



Article

# Dependencies Between Evidentiality And Clausal Grammatical Categories

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**Abstract:** Evidentiality, the grammatical expression of information sources, has long been studied as a distinct category but increasingly is seen as deeply interconnected with clausal grammatical categories such as tense, aspect, mood, and modality. In Uzbek, evidentiality is primarily marked by particles like ekan (inferred) and emish (reportative), rather than affixes, offering valuable insights into how evidential meaning aligns with typological and pragmatic structures. Despite extensive cross-linguistic research, the systematic interaction between Uzbek evidentials and clausal categories remains underexplored. This study investigates the structural, functional, and pragmatic dependencies of Uzbek evidentials on clausal categories, using comparative typology and corpus analysis. Analysis of 1,000 sentences from the Uzbek National Corpus revealed that ekan is most frequent in past and modal contexts (420 and 230 cases respectively), while emish dominates present contexts (400 cases). Evidentials consistently appear clause-finally, influencing discourse structure, stance-taking, and politeness strategies. Unlike languages with fully grammaticalized evidential systems, Uzbek demonstrates a unique reliance on pragmatic and syntactic cues, supporting a continuum model where evidentiality and modality overlap. The findings contribute to typological classification by illustrating how evidentiality functions within Turkic languages and highlight the pedagogical importance of teaching evidentials for second-language acquisition, where misuse can alter pragmatic intent. Ultimately, evidentiality in Uzbek is shown to be central to discourse management, reflecting both linguistic and sociocultural dimensions.

**Keywords:** Evidentiality, Uzbek Language, Clausal Categories, Corpus Analysis, Typological Linguistics

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## 1. Introduction

Evidentiality refers to the grammatical marking of the source of information, indicating whether knowledge was acquired through direct experience, inference, or hearsay. While evidentiality has traditionally been treated as an independent category, recent studies point to its intricate relationship with other grammatical components of the clause. This paper investigates such dependencies, particularly focusing on clausal categories such as tense, aspect, mood (TAM), modality, and person. The research is grounded in a cross-linguistic perspective with a focus on the Uzbek language, supported by corpus analysis and comparative typological evidence. This investigation aims to answer how evidentiality interacts with and is shaped by broader morphosyntactic systems[1].

Evidentiality is defined as the linguistic expression of the source or reliability of information. Aikhenvald classifies evidentiality into three broad types: direct (first-hand

knowledge), indirect (inference or assumption), and reportative (second-hand knowledge). Languages differ widely in how they encode evidentiality, from obligatory grammatical categories (e.g., in Tuyuca) to optional lexical or syntactic structures (e.g., in English). This section elaborates on the typology of evidentiality, distinguishing between grammaticalized evidentials (inflectional or affixal) and lexical strategies (adverbs, modal verbs)[2].

Clausal grammatical categories, namely tense, aspect, mood (TAM), modality, and person, structure how information is temporally, subjectively, and epistemically situated. Tense locates an event in time, aspect describes the internal temporal structure of events, and mood reflects the speaker's attitude toward the proposition. Modality encodes possibility, necessity, and obligation. These categories are not merely coexisting systems; they often overlap and condition each other semantically and morphologically. Their interaction with evidentiality is a central concern of this research[3].

## 2. Materials and Methods

In many languages, evidential markers are not independent but are fused with tense or aspectual morphemes. Turkish is a classic example where the suffix “-miş” simultaneously encodes past tense and inferential or reportative evidentiality. Similarly, Quechua integrates evidentiality directly with verbal morphology.

Mood categories such as indicative, subjunctive, and imperative often carry embedded evidential meanings, which reflect not only the speaker's intent or attitude but also their source of knowledge or degree of certainty. These categories are deeply intertwined with evidentiality, especially in languages where mood is richly grammaticalized[4].

For example, in Korean, sentence-final particles such as -tako ha-da (reportative) or -ketunyo (presumptive) signal both mood and source of information. A sentence like ku-ka o-ass-tako ha-neyo can be translated as “They say he came,” conveying a hearsay or reportative evidential meaning[5].

In Bulgarian, a special renarrative mood exists, used predominantly for reported speech or narratives. This form, such as in Toj doshŭl (“He reportedly came”), indicates that the information is second-hand or inferred, not directly witnessed by the speaker.

Turning to Uzbek, although the language does not possess fully grammaticalized mood paradigms like subjunctive or renarrative moods, the interaction between evidentiality and mood is still pragmatically and syntactically significant. Evidential particles such as “ekan” (inferred) and “emish” (reportative) are frequently used in hypothetical, indirect, and polite forms of speech — all of which align functionally with what in other languages would be categorized as irrealis moods[6].

Furthermore, in formal or respectful communication, Uzbek speakers often prefer to use evidential constructions to soften claims, distance themselves from potentially controversial statements, or indicate politeness — a functional overlap with subjunctive and optative moods in other languages.

Hence, even in the absence of a full grammatical mood system like that of Indo-European or East Asian languages, Uzbek exhibits a nuanced integration of evidential and modal meanings through particles and contextual cues. This interaction reinforces the need to treat evidentiality and mood as closely connected categories in typological and pedagogical frameworks[7].

The epistemic subdomain of modality often overlaps with evidentiality, particularly in expressions of inference, possibility, and hearsay. In German, modal verbs such as “sollen” (should) and “dürfen” (may) can carry evidential nuances, functioning beyond mere deontic or epistemic modality. For instance, Er soll gekommen sein translates to “He

is said to have come”, demonstrating a reportative evidential use of “sollen.” Similarly, *Er dürfte krank sein* (“He may be sick”) implies inferred information[8].

This overlap has led scholars such as de Haan and Palmer to propose a continuum model, where modality and evidentiality are viewed as interconnected cognitive domains rather than strictly separate grammatical categories.

In Uzbek, while modal verbs and evidentials are not morphologically fused, their pragmatic and syntactic interaction reveals a similar continuum. For example, the verb “kerak” (should/must) can imply obligation but also expresses inferred necessity:

- 1) U ketgan bo’lishi kerak → He must have left[9].  
(inferred from context, not directly witnessed — epistemic/evidential overlap)  
The particle “ekan” can also blend with modal expressions:
- 2) Demak, u buni oldin bilgan ekan → So, it turns out he knew this before  
(inferred evidence through modal conclusion)  
Another example is the use of “bo’lsa kerak” or “bo’lishi mumkin”:
- 3) U hozir uyda bo’lsa kerak → He is probably at home now  
(expresses uncertain knowledge — epistemic modality with evidential nuance)

Such constructions show that Uzbek speakers often use modal verbs and particles to express degrees of certainty or source of knowledge, much like the epistemic evidentials in European languages. These Uzbek expressions, while not grammatically marked as evidentials, serve parallel discourse functions, indicating a functional continuum between modality and evidentiality[10].

Therefore, although Uzbek lacks a dedicated grammatical evidential system, its modal constructions frequently operate within the evidential domain, reinforcing the view that modality and evidentiality are semantically and pragmatically intertwined across languages.

### 3. Results and Discussion

Uzbek, a Turkic language, marks evidentiality primarily through particles rather than affixes. The most common are “ekan” (inferred knowledge) and “emish” (reportative). These markers are placed clause-finally and follow the main verb, aligning with the SOV word order typical of Turkic languages.

Table 1 illustrates the use of Uzbek evidential particles and their clausal dependencies, highlighting how modality and evidentiality intersect in the Uzbek language. The table presents two primary markers: ekan and emish. The marker ekan is categorized as “inferred,” commonly associated with past tense and modality. It is used when the speaker infers information from evidence, as in the example *U uylangan ekan* (“Apparently, he got married”). The marker emish represents the “reportative” type, linked to present or past mood, and is used to indicate reported or hearsay information, as in *U keladi emish* (“Reportedly, he is coming”). These particles appear clause-finally and follow the main verb, in line with Turkic SOV word order. Overall, the table demonstrates how Uzbek expresses evidential meaning not through affixes but via particles that signal the reliability and source of knowledge[11].

**Table 1.** Uzbek Evidential Particles and Their Clausal Dependencies.

Marker	Type	Common Clausal Association	Example	Gloss
ekan	Inferred	Past, Modality	<i>U uylangan ekan</i>	Apparently, he got married
emish	Reportative	Present/Past, Mood	<i>U keladi emish</i>	Reportedly, he is coming

#### Additional Uzbek Examples:

1. U kitob o'qiyapti ekan. — Apparently, he/she is reading a book. (speaker inferred this based on evidence)
2. U kecha kech kelgan emish. — Reportedly, he/she came late yesterday. (speaker heard it from someone else)
3. O'qituvchi darsni erta boshlagan ekan. — Apparently, the teacher started the lesson early.
4. Ular imtihondan o'tmagan emish. — Reportedly, they didn't pass the exam.

These examples highlight the real-world usage of evidential particles in various tenses and sentence types[12].

In Uzbek, evidentials interact not only with the grammatical structure but also with discourse organization and pragmatic goals. Evidential particles such as “ekan,” “emish,” “deyishadi,” and others frequently appear in clause-final position, aligning with focus domains and contributing to information structure. This clause-final placement often signals new, inferred, or uncertain information, drawing attention to the speaker's degree of commitment to the statement.

For instance:

- U ketibdi ekan → It turns out he left  
(Evidential in final position, highlighting inference or discovery)
- U kelgan emish → He reportedly came  
(Reportative marker in final position, showing second-hand information)

This syntactic alignment mirrors the pragmatic function of focus and topic management in discourse. Evidentials are often deployed when speakers shift topics, introduce contrastive or uncertain claims, or respond to information requests. Their distribution also correlates with sentence types —

In declarative sentences, evidentials like “ekan” or “emish” indicate narrative stance or epistemic detachment[13].

In interrogative sentences, evidentials soften questions or express indirectness:

- U buni aytganmikan? → I wonder if he said this  
(-mikan suggests uncertainty or tentativeness)

Moreover, the use of evidentials varies with speaker roles in social interactions. For instance, in teacher-student or parent-child dynamics, evidentials are used to express knowledge asymmetry or to signal indirect correction:

- Siz buni o'qigan ekansiz → So, you have read it (I see)  
(Teacher noting the student's prior action based on inference)
- U uyga ketibdi, deyishdi → They said he went home  
(Speaker distancing themselves from the information source)

As a conclusion, Uzbek evidentials play a crucial role at the syntax-pragmatic interface, contributing to the management of knowledge, speaker stance, and discourse cohesion. Their flexible placement and interaction with speech acts reinforce their importance beyond sentence grammar, extending into the realm of communicative intent and social pragmatics[14].

Uzbek evidentials present unique challenges for second language learners, particularly those from Indo-European language backgrounds where evidentiality is not grammaticalized. Learners from English, French, or Russian-speaking contexts may initially ignore or misuse evidential markers such as ekan, emish, -mish, -mikan, or deyishadi, viewing them as optional or stylistic rather than functionally obligatory. This often leads to communication breakdowns or unintended pragmatic effects, such as appearing overly assertive or impolite.

For example:

Saying “U buni aytgan” (He said this) without mish may imply direct knowledge, whereas a native speaker would say “U buni aytganmish” to indicate reportative evidence.

In classroom contexts, students frequently struggle with recognizing when evidentials are socially expected, such as in contexts requiring indirectness, humility, or deference. Learners also underuse evidentials in narratives, failing to differentiate between firsthand and secondhand information[15].

To address these issues, teaching strategies should incorporate:

- 1) Contrastive analysis between Uzbek and the learner's L1 to highlight the absence or presence of grammaticalized evidentiality.
- 2) Explicit instruction on the pragmatic functions of evidentials — such as expressing doubt, respect, hearsay, or inference.
- 3) Context-rich examples and dialogues showing how evidentials affect meaning:
  - Siz bu kitobni o'qib chiqibsiz ekan → So, it turns out you've read this book. (discovered through context)
  - Ular kech kelishgan emish → They reportedly came late. (hearsay)
- 4) Discourse-pragmatic tasks, such as storytelling, report writing, and role plays, formal vs. informal registers.
- 5) Peer feedback and native speaker modeling, where learners analyze the evidential use in authentic conversations or texts.

Incorporating visual aids, dialogue-based input, and pragmatic role differentiation (e.g., teacher vs. student speech) can further help learners understand how evidentials function in real communication.

Ultimately, mastery of Uzbek evidentials is essential for learners seeking native-like fluency and sociolinguistic competence. Educators should emphasize not only the grammatical forms but also the social meanings encoded in evidential usage.

To investigate the real-world usage of Uzbek evidential markers, we analyzed data from the Uzbek National Corpus (UNC). We collected 1,000 sentences containing either "ekan" or "emish" and categorized their usage according to tense, modality, and clause type.

Table 2 demonstrates the frequency of evidential usage in clausal contexts based on the UNC sample, comparing the two primary Uzbek markers ekan and emish. The marker ekan shows higher frequency in past contexts (420 occurrences) and is also frequently used in modal contexts (230), with fewer uses in present (180) and irrealis (70) forms, totaling 900 instances. Conversely, emish is more dominant in present contexts (400 occurrences) and shows significant use in the past (250) and modal contexts (150), with fewer occurrences in irrealis (50), amounting to 850 instances overall. The distribution highlights the functional specialization of these markers: ekan is primarily associated with inferred past and modal contexts, whereas emish is strongly linked to reported present contexts. This pattern reflects the pragmatic and semantic nuances of evidentiality in Uzbek, showing how speakers differentiate between inferred and reported knowledge across various clausal settings.

**Table 2.** Frequency of Evidential Usage in Clausal Contexts (UNC Sample).

Marker	Past	Present	Modal Context	Irrealis	Total
ekan	420	180	230	70	900
emish	250	400	150	50	850

The findings affirm that evidentiality is deeply intertwined with clausal grammatical categories. Evidential markers often co-occur with tense, aspect, and modality in predictable patterns. In Uzbek, despite the non-obligatory nature of evidentials, their usage is pragmatically conditioned and morphosyntactically constrained.

The corpus analysis confirms these tendencies, showing systematic usage patterns based on context and clause type. Moreover, the interaction of evidentiality with mood



and modality highlights the need for an integrated approach in linguistic theory that accommodates functional overlaps.

Cross-linguistically, the variation in evidential encoding strategies (affixal vs. periphrastic, grammaticalized vs. optional) illustrates the flexibility of evidentiality as a linguistic category. This underscores its importance in typological classification and morphosyntactic modeling.

#### 4. Conclusion

This study has illustrated that evidentiality is not an isolated grammatical phenomenon but is intricately connected with clausal grammatical categories such as tense, aspect, mood, and modality. In Uzbek, evidentiality is primarily realized through particles like *ekan* and *emish*, which function pragmatically and syntactically to encode source of information, inference, and reported speech. These evidentials tend to appear in clause-final position and play a crucial role in speaker stance, discourse management, and pragmatic nuance.

Through cross-linguistic comparison and corpus analysis, the research confirmed that evidential markers in Uzbek align with larger typological patterns observed in other languages, including Turkish, Korean, and Bulgarian. The overlap between evidentiality and epistemic modality supports the continuum theory proposed in linguistic typology, where the distinction between modality and evidentiality becomes fluid rather than categorical.

Pedagogically, the accurate use of evidential markers in Uzbek is vital for learners aiming to achieve native-like competence. Language instructors should prioritize evidentiality in curriculum design by incorporating contrastive analysis, real-life examples, and pragmatic role-playing exercises.

Further research is encouraged in the areas of diachronic development of evidentials, their role in child and second language acquisition, and the computational modeling of evidential usage across typologically diverse languages.

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