

Evidentials that come from nouns: a case of Ainu

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1. Typological profile of Ainu

- Ainu (here: Southern Hokkaido dialects of Saru and Chitose), a moribund isolate of Northern Japan, is polysynthetic, agglutinating, head-marking, SV/AOV, and pro-drop.
- No case marking on arguments (neutral alignment): S, A, and O are distinguished by the constituent order and obligatory verbal indexing; obliques are marked by postpositions.
- With respect to verbal indexing (affixes and clitics: =) shows mixed alignment:
 - tripartite in **1PL.(EXC)**, viz. *ci=* marks A, *=as* S, and *un=* O for the first person exclusive, and *a=* A, *=an* S, and *i=* O for **IND(efinite) person** (is not only used to refer to the indefinite proper, but also as 1PL.INC, 2SG/PL honorific, and logophoric, i.e. the person of the protagonist in folktales and reported discourse where it is conventionally translated as ‘I’, as in most examples below (Bugaeva 2008, 2011);
 - nominative/accusative in **1SG**, viz. *ku=* marks A/S and *en=* O;
 - neutral in **2SG/PL** and **3SG/PL**, viz. *e=* marks A/S/P in 2SG and *eci=* in 2PL, and the 3rd person is always zero-marked.
- The A set of prefixes is also employed for inalienable possession where they are attached to the head noun (possessee) to mark the person and number of the possessor; the head noun is additionally marked with possessive suffixes: *haw* ‘voice’ > *ku=haw-e* ‘my voice’.
- Ainu lacks pure tense, but has a few voice, aspectual, modal, and evidential markers.

2. An overview of evidentials in Ainu: semantics and syntax

- * Evidentiality as a category marking ‘source of information.’ (Aikhenvald 2004: 3)
- * In most Ainu grammars, evidentials are entered under ‘mood/modality’ along with genuine modal markers (Kindaichi 1993(1931): 326-42), (Chiri 1974(1936): 154-67), (Shibatani 1990: 83-4)¹, cf. “assertive mood” (factualness/truthfulness) in Refsing (1986: 234-37), “expressive nominalizers...conviction about one’s experience” in Tamura (2000 (1988) 227-29).
- * The first attempt to single out evidentials in Ainu is Nakagawa (1995: 12-3), see further elaboration in Bugaeva (2004: 69-75).
- “Evidentials often come from grammaticalized verbs” and “rarely come from nouns.” (Aikhenvald 2004: 271, 284)
- Ainu presents an example of such a rare language: it has a four-term evidential system, all of them originating in nouns, which can still be used as lexical words (outside

¹ Shibatani’s description of evidentials is based on Chiri (1974 (1936)), however, he insightfully notes that these “modal expressions” are evidential in nature.

evidentiality), cf. the number of tokens in my corpus of 23 Ainu folktales (44,717 words; **K**) in Table 1.²

- Semantically, this system belongs to type C1 (Aikhnevald 2004: 51-2) attested in a number of East Tucanoan languages (Tucano, Barasano, Tatuyo, and traditional Tariana). As is typical of type C1 (Aikhnevald 2004: 65), an inferential evidential in Ainu combines both inference based on tangible evidence and assumption based reasoning/general knowledge, and a reported evidential – hearsay and quotative.

Table 1. *A four-term evidential system in Ainu*

| TERM | MARKER (EV) | LIT. MEANING | EPISTEMIC EXTENSION | FREQUENCY in 44,717 word corpus |
|--------------------|--|------------------|---|---------------------------------|
| Inferential | <i>ru-w-e</i> (1) trace/footprint-EP-POSS | < ‘the trace of’ | Certainty (12) (very frequent) | 676 |
| Reported | <i>haw-e</i> (2) voice-POSS | < ‘the voice of’ | Conjecture (11a) | 54 |
| Visual | <i>sir-i</i> (3) sight-POSS | < ‘the sight of’ | Certainty ³ (?) Conjecture ⁴ (?) | 90 |
| Non-visual sensory | <i>hum-i</i> (4) sound-POSS | < ‘the sound of’ | Doubt ⁵ (?) | 26 |

※ Inferential *ruwe* is particularly common in folktales, which is due to its **certainty** extension.

(1) a. [*mosirpaunsar or wa topattumi ek ruwe ne.*
(place.name) place ABL night.raider come.SG INF.EV COP

‘It is a fact that (lit. ‘it is the trace of’) the night raiders came from Mosirpaunsar.’ (N1 130)

b. [*tane e=poro ruwe ne.*
already 2SG.S=be.big INF.EV COP

‘It is a fact that (lit. ‘it is the trace of’) you are already big.’ (K7708242UP.223)

(2) [*a=kor nispa ek hawe ne.*
IND.A=have wise.man come.SG REP.EV COP

‘It is said that (lit. ‘it is the voice of’) our wise man has come.’ (K8010281.UP.059)

² I use the following abbreviations: 1/2/IND(efinite) person indexing, A =transitive subject, ABL =ablative, ADM =admirative, ADV=adverbial, APPL =applicative, AUX =auxiliary, COP =copula, CAUS =causative, EP =epenthetic consonant, EC =evidential construction, EV =evidential noun, FIN =final particle, FOC =focus particle, INF.EV =inferential evidential, LOC =locative, N =noun, NEG =negation, NONVIS.EV =non-visual evidential, NP =noun phrase, NR =nominalizer, O =object, PL =plural, POSS =possessive, REFL =reflexive, REPEV =reported evidential, S =intransitive subject, SG =singular, VIS.EV = visual evidential.

³ Chiri (1974 (1936): 161).

⁴ Nakagawa (1997: 65).

⁵ Chiri (1974 (1936): 163).

(3) [*húci ek kor an*] *siri ne*.
 grandmother come.SG and exist.SG VIS.EV COP
 ‘It looks that (lit. ‘it is the sight of’) grandmother is coming.’ (Tamura 1988: 77)

(4) [*poy-seta en=sam ta ek*] *humi ne...*
 be.little-dog 1SG.O=near LOC come.SG NONVIS.EV COP
 ‘It feels that (lit. ‘it is the sound of’) a puppy came up to me.’ (ST 14)

- In **declarative sentences** (1)-(4), evidential nouns are followed by the equative copula *ne* ‘be(come) sth/sb’, so such a construction (EC) is viewed as biclausal, cf. “can be placed after sentences that end with verb phrases, where they **nominalize** the sentence, and the copula *ne* is placed afterwards to complete the phrase” (Tamura 2000: 227) and “external **relative clause analysis**” in Okuda (1989) and Satō (2008: 175). Clarification is needed:

I treat the EC as containing a nominal complement clause [[NP] N-POSS]_{NP} COP; the **copula** is analyzed as matrix clause predicate, the evidential noun (EV) as **copula complement** (copula subject is left unexpressed, since it is a dummy), and the clause preceding evidential noun as **clausal nominalization** functioning as modifier of the EV.

3. The use of Ainu evidentials in different clause types

- Contrary to Anderson’s generalization (1986: 227), evidentials in Ainu (all of them) may occur in a few irrealis clauses and in many other clause types triggering different ECs, see summary in Table 2. However, EV cannot occur in imperative and relative clauses.

NEGATIVE CLAUSES

- (5) a. [*ray kopan pe a=ne*] *ruwe ka somo ne*.
 die dislike thing/person.NR IND.A=COP INF.EV even NEG COP
 ‘It is not a fact that (lit. ‘it is not the trace of’) I am not one who is afraid of death.’
 (K7908032UP)
- b. [*a=kor wen puri anak te-wa-no asuru-hu as ka somo ki nankor*] *ruwe ne na*
 IND.A=have bad conduct TOP here-ABL-ADV rumor-POSS stand.SG even
 NEG do probably INF.EV COP FIN
 ‘As to my evil conduct, it is a fact that (lit. ‘it is the trace of’) from now on there won’t probably be (any) rumors about it.’ (N 8)

INTERROGATIVE CLAUSES

- (6) a. [*nep ka e=nukar*] *siri?*
 what even 2SG.A=see VIS.EV
 ‘Did you see anything?’ lit. ‘The sight of your seeing anything?’ (N 222)

- b. [*hnta eci=ye hawe an?*
 what 2PL.A=say REP.EV exist.SG
 ‘What did you (PL) say?’ lit. ‘What was the voice of your saying?’ (K7803233UP.309)

EXCLAMATORY CLAUSES

- (7) a. [*kéra-an humi!*
 taste.POSS-exist.SG NON.VIS.EV
 ‘It tastes (lit. ‘the sound of) good!’ (OI)
- b. *haa, iranakka hawe!*
 Oh! be.unpleasant REP.EV
 ‘Oh! It is (lit. ‘the voice of) unpleasant!’ (as a reply to my request for telling the same Ainu story in Japanese) (AB 73)

COMPLEMENT CLAUSES

- (8) [*sir-ka a=o-terke humi a=erampewtek*
 ground-top IND.A=at.APPL-run NON.VIS.EV IND.A=not.know
 ‘(I was running so hard,) I don’t know if I was touching the ground.’ (K8010281.UP.059)

CONDITIONAL CLAUSES

- (9) [*nen poka a=kar wa tap-ne ne hawe ne yak-un,*
 how only IND.A=make and like.this-COP COP REP.EV COP if-COP
 ‘(“No matter what your daughter looks like, I have come to take her as my wife,” I said. My uncle was very surprised, “Our nephew (=you) has come to take our transformed hairy daughter and will take her to kill her,” he said. “Why should I kill her?)
If it is that you say (lit. ‘it is the voice that’) that I (should) somehow deal with it, (I will return her to her original self and bring her back to you.)’⁶ (K8010291UP.095)

TEMPORAL CLAUSES

- (10) a. [*a=pon-mac-i anak-ne tek-ehe kere] siri isam*
 IND.A=young-woman-POSS TOP-COP hand-POSS touch VIS.EV not.exist
ki rapok-ke-he,
 do while-POSS-POSS
 ‘(My first wife took care of everything.) Meanwhile it looked that (lit. ‘it was a sight of’) my second wife stopped touching (her baby), (she had another baby.)’ (K8010281.UP.231)
- b. [*sirepa=an ruwe ne kor*
 arrive=IND.A INF.EV COP when/then
 ‘It is a fact that (lit. ‘it was the trace of’) when I arrived to the village, (nobody came out).’ (TS 68)
- c. [*si-musis-ka=an ruwe ne akusu,*
 REFL-cough-CAUS=IND.S INF.EV COP then/when
 ‘It is a fact that (lit. ‘it was the trace of’) when I coughed to announce my arrival, (an extremely beautiful woman came out).’ (K8010291UP.057)

⁶ Cross-cousin marriages were common with the Ainu.

Table 2. *Ainu evidentials (EV) in different clause types*

| Clause types | Inferent. <i>ruwe</i> ‘the trace of’ | Report. <i>hawe</i> ‘the voice of’ | Vis. <i>siri</i> ‘the sight of’ | Non-vis. <i>humi</i> ‘the sound of’ | Notes EV use |
|--|---|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--|---|
| NEGATIVE: (a) <i>EV ka₁ somo₂ ne₃</i> , lit. ‘(It) <u>is</u> ₃ not ₂ even ₁ the EV of’; <i>EV ka₁ isam₂</i> , lit. ‘Even ₁ the EV of...not exist ₂ ’ | + (5a) | + (5a) | + (10a) | + (10a) | Is possible to negate: (a) information source; |
| (b) ... <i>NEG...EV ne₁</i> , lit. ‘(It) <u>is</u> ₁ the EV of not ...’ | + (5b) | + (5b) | + (5b) | + (5b) | (b) clausal nominalization |
| INTERROGATIVE: (a) ... <i>EV?</i> lit. ‘The EV of...?’ | + (6a) | + (6a) | + (6a) | + (6a) | Is possible in: (a) polar Q; |
| (b) ... <i>EV an₁?</i> lit. ‘(Who/What etc.) is/was ₁ the EV of ...?’ | + (6b) | + (6b) | + (6b) | + (6b) | (b) content Q. Is not obligatory, but questions with EV are regarded as more polite. ⁷ |
| EXCLAMATORY: ... <i>EV (an₁)</i> , lit. ‘the EV of...(exists ₁)!’ | + (7b) | + (7b) | + (7b) | + (7a) | The non-vis. <i>humi</i> is much frequently used in exclamatory (and comp) clauses than in any other ⁸ . |
| COMPLEMENT: ... <i>EV+COMP-taking V</i> , lit. ‘think/hear/see/feel the EV of...’ | + (8) | + (8) | + (8) | + (8) | Allows a broad range of COMP-taking verbs; to be investigated further. |
| CONDITIONAL: ... <i>EV ne₁ yak-un₂</i> , lit. ‘if ₂ (<i>it</i>) <u>is</u> ₁ the EV of...’ | + (9) | + (9) | + (9) | - (9) | Other cond. conjunctions: <i>yak/yak-ne/ciki</i> ‘if’. Only inf. <i>ruwe</i> can co-occur with all of them; to be investigated further. |
| TEMPORAL: (a)... <i>EV ne₁ rapokke(he)₂</i> , lit. ‘While ₂ (<i>it</i>) <u>is</u> ₁ the EV of...’ | + (10b,c) | - (10b,c) | + (10a) (10b,c) | - (10b,c) | |
| (b)... <i>EV ne₁ kor₂/akusu₃/ayne₄</i> , lit. ‘When ₂ (<i>it</i>) <u>was</u> ₁ the EV of...’; ‘It was the EV of..., then ₃ /then finally ₄ ’ | + (10b,c) | - (10b,c) | - (10b,c) | - (10b,c) | Only inf. <i>ruwe</i> is used in a wide range of temporal clauses. |

⁷ Satō (2008: 134).

⁸ Tamura (2000: 228).

- Most evidentials may co-occur with modal and aspect markers, which occur either in
 - (a) the clausal nominalization, e.g. desiderative *rusuy*, deontic *kuni p*, intentional *kusu ne*, or in
 - (b) both the clausal nominalization and (the main) EV clause (but not simultaneously), e.g. admirative *aan* (in Saru)/*anan* (in Chitose) (12b), probabilative/convictive *nankor* (5b), (11a,b) and actional perfect marker *a*.

Only the inferential *ruwe* is attested with all these markers, other EVs allow fewer co-occurrences, with non-visual *humi* being the least prone to the co-occurrences.

(11) a. [*kira nankor hawe ne*.
 run.away probably REPEV COP
 ‘(Based on what they said) I assume that (lit. ‘it is the voice of’) they will probably run away (if I say, “Meow”).’ (CM 132) Horobetsu dialect

b. [*suy nep ka siknu wa oka kunak*
 again what even alive and exist.PL COMP
ramu-pa wa payeoka hawe ne nankor
 think-PL and travel.PL REPEV COP probably
 ‘(There were only dead people and I was scared, so I built a small home here and have been raising you. However,) based on what I probably heard (lit. ‘it is probably the voice of’) I think that they have come back to see if anyone is still alive.’ (K7908051UP.044)

- Ainu allows **the co-occurrence of two EVs in one clause**, but such examples are rare and the second evidential is always the inferential *ruwe*. This is probably due to the **certainty** (=assertive) extension of the inferential *ruwe*, which is conventionalized in folktales: Ainu storytellers regarded the folktales of most genres as true stories.

(12) a. [*a=ekas-i i= resu hi ne*]
 IND.A=grandfather-POSS IND.O=raise thing.NR COP
hawe an ruwe ne
 REPEV exist.SG INF.EV COP
 ‘(“You must say, “This and this happened, and) it is said that (lit. ‘it is the voice of’ grandfather raised me,” (said grandfather.)’ (K7807151UP.051)

b. [*a=irwak-ih ne hawe ne wa kusu*
 IND.A=sibling-POSS COP REPEV COP and because
rametok-kor siri ne anan ruwe ne
 bravery-have VIS.EV COP ADM INF.EV COP
 ‘(Now, I realize that) he had been so brave (lit. ‘it was the sight of that’) because it was said that (lit. ‘it was the voice of’) he was my cousin!’ (A few years ago the hero had fought a sword battle against a man from another village. Later he was told that the

man was his cousin and then he finally realized why the man had been such a brave warrior.’ (N2 303) Three EVs in one sentence: one in the 1st clause and two in the 2nd.

4. Are evidentials still “nouns”? Or have they turned into EV+COP auxiliary verbs?

- EVs show the following properties of nouns as they
 - (a) prosodically, in declarative sentences, take a standard ‘modifier+noun’ pattern in which the noun (here: EV) loses its accent while the main clause predicate (COP) retains its accent, i.e. EV and COP do not constitute one phonological unit (Osami Okuda, p.c.);
 - (b) retain possessive suffixes with a major associative anaphoric use providing reference to a larger situation encoded in the clausal nominalization;
 - (c) may be followed by nominal restrictive particles, e.g. *ka* ‘even’ (5a), *he* <FOC>;
 - (d) formally function as arguments of the main clause predicates (i.e. complements of the equative copula *ne* in declarative sentences, subjects of the locative copula *an* in content question and exclamation clauses etc.);
 - (e) allow for some variability of the main (evidential) clause predicate, cf. *ne* <COP>, *an* ‘exist’, *isam* ‘not exist’, and also *as* ‘stand’;
 - (f) may fall under a separate scope of negation, modality, and aspect.

- Nevertheless, EVs are strongly grammaticalized nouns since they
 - (a) do not allow for other modifiers (demonstratives, determiners) in addition to the nominal complement clause, which distinguishes them from non-grammaticalized nouns in a position of the head of a relative clause;
 - (b) can be used with any subject of the modifying clause, and most importantly, in equative clauses (1b), (5a) where subjects are clearly not identical with the evidential noun in question, which shows that they have stopped to subcategorize for a specific semantic category, and thus have become semantically “empty” in a sense (Heiko Narrog, p.c.).

- Infer. *ruwe* is the most grammaticalized and frequently used EV, which is due to the epistemic extension of certainty. It allows the greatest syntactic combinability with modal and aspect markers. I suggest that, at least in the case of inf. *ruwe* the biclausal evidential construction is on the verge of turning into a monoclausal complex predicate construction consisting of verb + auxiliary verb *ruwe-ne* (evidential noun + copula). Additional support for this directionality is found in the development of structurally similar modal/aspectual constructions in Southern Hokkaido Ainu (e.g. intentional *kus-ne* (AUX) < *kusu ne* lit. ‘it is the reason of (?)’, deontic *kuni-p-ne* (?-thing/person.NR-COP) which are no longer used as lexical words) and in other languages, e.g. Japanese (Tsunoda, forthcoming) and a few Tibeto-Burman languages (DeLancey 2011: 243).

5. Concluding remarks

- Ainu has a four-term evidential system (type C1) consisting of inferential, reported, visual, and non-visual evidentials similar to that of some Amazonian languages.

- All Ainu EVs originate in nouns and still retain many nominal properties (POSS marking etc.), which is unusual cross-linguistically. They are grammaticalized nouns.

- In declarative sentences, the EC has the following biclausal structure: [[NP] N-POSS]_{NP} COP; the event itself is encoded in the clausal nominalization (NP) which functions as a nominal complement of the EV (N-POSS).
- Ainu EVs may fall under a scope of negation, modality, and aspect, but not all to the same extent. Inf. *ruwe* allows the greatest syntactic combinability with modal, aspect and other evidential markers due to its epistemic extension of certainly and conventionalized use in folklore.
- Being the most grammaticalized evidential noun, inferential *ruwe* is virtually on the verge of turning into an auxiliary verb *ruwe-ne* (EV+COP), a grammaticalization path that is already attested in the development of structurally similar modal/aspectual markers in Ainu and other languages (e.g. Japanese and TB). The biclausal evidential construction may eventually give place to a monoclausal complex predicate construction.

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