I see "Understand" that you are in control.). By comparing examples of spoken language with those of written literary language, the work highlighted the role of the verb analysed in relation to *evidentiality*: on the one hand as a marker of *direct evidentiality*– perceptual, and on the other hand, markers of *indirect evidentiality*–inferential, displaying the cross-language capacity to designate both *direct perception* and *indirect perception*.

The reading of verbs can be done strictly literally, in which case the proper meaning of the verb of perception can be preserved, or a pragmatic interpretation of verbal markers can be given, in which case it can be glossed as calls to the attention and interest of the interlocutor for the quotes contained in the statement. At the same time, it is also to be noted that their verbal mode and time influence the obvious attitude they express (*Sees* that it is raining. – indicative, present; *He'd see* it's raining. – conditional-optative, present; *He must*

be seeing it rain. – presumptively), such types of structures in which concrete-abstract transfer occurs lead to shifts of meaning within the same verb.

I have integrated the verb of perception, such as *see*, because I believe that it is an integral part of the category of evidentiality, thus being able to explain the frequent semantic "slides" from the physical perceptions themselves towards epistemic meanings.

Referring to the fundamental stage of *information acquisition*, the position that *direct perception* (through the senses) is excluded as an *epistemic way* should be accepted, in my opinion.

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