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The Historical Development of
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0. Introduction. Evidentiality is discussed as a pragmatic and as a grammatical category by Jakobsen (1957), Whorf (1956), and Woodbury¹ (MS). Jakobsen (1957:4) terms evidentiality

...the verbal category which takes into account three events —the narrated event, the speech event, and the narrated speech event, namely *the alleged source of information about the narrated event* [italics mine]. The speaker reports an event on the basis of someone else's report (quotative, i.e., hearsay evidence), of a dream (revelative evidence), of a guess (presumptive evidence) or of his own previous experience (memory evidence).

Jakobsen's description of evidentiality as dealing with the "alleged source of information about the narrated speech event" suggests that, among other things, evidentiality also includes whether a statement reports a real, actual event or not, i.e., evidentiality deals with questions of the referentiality or non-referentiality of statements.

Manifestations of evidentiality are distributed throughout the grammar of modern English. Quotative evidence: Quotatives are used in a number of ways to indicate indirectly acquired knowledge. A direct quote purportedly reports an actual speech event verbatim e.g., *Jane said, "My work is finished."* An indirect quote, while also the report of an actual speech event, is not verbatim e.g., *Jane said that she had finished her work.* A third class of quotatives, in contrast to the direct and indirect quotations above, is not the report of an actual speech event; instead, it reports a commonly or generally held belief e.g., *They say (that) most psychiatrists are a little crazy.* Other similar constructions using various 'sense' verbs also exist which also report indirect knowledge in a way largely parallel to the above use of *They say...* e.g., *I hear..., I see..., I understand (that)...* Notice that the contrast between the referentiality of the direct and indirect quotations and the non-referentiality of the third set of examples is mainly, although obviously not exclusively, a consequence of the tense of the main clause verb. Presumptive evidence: A wide range of syntactic and morphological devices are used to acknowledge not just the presumptive character of a statement but also to record a comment on the degree of probability. Of course the most obvious indication is the certainty implied by the omission of any comment at all on probability. Syntactically, comments on probability can be indicated by embedding a statement under a variety of main clause verbs e.g., *I think (that)...., It seems...., I suppose (that)*

..., *I feel (that)...*, *It appears (that)...*, *It looks like...*
 Morphologically, modals and adverbs both show probability e.g., *That might be him now*, *She's probably here already*. Referentiality: Whether a statement is referential or not is often indicated in the verb system, in the modals, or in the use of determiners. In fact, one of the most basic and pervasive dimensions of the verb system is the indication of referentiality e.g., *He plays football* vs. *He is playing football*. Other sometimes quite subtle evidential distinctions can also be made. For example, the presence of must in the sentence '*The toast must be burning*' ('cf. '*The toast is burning*') signals more than just the indirect nature of the speaker's knowledge; it also signals that the statement about the toast was a product of logical induction. English is, in short, the possessor of a fine range of devices that indicate evidential distinctions. Evidentiality marking—found throughout the grammar as one dimension of various assorted other systems—is an integral part of the semantics and, on closer inspection, the grammar of modern English.

1.0 Akha sentence particles. Akha² has an elaborate system of sentential particles, one of the functions of which is to indicate evidentiality distinctions. The centrality of evidentiality to the system is acknowledged by the fact that Egerod and Hansson (1974:227) begin by dividing the sentential particles into two sets: the 'sensorial' particles, which specify how the speaker's knowledge was arrived at, and the 'non-sensorial' particles, which do not. And, while evidential distinctions can sometimes be found elsewhere in the grammar, it is in the sentential particles that it is most salient.

1.1 The ubiquitous ə [eu]. The most frequently used particle in Akha is the ubiquitous ə ~ á [eu ~ eu_v]. Its range of functions includes: the subordination of one noun to another, as in possessive, genitive, and other noun-modifying constructions; the marking of the citation form of the verb; the subordination of verbs to nouns in relative clause constructions; and, the termination of utterances, which are most typically in the declarative mood.

As with a number of the Akha particles that we will examine, a semantically-significant tonal alternation exists between a low-toned variant marking past tense ə [eu_v], and a non-low-toned variant marking non-past á [eu]. Lewis' dictionary has three entries under eu:

- eu used in the following statements; declarative positive, declarative negative, and in questions demanding an explanation (it tends to be a bit scoldy in the latter)
- eu_v this signifies strong assertion that what is said is true
- eu_v much the same as -eu, but tends to be used more with: 1. negative statements 2. about something in the past

Interestingly, it is the variant tonally-marked for past tense -eu_v which carries with it the "strong assertion that what is said is true". This might simply be a pragmatically-predictable consequence of the past tense marking. Originally the particle -eu appears not to have had any more of an evidential flavor than

the certainty implied in any unqualified, declarative statement. Instead, the 'assertive' flavor now found in -eu, may have originated secondarily from a combination of this 'implicit' certainty and the certainty associated with all past events.

Historical notes: Akha -eu, reconstructed at the proto-Lolo-Burmese (PLB) level as *way³, is described in Bradley (1979a:254):

There is one particle, probably of considerable antiquity, which occurs both after nouns and after verbs. This particle, 'declarative'/'genitive' *way³, occurs in every language for which there are any significant data available on particles. Its functions include the subordinating of one noun to another, ...; the subordinating of verbs to nouns, in a relative-clause-type relationship; and the termination of an utterance in a declarative mood.

And, although particles—particularly sentence-final particles—present unique problems of reconstruction e.g., the tones seem quite susceptible to the influence of sentence-final intonation, Akha -eu is without question phonologically cognate to the rai'/rai of Written Burmese, the rgh⁵ of Fraser's Lisu, and the ubiquitous ve of Black Lahu (Matisoff 1972a). However, with the exception of Black Lahu ve, which is the only particle to be both phonologically cognate and functionally parallel to Akha -eu, it is a particle other than the cognate one which is the functional counterpart; for example, the functional counterpart is tai'/tai not rai'/rai in Written Burmese and a not rgh⁵ in Lisu.

At the proto-Loloish and, presumably, proto-Lolo-Burmese stages, Bradley's characterization of *way³ as essentially a 'nominalizer' is quite accurate. Bradley then equates this PLB *way³ with PTB *-ki or *-gi, which Benedict—on the basis of a more than sufficient data base—establishes as a genitival (subordinating) suffix. However, it is not clear to me that PLB *way³ should be equated with this particle.³ Nonetheless, on the basis of such extra-Lolo-Burmese evidence as Sherpa way 'have', Akha -eu < PLB *way³ must at least be related to an earlier PTB copular *way. The independent question of whether the sentence-final manifestations of Akha -eu < *way³ should be analyzed as essentially copular or essentially nominalizing I will leave to those with more faith than I have in the discreteness of functional categories.

1.2 Other particles. Aside from the quotative, which will be mentioned below, the other particles of Akha align themselves along several crosscutting dimensions: expected—non-expected; sensorial—non-sensorial; non-past—past. The non-sensorial particles, which do not specify how the speaker's knowledge was arrived at, are further subdivided into two sets depending upon the person of the subject. For example, in a declarative statement, if the subject is first person, the pertinent particle from set X is used; otherwise, the particle is chosen from set Y. For a question, if the subject is second person, the pertinent particle from set X is used; otherwise, the particle is chosen from set Y. This alternation, I suspect,

correlates with the fact that questions—especially yes-no questions—are to a large degree confirmatory in nature; in fact, Lewis notes several places that a certain particle is used in a question when the speaker anticipates an answer which will use it. And, for indirect reference, if the subject is third person, the pertinent particle from set X is used; otherwise, the particle is chosen from set Y. The sensorial particles, which do specify how the speaker's knowledge was arrived at, distinguish between visual and non-visual. For these particles, the expectation—non-expectation dimension often shifts to non-surprise—surprise, all the time—intermittently, and luckily—unfortunately, a range that seems to have its own not totally unexpected logic to it. Another dimension mentioned above as crosscutting all the particles is non-past—past with non-past correlating with a high tone and past correlating with a low tone. This correlation of tone and tense is not etymological but I have not yet been able to reconstruct the conditioning factors. With the sensorial particles the notion of non-past—past often comes to include direct—indirect. The Akha particles are represented in Chart 1.

	<u>Expected</u>	<u>Non-Expected</u>
<u>Non-Sensorial:</u>	<u>X</u> . <u>Y</u>	<u>X</u> . <u>Y</u>
<i>non-past</i>	má : mé	é : á
<i>past</i>	mà : mè	è : à
<i>negative:</i>		
<i>non-past</i>	mà...má : mà...mé	mà... : mà...a
<i>past</i>	mà...a	
<u>Sensorial:</u>		
<i>visual:</i>		
<i>non-past</i>	ŋáa	ŋá
<i>past</i>	ŋáá	ŋà
<i>non-visual:</i>		
<i>non-past</i>	mía	nja
<i>past</i>	míá	njà
<u>Prediction of the future:</u>	<u>X</u> . <u>Y</u>	
	njá . mí	

Chart 1: Akha Evidential Particles

(Adapted from Egerod and Hansson 1974: 227-8)

The interpretation of the chart is obvious both from its own arrangement and from the text immediately preceding it. What is not obvious is how these particles fit in with the rest of the grammar synchronically and where they developed from diachronically. Each particle will now be discussed in this light.

1.2.1 Non-sensorial. These particles, which deal with statements in which no indication is given about the source of the evidence, are crosscut both by a dimension of expectation and by the X/Y person distinction discussed above. The person dimension is only of peripheral interest to questions about the origins of the current semantic system, but the dimension of expectation—non-expectation is interesting. Although I am not yet positive of the etymology of the first pair on Chart 1 i.e., *má* ~ *mà*, the most likely association is with the general PLB nominalizing particle **ma*³, a particle which occurs in Lisu marking some relative clauses and some subordinate clauses. And, of course, its development into a non-sensorial marker of the expected is not surprising; the nominalization of the expected is quite common. The other non-sensorial expected particles i.e., *mé* ~ *mè* developed out of an erstwhile copula and still realized as such in the form *mè* of Karen. Within Lolo-Burmese it has a number of excellent cognates including the sentence-final aspectual particle of Burmese *mai'*/*mai*. The semantics of the Akha particles are foreshadowed in Okell's (1969: 354) description of Burmese *mai'*/*mai* as being "future, or assumptive". There is a strong parallel here with English *will*, at least in its manifestation in sentences like *I'll go to San Francisco tomorrow*, in that a future state is being assumed. Originally, the contrast between *má*/*mà* and *mé*/*mè*, which at least in part was the artifact of cooccurrence constraints between particles and personal pronouns, may also have included a realized/unrealized dimension with the 'realized' being marked by the nominalizing **ma*³ and the 'unrealized' being marked by the provenience of the modern *mé*/*mè*. This distinction would have then been leveled by whatever mechanism it was that imposed a tonal past—non-past distinction on all the Akha particles.

The non-expected, non-sensorial particles *é/è* and *á/à* come from sources somewhat parallel to the sources found for the expected counterparts discussed above. *é/è* is cognate with Tibetan *yin* and Sherpa 'in and, I suspect, Burmese *yan/raŋ* [yiñ] 'if', despite the difficulties presented by the spelling of the final rime. In contrast to the 'assumptive' future of *mai'*/*mai*, *yan/raŋ* represents a 'speculative' future, a distinction that might be represented in English by the difference between *He'll go to Fresno tomorrow* and *He could go to Fresno tomorrow*. The other member of the non-expected, non-sensorial pair is *á/à*. And, while at one point Egerod and Hansson (1974:265) gloss *áa* as 'exclamation', etymologically these seem to be just the reflexes of the PTB third person pronoun. Its presence in this paradigm is more by default than by design i.e., it started out as a third person pronoun which developed into a relatively neutral sentence-final particle. Any additional meaning it may have acquired is no doubt due more to the meanings of the other particles that it has been thrust into opposition with than to any inherent meaning of its own. The X/Y distinction between the uses of *é/è* and *á/à* is the remnant of earlier cooccurrence constraints within the verb paradigm; in both Tibetan and Sherpa the cognates

of the é/è are restricted to use with the first person. The semantics of the é/è also seem to be preserved in Sherpa, where use of the cognate form 'in (Woodbury MS:11) "entails that the speaker is unsure of the proposition, and found out perhaps by hearsay".

1.2.2 Sensorial. The sensorial particles, which indicate the speaker's source of evidence for the statement, are divided into visual and non-visual. The core of all four forms of the visual particle is η_a . The tonal variation not only correlates with the past—non-past distinction but is also found with the majority of the particles on the chart functioning the same way. The expected, non-past and past forms are without question composed of two morphemes: $\eta\acute{a} > \eta\acute{a} + a$ and $\eta\grave{a} > \eta\grave{a} + \acute{a}$. Historically, the η_a is the wide-spread first person pronoun of Tibeto-Burman in general and of Akha in general. In this specific environment it must have arisen from one of two sources: either it arose from the reinterpretation of a post-verbal first person agreement marker—a conclusion that in one sense simply begs the question of where it came from—or it arose out of the semantics and syntax of embedding a clause under $*\eta_a$ 'I' plus a verb of perception or cognition i.e., it arose out of the syntax and semantics of a Tibeto-Burman SOV equivalent of a structure such as *I see that...* or *I know that...* The expected—non-expected dimension corresponds to the presence or absence of the nominalizing $-a/-\acute{a}$; since it is not uncommon to treat expected or given material in nominalizations, the development of $-a/-\acute{a}$ from a nominalizer into a marker of the expected is at least plausible.

The two expected, non-visual particles can, like their visual counterparts, be divided into two parts: $m\acute{a} > m\acute{a} + a$ and $m\grave{a} > m\grave{a} + \acute{a}$. As with their visual counterparts, the tonal variation signals the past—non-past distinction and the presence of the nominalizing $-a/-\acute{a}$ marks expectation.⁴ The essence of the marker, however, is contained in $m\grave{-}$, which has direct cognates in $m\grave{a}$, a concessive particle found with both nouns and verbs in Lisu and most likely pei mai' ('lui') of Burmese which means (Okell 1969:381) "although, in spite of..." Thus, the basic difference between the visual and the non-visual expected correlates with an earlier distinction between what was known through personal experience and what was simply conceded to be true.

The two unexpected, non-visual particles are monomorphemic. In addition the non-past member of the pair $\eta_j a$ lacks the anticipated high tone associated elsewhere with the non-past. The particle itself relates to the new topic marker of Lisu, which contrasts with the old topic marker. Other forms look and feel related such as the auxiliary verb $\eta_j a$ 'able to' and the sentence particle $\eta_j \acute{a}$ 'will'. However, the connections if any remain unclear.

1.2 Quotative. The last evidential particle to be discussed in this paper is one not included on the chart: the quotative $d_j\acute{e}$, which is cognate with Phunoi $c\grave{e}$, Bisutsi/kyi, and $Mp\grave{i} t_{c\acute{e}}^1$. It

derives from a verb meaning 'speak' and, as in English, can be used either to report indirect knowledge or to indicate the hearsay nature of the knowledge.

2.0 Conclusion. Although it would be grossly inaccurate to say that the origins or even the semantics of the Akha evidential system are well understood, certain things are already clear. While an examination of extra-Lolo-Burmese languages such as Sherpa and Lhasa Tibetan (Kitamura 1977) makes it clear that part of the evidential system evolved from distinctions present in the language family perhaps as far back as proto-Tibeto-Burman, it is equally obvious that other parts of the modern system represent independent innovations within the history of Akha itself. And, although too many small pieces remain to be filled in by further comparative, historical, and synchronic studies for us to be sure about all the parts involved in the system, any adequate understanding will have to go beyond simple descriptive studies into the pragmatics involved.

A different sort of conclusion also has come out the work on Akha evidentiality. These have to do with the surprising comparability of this system with the distinctions expressible in English: the differences are far more in the differing degrees of covertness and obligatoriness in expression than in the set of distinctions themselves.

Notes

This paper is of necessity somewhat speculative and certainly preliminary in nature. Part of this is due to the fact that there are no handbooks nor etymological dictionaries nor comparative grammars for these languages. For these things I offer no apology. However, for those whose papers I have read and probably to some degree misunderstood, I do apologize but with the hope that you will point out the errors to me.

¹This introduction owes most of its content and some of its form to Woodbury (MS). This is also the source for any references to Jakobsen (1957).

²Unless otherwise designated, Akha forms are cited in the notation used in Egerod and Hansson (1974), often followed by the forms used in Lewis (1969) in brackets.

³Benedict reconstructs a Tibeto-Burman genitival (subordinating) suffix PTB *-ki or *-gi on the basis of such forms as Written Tibetan -kyi- ~ -gyi- ~ -yi- ~ -i which has a range of functions quite similar to those found with PLB *way³. However, elsewhere (Thurgood 1981:40-41) it has been argued that the semantic similarity is due to the semantics of an earlier juxtaposition *way + *-ki, with the subsequent loss of the *-ki.

⁴The various a morphemes found throughout the chart and referred to throughout this paper all appear to be descended from the PTB *a third person pronoun. Although it has been analyzed as having

a range of functions which includes nominalizer, conjunctive adverb, copula (sentence-final), and sentence particle, it is quite easy to characterize syntagmatically: it occurs clause finally.

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