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# One *-mi*: An Evidential, Epistemic Modal, and Focus Marker in Imbabura Quechua

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## 1 Introduction

The Quechua language family has received much attention for its well-attested evidential/epistemic modal system (e.g., Faller 2003, Weber 1986, Nuckolls 1993, and Floyd 1999). This paper focuses on the multiple functions of the particle *-mi* in Imbabura Quechua (IQ). Some of the functions are exemplified in (1)-(3).<sup>1</sup>

- (1) *Juan-mi punyu-rka*  
Juan-**mi** sleep-PST  
'**Juan** slept.'<sup>2</sup>
- (2) a. *Juan-mi Berkeley-man ri-gri-n*  
Juan-**mi** Berkeley-to go-FUT-3  
'**Juan** will go to Berkeley.' [after Faller 2003; elicited example]
- b. *Juan-mi izhakizha ka-ni*  
Juan-**mi** sad be  
'**Juan** is sad.' [after Faller 2003; elicited]
- (3) A: *pita wanyuchi-rka pirkuti-ta*  
who kill-PST rat-ACC  
'Who killed the rat?'
- B: *Pepe-mi wanyuchi-rka pirkuti-ta*  
Pepe-**mi** kill-PST rat-ACC  
'**Pepe** killed the rat.'

In (1), the use of *-mi* has (by default) a firsthand evidential function; it indicates that the origo has herself observed the focal situation of Juan's sleeping. In (2a), which includes a future tense marker, i.e., which is irrealis, *-mi* has a somewhat different function. There, *-mi* has a positive epistemic modal sense; it indicates the speaker's commitment to the validity of the information. In (2b), *-mi* can also be said to be functioning more as an epistemic modal marker than as an

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<sup>1</sup> Except where otherwise marked, all the data in this paper were elicited from two language consultants (called here MC and AO) during a field methods class at the University of California, Berkeley in 2009-2010. My gratitude goes to the consultants for their patience and kindness.

<sup>2</sup> Boldface is used throughout this paper to represent the firsthand evidential, strong-positive epistemic modal, and discourse-focus meanings conveyed by *-mi* that cannot be expressed in English with a single morpheme (but are expressed periphrastically or by word order or intonation).

evidential marker, as the origo cannot have direct access to the internal state of the subject. In (3), *-mi* marks the focused element in the utterance, the answer to the preceding question. It is important to note that these contexts of use are not necessarily disjunctive; as a result, the utterances in (1) and (4) are ambiguous.

- (4) *Juan shamurka-mi*  
 Juan come-PST-**mi**  
 ‘Juan came.’

The sentence in (4) could be used in situations where, for example, the speaker witnessed Juan’s arrival (a firsthand evidential reading), Juan told the speaker he had come to the place in question (a positive epistemic modal reading), or where the speaker wished to stress that it was Juan, as opposed to someone else, who had come (a contrastive focus reading).

The aim of this paper is to examine the possibility that these three functions are conceptually interrelated. It explores two major questions that bear on this issue. The first question is related to the ongoing debate between so-called conflationists and non-conflationists about whether evidentials and epistemic modals should always be analyzed as belonging to a single functional category, i.e., whether the two categories can ever be separated or not (Michael 2010). This paper shows that there are quite a few situations in which it is not a simple matter to identify which role *-mi* is playing in the context (for example, in performatives and irrealis clauses). I suggest that, to better understand how *-mi* is licensed in both firsthand evidential and positive-epistemic modal contexts in Imbabura Quechua, we should consider the conceptual causal event structure of epistemicity (Sweetser 1990), which is evoked by both evidentials and epistemic modals. This paper argues that *-mi* cannot be classified as a pure evidential marker or as a pure epistemic modal marker, that it rather conveys both notions, and further, that to identify which is the more salient function in any given case, we must consider the whole causal event structure of epistemicity, which is evoked by both categories; this event structure involves a series of sub-event structures linked by the origo’s inference processes. I further suggest that the separation of the two categories is not, in fact, the most important issue, but that characterizing each in relation to the other is key to grasping the nature of each.

The other major question is whether the core function of *-mi*, whether one defines it as primarily an evidential marker or primarily an epistemic modal marker, is being functionally extended where *-mi* is used as a focus marker or whether the focus marking function is completely unrelated (i.e., that *-mi* is synchronically polysemous). This study explores the possibility that the functions of encoding firsthand evidentiality/positive epistemic modality and focus are conceptually related, and concludes that they do indeed share a cognitive motivation in that in both cases, the origo’s attention is explicitly directed to the cognitively more salient portion of a given stimulus. In the case of evidentiality and epistemic modality, the target event itself is picked out as being the most cognitively salient aspect of the situation while the origo’s mode of access to the event or her beliefs about the likelihood of its occurrence are presupposed and backgrounded. In the case of focus marking, the focused element is picked out as being cognitively salient while the other elements in the construction are explicitly given less attention.

Section 2 of the paper reviews previous approaches to evidentials and epistemic modals in the Quechua languages, summarizing points of agreement and disagreement in the literature. Section 3 explores the evidential and epistemic modal aspects of *-mi*, analyzing a variety of relevant examples, and begins to develop a comprehensive description of its function. Section 4 examines

the morpheme's focus marking function, providing a further basis for the later discussion of how the multiple functions of *-mi* may be conceptually related. Section 5 sets for the hypothesis that the firsthand evidential/strongly-positive epistemic modal and focus marking functions of *-mi* are conceptually related; they all explicitly foreground stimuli that are cognitively more salient and background stimuli that are presupposed or part of the common ground in the given context. This section discusses the theoretical implications of that relationship. Section 6 concludes the discussion.

## **2 Previous Approaches**

Quite a few linguists (e.g., Chafe 1986, Willett 1987, de Haan 1999) have discussed the relationship between evidentials and epistemic modals. This relationship has been investigated with regard to the Quechua languages in particular Faller (2003), Weber (1986), Nuckolls (1993), and Floyd (1999), among others.

The outstanding question in this research is whether it is possible to disentangle the notion of evidentiality, which relates to the speaker's source of information about the focal event, from the notion of epistemic modality, which relates to the speaker's epistemic stance towards the focal event. For example, the usual interpretation of the utterance in (1) is both that the speaker has direct evidence that the focal situation occurred, for example having seen Juan sleeping, and that she is convinced it is a fact that the focal situation occurred.

The authors mentioned above take different positions as to whether both of these semantic properties are lexically encoded in *-mi*. Weber (1986, summarized in Faller 2003) argues that, lexically, evidentiality is encoded as a semantic property of *-mi* and that the 'validation' (i.e., positive-epistemic modal) meaning derives from the extralinguistic cultural axiom that one's own experience is reliable. Nuckolls (1993) takes the opposite view, asserting that *-mi* is primarily 'validation,' i.e., that it lexically encodes positive epistemic modality, while the evidential meaning is implied. However, as Faller (2003) points out, neither of these approaches is satisfactory, as there are more than a few examples for which it is quite difficult to determine which of the two functions is more salient (for example, in a situation in which the speaker has physically witnessed something, but is not sure what it was, or in a situation in which the speaker was sure that something would happen in the future).

To account for these functions that are not easily categorizable, Floyd (1999) argues that the functions of *-mi* in Wanka Quechua form a radial category, with the evidential function at the center of the radial network. Similarly, Faller (2003) proposes that *-mi* in Cuzco Quechua should be analyzed as an evidential/epistemic modal element whose semantic and pragmatic function is parameterized by evidential licensing conditions. She treats *-mi* not as a pure epistemic modality marker but as an emphatic illocutionary force marker because it does not weaken assertions in the way that epistemic modal markers usually do (Speas 2008:956). Faller also argues that *-mi* is licensed if the speaker has access to the most direct source of information possible about the described event.

This paper shares Floyd's and Faller's position that maintaining a strict distinction between evidentiality and epistemic modality does not allow us to fully account for the target phenomena from prototypical cases to less prototypical ones. However, I further argue that neither evidentiality nor epistemic modality can be fully understood without considering the causal structure shared by the two functional categories (Sweetser 1990), i.e., the chain of causal events linked by an origo's inference process. (This concept is described in detail in section 5.)

The other major issue discussed in this paper is whether *-mi*'s focus marking function is a functional extension of its other uses. There has been some descriptive work on the use of *-mi* as a focus marker (e.g., Weber 1989, Muysken 1995, Cole 1982), but the relationship between the evidential/epistemic modal and the focus marking functions has not received much attention.

### 3 Evidentiality vs. Epistemic Modality

In this section, I show that *-mi* is licensed in both evidential and epistemic modal context, indicating that it cannot be described either as a pure evidential marker or as a pure epistemic modal marker, but rather should be described as marking both.

#### 3.1 Direct Evidentiality and Spatial Specification

According to my IQ language consultant, MC, *-mi* can be used to encode firsthand direct evidentiality. According to her, the sentences in (5) and (6) are subtly different.

(5) *chaypi alku*  
 there dog  
 'There's a dog there.'

(6) *chaypi-mi alku*  
 there-**mi** dog  
 'There's a dog **there**.'

It is notable that MC accompanied the utterance in (6) with a pointing gesture to indicate the location of the hypothetical dog; it seems that *-mi* narrows down the space being referred to in the utterance to indicate an entity within the range of the experiential origo's vision. This suggests that *-mi* can function as a spatial specifier, encoding adjacency or immediacy (like *right* or *just* in English), which is conceptually contiguous to the directness of the origo's mode of access encoded by *-mi*.

The direct evidential function of *-mi* is demonstrated by the contrast between the examples in (7).

- (7) a. *Iksoo shamu-rka*  
 Iksoo come-PST  
 'Iksoo has come.'
- b. *Iksoo shamu-rka-mi*  
 Iksoo come-PST-**mi**  
 'Iksoo **has come**.'

According to MC, a sentence like that in (7a) might be used when the subject was outside the room, for example, if Iksoo had just knocked on the door and the speaker wanted to suggest someone should open it. In contrast, a sentence like that in (7b) might be used when Iksoo was already in the room and the speaker wanted to tell someone else Iksoo was with her; in this latter case, the speaker would, of course, have visual access to Iksoo.

The direct evidential function of *-mi* can be tested by adding a sentence to the utterance that explicitly denies that the speaker had visual access, as in (8).

- (8) ??*Ines-ka kayna pay-pa nyanya-ta-mi tupa-ri-rka*  
 Ines-TOP yesterday 3SG-GEN sister-ACC-**mi** meet-REF-PST  
  
*nyuka na riku-rka-ni-chu*  
 1SG NEG see-PST-1SG-NPI  
 ‘Ines visited her **sister** yesterday. I didn’t see it.’<sup>3</sup>

AO said that (8) is “contradictory,” indicating that *-mi* carries an indefeasible evidential implicature.<sup>4</sup>

These examples show that *-mi* definitely has a direct evidential function, encoding that the speaker perceived the focal information via a direct mode of access (MOA; Hanks 1990).

### 3.2 Strongly Positive Epistemic Modality

The previous section demonstrates clearly that *-mi* has an evidential function. However, it is also licensed in some non-evidential contexts, where the origo did not obtain the focal information directly. For example, the utterance in (9) might be licensed in a context where Juan had told the speaker about having run.

- (9) *Juan kalpa-rka-mi*  
 Juan run-PST-**mi**  
 ‘Juan **has run**.’

If *-mi* were only a direct evidential marker, it would not be licensed in (9), as the MOA (report) is not direct.

*-mi* is also licensed in utterances such as those in (2) (repeated here as (10)) that refer to irrealis events or to the emotional state of some third party, neither of which the origo can directly observe or experience at the speech time.

- (10) a. *Juan-mi Berkeley-man ri-gri-n*  
 Juan-**mi** Berkeley-to go-FUT-3  
 ‘Juan will go to Berkeley.’ [after Faller 2003; elicited]  
  
 b. *Juan-mi izhakizha ka-n*  
 Juan-**mi** sad be-3  
 ‘Juan is sad.’ [after Faller 2003; elicited]

In these examples, *-mi* is being employed as a positive epistemic modal element, encoding the

<sup>3</sup> When I first asked directly what the difference was between *Ineska kayna paypa nyanyata tuparirka* and *Ineska kayna paypa nyanyata-mi tuparirka*, AO said the latter means the speaker physically saw Ines, indicating that *-mi* is closely related to direct evidentiality.

<sup>4</sup> However, it should be noted that the situation may be somewhat more complex, as I discuss in section 5.1.

speaker's commitment to the validity of the information.

There are a number of other contexts in which *-mi* can play an epistemic modal role. First, *-mi* is licensed in performative utterances. As performatives are essentially about the speaker's intent to induce the addressee to conform to her intention, they cannot be said to pertain to the origo's (previous) experience, but rather refer to irrealis events that have not yet been assimilated into experience; therefore, they are generally not compatible with a direct evidentiality. When I asked AO about the performative utterances with *-mi* in (11) and (12), he said they sounded natural.

(11) *nyuka ni-ni-mi kan-kuna kosa warmi ka-ngi-chi*  
 1SG say-1SG-**mi** you-PL husband wife be-2PL-CAUS  
 'I **pronounce** you husband and wife.'

(12) *kay wasi-ta shuti-chi-rka-ni-mi Maria-ta*  
 that building-ACC name-CAUS-PST-3SG-**mi** Maria-ACC  
 'I **name** the building Maria.'

Secondly, *-mi* is licensed in contexts in which the speaker is talking about events that she could not have been present for, for example because they occurred before her birth, if she is sure that they actually occurred.

(13) A: *maypita wacha-ri-rka kan-pa mama*  
 where be.born-REF-PST 2SG-GEN mother  
 'Where was your mother born?'

B: *nyuka mama-mi wacha-ri-rka Seoul-pi.*  
 my mother-**mi** born-REF-PST Seoul-LOC  
 'My **mother** was born in Seoul.'

For example, if B had been told about the focal event by a reliable source such as his grandfather and was sure it was the truth, according to AO, the response in (13) with *-mi* would be licensed.<sup>5</sup> This supports the hypothesis that *-mi* has an epistemic modal function in which it indicates that the speaker is committing herself to vouching for the validity of the focal information.

Lastly, *-mi* can be used in situations where the speaker wishes to indicate certainty about a proposition that might be supposed to be in question; for example, AO produced the utterance in (14) when I asked what a speaker might say if she saw someone from a distance, but was sure it was Josh.

(14) *nyuka-mi riku-rka Josh-ta*  
 I-**mi** see-PST Josh-ACC  
 'I saw Josh.'

<sup>5</sup> According to AO, if the indirect evidential marker *-shi* had been used instead in the response in (13), it would be likely taken to indicate the speaker's doubt and be interpreted as a confirming question. (It could be translated periphrastically as something like 'I heard my mother was born in Seoul, right?') In other words, the indirect evidential *-shi* is not licensed in such contexts unless the focal information is shared knowledge in the interlocutors' common ground.

*-mi* would not have been licensed if the speaker had not been sure that the person she saw was Josh. In this situation, a direct evidential might not be appropriate because the evidence was not robust, but *-mi* can nonetheless be used, indicating that the constraints on the epistemic modal sense can override the constraints on the evidential sense.

The strongly positive epistemic modality of *-mi* can be confirmed by testing whether it is compatible with the weak epistemic modal adverbial *nyarazha* ‘maybe.’<sup>6</sup>

(15) *nyarazha tamyá-gri-n(\*-mi)*  
maybe rain-FUT-3SG(-**mi**)  
‘Maybe, it must be going to rain.’

(16) *nyarazha tamyá-xu-n(\*-mi)*  
maybe rain-IMPF-3SG(-**mi**)  
‘Maybe, it must be going to rain.’

In (15) and (16), the strongly positive epistemic modality of *-mi* conflicts with the weakly positive epistemic modal adverb *nyarazha*. (While the utterance in (16) could also have a direct evidentiality reading, which would in itself conflict with *nyarazha*, the utterance in (15) is unrealistic, and therefore cannot be construed as being based on direct evidence.) The ungrammaticality of these examples clearly shows that *-mi* conveys strongly positive epistemic modality.

#### 4 Focus Marking

This section explores the focus marking function of *-mi* in detail. I show that information that has not yet been assimilated into the addressee’s knowledge is regarded as novel and that *-mi* is licensed to mark that novelty.

##### 4.1 Argument Focus

One test that is commonly used to identify topic/focus contrasts is to set up a question-and-answer pair. The information that was explicitly included in the questioning utterance becomes the topic of the response utterance, while the new information (that corresponds to the interrogative pronoun in the question) is in focus. Some examples demonstrating the use of *-mi* in response to a question are given in (3) (repeated here as (17)) and in (18).

- (17) a. A: *pita wanyuchi-rka pirkuti-ta?*  
who kill-PST rat-ACC  
‘Who killed the rat?’
- B: *Pepe-mi wanyuchi-rka pirkuti-ta*  
**Pepe-mi** kill-PST rat-ACC  
‘**Pepe** killed the rat.’

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<sup>6</sup> In my other consultant’s dialect (MC’s), the equivalent expression to *nyarazha* is *nachari*.



- b. B: ?? *pirkuti-ta-mi wanyuchi-rka Pepe*  
 rat-ACC-**mi** kill-PST Pepe  
 ‘Pepe killed **the rat**.’

In (17a), *-mi* marks the argument, *Pepe*, that gives new information. In this same context, according to MC, *-mi* cannot be attached to *pirkuti* ‘the rat,’ as in (17b).

In (18), a different argument is focused; a different argument, *pirkutita* is new information, and is therefore marked with *-mi*.

- (18) a. A: *imata-ta Pepe wanyuchi-rka*  
 what-ACC Pepe kill-PST  
 ‘What did Pepe kill?’
- B: *pirkuti-ta-mi wanyuchi-rka Pepe*  
 rat-ACC-**mi** kill-PST Pepe  
 ‘Pepe killed **the rat**.’
- b. B: *pepe-ka wanyuchi-rka pirkuti-ta*  
 Pepe-TOP kill-PST rat-ACC  
 ‘Pepe killed the rat.’
- c. B: *Pepe-ka pirkuti-ta-mi wanyuchi-rka*  
 Pepe-TOP rat-ACC-**mi** kill-PST  
 ‘Pepe killed **the rat**.’

In fact, in the versions of this response in (18b) and (18c), the topic marker *-ka* is attached to the old information *Pepe*, highlighting the topic-focus contrast.

#### 4.2 Sentential/Predicate Focus

The question-and-answer examples presented in the previous section suggest that *-mi* can be used to mark an argument in focus. This section and the next examine other focus environments. Firstly, the example in (19) shows that *-mi* can also be used to mark an argument within a larger predicate that is in focus.

- (19) a. A: *imata-ta Pepe ra-rka*  
 what-ACC Pepe do-PST  
 ‘What did Pepe do?’
- B: *pirkuti-ta-mi wanyuchi-rka Pepe*  
 rat-ACC-**mi** kill-PST Pepe  
 ‘Pepe killed **the rat**.’
- b. B: ?? *pirkuti-ta wanyuchi-rka-mi Pepe*  
 rat-ACC kill-PST-**mi** Pepe  
 ‘Pepe **killed** the rat.’

- c. B: *wanyuchi-rka-mi pirkuti-ta Pepe*  
 kill-PST-**mi** rat-ACC Pepe  
 ‘Pepe **killed** the rat.’

In (19), the only presupposed information in speaker A’s question is *Pepe rarka* ‘Pepe did.’

According to MC, the versions of the response in (19b) and (19c), where the particle appears on the predicate, are not preferred. However, MC described the example in (20) as sounding natural, and produced the predicate-focus example in (21) in a spoken text.

- (20) A: *imata tuku-rka-ngi*  
 what happen-PST-2SG  
 ‘What happened?’

- B: *nyuka alku kishpi-rka-mi*  
 My dog run.away-PST-**mi**  
 ‘My dog **ran** away.’

- (21) *kunan-ga kan-pa kan-pa ya-shka-ta-ka*  
 now-TOP 2SG-GEN 2SG-GEN think-PERF-ADVZ-TOP

- apa-sha-mi ni-shka nin*  
 take-FUT-**mi** say-PERF QUOT  
 ‘‘Now your things, your thoughts, I **will take**,’’ he said.’

The response in (20) is a good example of sentence focus, given that all of the information in speaker B’s utterance is new (not mentioned in A’s question); it shows that sentence-focus can also be marked with *-mi*. In (21), there are two topic-marked elements, and the predicate *apa* ‘take’ is in focus, marked by *-mi*.

### 4.3 Contrastive Focus

*-mi* also seems to be used as a contrastive focus marker, as in the example in (22).

- (22) A: *pita miku-rka atalpa-ta Juan o Laura*  
 who eat-PST chicken-ACC John or Laura  
 ‘Who ate the chicken, John or Laura?’

- B: *Laura na miku-rka-chu Juan-mi miku-rka*  
 Laura NEG eat-PST-NEG John-**mi** eat-PST  
 ‘Laura didn’t eat it; **John** ate it.’

In this case, there are only two candidates for the element in focus; if one, *Laura*, is negated, it is natural that the other, *Juan*, should have contrastive focus, and it is *Juan* that is marked with *-mi*.

The example in (23) similarly demonstrates contrastive focus.

(23) A: *kan-pa misi kishpi-rka-chu*  
 2SG-GEN cat run.away-PST-Q  
 ‘Did your cat run away?’

B: *na nyuka alku-mi kishpi-rka, misi-ka wanyu-rka-mi*  
 NEG 1SG.GEN dog-**mi** run.away-PST cat-**ka** die-PST-**mi**  
 ‘No, my **dog** ran away, my **cat died**.’

As *misi* ‘the cat’ is mentioned in A’s question and is therefore given information, it is topic-marked with *-ka* in B’s response, while the contrasting argument *alku* ‘the dog’ is focus-marked with *-mi*, as is the contrasting predicate *wanyurka* ‘died.’

## 5 Discussion

### 5.1 Evidentiality, Epistemic Modality, and Immediacy

The examples presented in Section 3 showed that *-mi* is licensed in both evidential and epistemic modal contexts. This sub-section presents examples showing that some utterances with *-mi* have characteristics of both — or, in other words, could be described as hybrid.

First, the obvious conclusion one might draw from the result of the defeasibility test for evidentiality in (8) is challenged by the example in (24), which the same consultant (AO) described as grammatical.

(24) *Juan-mi kalpa-rka nyuka na riku-rka-ni-chu*  
 Juan-**mi** run-PST I NEG see-PST-1SG-NPI  
 ‘**Juan** ran. I didn’t see it.’<sup>7</sup>

This inconsistency may be due to the fact that I asked about (24) immediately after asking whether the example in (25) could be used in a situation in which Juan had told the speaker about the running. AO said it could, indicating that *-mi* in (25) is being used more as an epistemic modal marker.

(25) *Juan-mi kalpa-rka*  
 Juan-**mi** run-PST  
 ‘**Juan** ran.’

It therefore seems likely that AO may have been thinking of (24) as being possible in a similar situation. In both cases, therefore, the utterance is licensed if the information was obtained via report rather than via firsthand direct evidence; this is not the prototypical type of situation where one might expect to find a direct evidential. It seems that the reason (24) and (25) are licensed is the speaker’s belief in and willingness to vouch for the validity of the information; this might be taken to indicate that *-mi* is functioning in these cases as an epistemic modal marker rather than

<sup>7</sup> I asked AO in a way similar to the one for (8): first, “How can I say ‘Juan ran?’” Second, “Can I put *-mi* on *Juan* and what does that mean?” Then, “Can I say *nyuka na rikurkanichu* right after that?” In this case, unexpectedly, AO said that the utterance is okay. Presumably, it was prompted right after I had elicited an utterance in EM context, which can be shown in (25).

an evidential marker.

It should be noted, though, that Faller (2003) argues that *-mi* cannot be a canonical epistemic modal in Cuzco Quechua, because it does not weaken an assertion. When an epistemic modal — even a strongly positive one — is used in an utterance, it indicates that the speaker is making an assessment about the situation rather than asserting that it pertains. An utterance containing an epistemic modal marker therefore always encodes a weaker speaker validation than a corresponding utterance that does not contain an epistemic modal marker (for example, English *He must have been there* vs. *He was there*). As the presence or absence of *-mi* does not indicate anything about the speaker’s assessment of the propositional content, Faller’s characterization seems to hold in IQ.

Given that any direct evidential reading conveyed by *-mi* may be defeasible when the context provides information about an indirect source of evidence, and that it can function as either an evidential or an epistemic modal, we can see that *-mi* can never be clearly assigned to either functional category, evidential or epistemic modal. This observation conforms to Faller’s (2003) definition of *-mi* in Cuzco Quechua as a best-possible-evidence marker. The best possible evidence is not always direct visual evidence, and so flexible evidential-licensing conditions allow *-mi* to assume both epistemic modal and evidential functions.

Secondly, *-mi* may also have some tense properties. MC produced some examples in which *-mi* was used as an immediate-tense marker, such as that in (26b), which might be licensed in a situation in which the speaker had seen a few minutes ago that it was raining and was certain that it still was.

- (26) a. *tamya-xu-n*  
rain-IMPF-3SG  
‘It’s raining.’
- b. *tamya-xu-n-mi*  
rain-IMPF-3SG-**mi**  
‘It’s **raining**.’

MC’s intuition was that *-mi* in (26b) may be marking the information as having been obtained in the immediate or recent past or it may be marking speaker certainty. In contrast, the sentence in (26a) does not convey that the evidence about the focal information was obtained in the recent past. The recent past meaning of *-mi* is also relevant to the contrast between the utterances in (27).

- (27) a. *tamya-shka-∅*  
rain-PERF-3SG  
‘It’s rained.’
- b. *tamya-shka-mi*  
rain-PERF-**mi**  
‘It’s **rained**.’

- c. ?*kayna tamyá-shka-mi*  
 yesterday rain-PERF-**mi**  
 ‘It **rained** yesterday.’

According to MC, the sentence in (27b) would likely be used when the speaker had obtained some relevant piece of evidence, for example seeing that the ground was wet, quite recently. On the other hand, *-mi* would not be licensed when the information had been obtained further in the past, for example the previous evening; utterances like that in (27c) are therefore infelicitous. Presumably, the utterance in (27b) could be used to talk about an event in the more distant past, while the example in (27a) could not.

Interestingly, *-mi* can also be used to mark recency in combination with a non-past tense marker, as in (28b), which might be licensed in a situation where the speaker had just noticed dark clouds in the sky.

- (28) a. *kaya tamyá-gri-n*  
 tomorrow rain-FUT-3SG  
 ‘It will rain tomorrow.’
- b. *kaya tamyá-gri-n-mi*  
 tomorrow rain-FUT-3SG-**mi**  
 ‘It **will rain** tomorrow.’

In this case, it is possible that *-mi* is being used to mark the speaker’s certainty, i.e., that it has an epistemic modal function.

In general, I would like to suggest that *-mi* in the preceding examples also has a mirative function, i.e., that it encodes novel information in the context that has not yet been assimilated into the common ground. In the examples in (27b) and (28b), the speaker has just observed some piece of evidence from which she has inferred the occurrence of the focal event.

Following on my earlier argument that the spatial deictic function and direct evidential function of *-mi* are naturally related to the positive epistemic modal function. I would like to suggest that the temporal immediacy use is related to all of these other functions. In the utterances in (29) with action verbs, MC emphasized that the function of *-mi* was to indicate temporal immediacy.

- (29) a. *nyuka pungu-ta tanga-sha*  
 I door-ACC push-FUT  
 ‘I’ll push on the door.’
- b. *nyuka pungu-ta tanga-sha-mi*  
 I door-ACC push-FUT-**mi**  
 ‘I’ll **push** on the door.’

It seems plausible to claim that this use is related to spatial specification and direct evidentiality as well as epistemic modality; firsthand evidentials indicate that the evidence for the focal information is within range of the speaker’s perception (spatial contiguity), and speaker certainty inherently involves the metaphorical extension of spatial contiguity to temporal contiguity. In

(29b), it is understood that the speaker intends to perform the action of pushing on the door in the very near future. In other words, the course of action is conceptually contiguous to the speaker at the speech time; temporal contiguity are often semantically linked to spatial contiguity by means of the TIME IS SPACE metaphor. This paper suggests that the contiguity evoked by *-mi* stems from its original evidential function, which entails that the focal information be deictically contiguous to the speaker. This conceptual contiguity is also related to *-mi*'s epistemic modal function, in that the more contiguous to the speaker the stimulus is in various dimensions, the stronger an epistemic stance the speaker can take. This relationship between functions is employed strategically in the textual example in (30).

- (30) *wanyu-gri-ngi-mi*  
die-FUT-2SG-**mi**  
'You **will die!**'

In this example, *-mi* can be described as an evidential/epistemic modal marker that encodes temporal/conceptual/causal contiguity.

The preceding argument suggests that the functions of *-mi* in Imbabura Quechua as a direct evidential marker, as an epistemic modal marker, as a marker of spatial contiguity, and as a marker of temporal contiguity are all related. As I noted above, Floyd (1999) suggests that the uses of *-mi* in Wanka Quechua form a radial category of multiple functions. It seems quite plausible that *-mi* in IQ has hybrid functionality, describable as a direct evidential/epistemic modal/deictic marker.

## 5.2 Evidentiality and Epistemic Modality as a Conceptual Package

The previous sections have demonstrated that the particle *-mi* in IQ is licensed in a variety of contexts, including evidentiality, epistemic modality, spatial and temporal immediacy, and discourse focus; these facts present strong counterevidence for any hypothesis about *-mi* that assumes it is either a pure evidential or a pure epistemic modal marker that is used exclusively for only one of those possible functions. Given that Quechua speakers use *-mi* freely in both contexts, and if the pragmatic implicatures of the marker in any context are not strictly constrained to the implicatures typical of evidentiality nor the implicatures typical of epistemic modality, but are flexibly interpreted in the given context, distinguishing precisely between the two categories may simply not be relevant to understanding the linguistic structure of Quechua.

Every epistemic modal construction has some evidential properties, whether they are implicit or explicit in a given context, and every evidential construction carries some epistemic implicatures (Kwon, to appear). For instance, in English, for someone to say, "You must be Seth Sweetser's sister," they must have obtained some kind of solid evidence, such as the name on the addressee's nametag (Sweetser 1990). Without any evidence to induce her conclusion, the speaker would not have been certain. If it is invariably the case that each of these functional categories carries some of the semantics or pragmatics of the other, it would be more meaningful to investigate how each of the categories is construed in the context of the conceptual structure evoked by both.

If we assume that both categories evoke the same causal event structure, we do not need to worry about the separability of the categories (or their labels).

The semantic and pragmatic properties of evidentiality and epistemic modality are not

determined each in isolation; rather, they are determined relative to each other, because they relate to different conceptual portions of the same causal event structure. This causal event structure involves an event in which the origo perceives some relevant piece of evidence, an event in which the origo assesses the situation based on that evidence, and an event in which the origo encodes her perception and/or the assessment of the evidence in a speech act about the situation. These three events are connected by the speaker's inference processes. This structure is schematized in Figure 1.

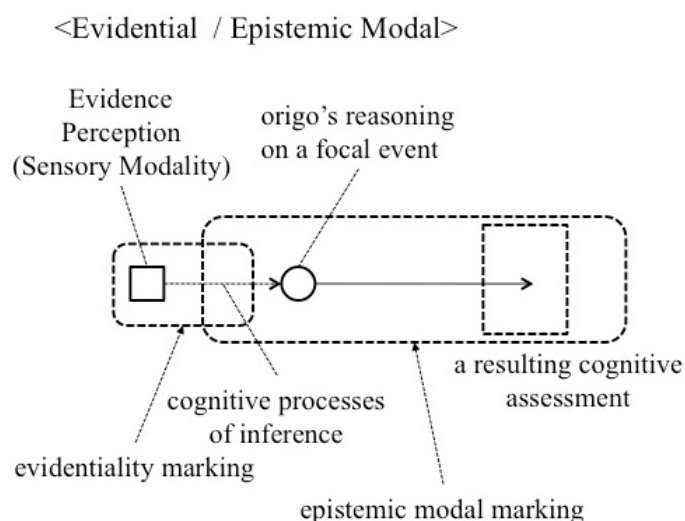


Figure 1: A schema of the causal event structure of epistemicity

In Sweetser's (1990) force dynamics approach to epistemic modality, epistemic modality is conceptualized as a tension between the origo's reasoning process (the force) and any potential constraints (barriers), such as counter-evidence. Figure 1 represents the schematic structure of evidentiality and epistemic modality in a more fine-grained way in that it breaks the force down into smaller pieces (or frame elements), including the origo's perception of the evidence, the belief she forms based on that evidence, and her reasoning about the focal event, which is induced or "pushed" by her perception and/or inference.

This approach supports the contention that separating the two functional categories according to strict criteria is not the important issue. In fact, it implies that neither of these notions can be fully defined independently of the other; rather, I would like to argue that what phenomena should be considered to belong to the category of evidentiality, what should be considered epistemic modality, and what should be considered to belong to some hybrid evidentiality/epistemic modality category is determined in a given language by which portion of the causal event chain is profiled and how that profiling is semantically encoded in linguistic expressions. In IQ, both evidentiality and epistemic modality are marked with *-mi*, with flexible overlap between the two functions.

### 5.3 Similarity Between Evidentiality/Epistemic Modality and Focus Marking

This sub-section explores the second major hypothesis of this paper, that evidentiality/epistemic

modality and focus marking are functionally related to each other. It does not seem implausible to suggest that a single linguistic item could be used for all of these functions, as the categories share the cognitive function of foregrounding the portion of the linguistic content that the origo believes has not yet been assimilated into the addressee's knowledge nor the common ground. Information that is new in information structure terms and the focal information in an evidential construction are both likely to be conceptually salient in their contexts and set apart from information that is already shared among and assimilated by all of the interlocutors.

Faller (2003) has shown that evidential constructions generally convey information that is new to the addressee, and a number of authors have pointed out that evidential constructions introduce presuppositions that the origo obtained the focal information in a particular way (Matthewson et al. 2006, Speas 2008, Kwon 2009). When a speaker produces an utterance with an evidential marker, the addressee expects that the marked information will be something she has not yet assimilated into her knowledge. The addressee automatically accommodates the presupposition that the speaker has obtained the marked information through some particular mode of access. For example, in the sentence *Pepe killed the rat-mi*, the focal information is the event of Pepe's killing the rat, not the presupposed event of the speaker's obtaining that information. In other words, the focal event marked by *-mi* is more novel and more cognitively salient and is therefore foregrounded.

If evidentials in general mark new information, the question arises of whether other types of evidentials can appear in focus position. The indirect evidential *-shi* seems to occasionally appear in focus position in IQ, as in the example in (31b); Weber (1989:419) describes a similar pattern in Huallaga Quechua.

- (31) a. A: *pita wanyuchi-rka pirkuti-ta*  
           who kill-PST           rat-ACC  
           'Who killed the rat?'
- B: *Pepe-mi wanyuchi-rka pirkuti-ta*  
           Pepe-**mi** kill-PST           rat-ACC  
           '**Pepe** killed the rat.'
- b. B: *Pepe-shi wanyuchi-rka pirkuti-ta*  
           Pepe-**shi** kill-PST           rat-ACC  
           'Pepe killed the rat.'<sup>8</sup>

Although the response in (31b) is not considered perfectly felicitous, AO does not judge it completely ungrammatical. It seems natural that evidentials in general should be used with novel information, as they are usually used in situations in which a speaker wants to disseminate information that (as far as she knows) has not yet been assimilated into the addressee's knowledge.<sup>9</sup>

More supporting evidence for the claim that the evidential/epistemic modal and focus marking

<sup>8</sup> Underlining is used here to represent the indirect-evidential meaning conveyed by *-shi* that cannot be expressed in English with a single morpheme, but is rather expressed periphrastically.

<sup>9</sup> The fact that *-mi* is used more frequently than *-shi* in focus position is not surprising given that speakers who are answering questions are likely to vouch for the validity of the information they are covering.



functions of *-mi* are related is that only one *-mi* is licensed in a simple clause (Cole 1982 and Muysken 1995), as demonstrated by the ungrammaticality of the example in (32).

- (32) \**nyuka mama-mi wacha-ri-rka-mi Seoul-pi.*  
 my mother-**mi** born-REF-PST-**mi** Seoul-LOC  
 ‘My **mother was born** in Seoul.’

If the evidential/epistemic modal and focus marking functions of *-mi* were completely distinct (i.e., if *-mi* were simply polysemous), the sentence in (32) should have been acceptable in a context where the speaker had strong evidence that her mother, rather than some other person relevant in the context, had been born in Seoul.

## 6 Concluding Remarks

In this paper, I have analyzed the functional properties of the enclitic *-mi* in Imbabura Quechua; as in other Quechua languages, *-mi* in IQ has multiple functions, marking direct evidentiality, strongly positive epistemic modality, and discourse focus. I discussed a number of contexts in which it is not possible to define with clarity which function *-mi* is performing, including performatives, irrealis events, and temporally or spatially immediate events. Based on these observations, I explored the possibility that the three listed functions of *-mi* are not distinct, but are conceptually related to one another. I argued that *-mi* cannot be classified as a pure evidential marker or as a pure epistemic modal marker, but performs both functions, and positioned my argument within the general debate about whether evidentials and epistemic modals can belong to a single functional category. I suggested that, to better understand why *-mi* is licensed in both evidential and epistemic modal contexts in Imbabura Quechua, we should consider the causal event structure of epistemicity as a whole, including how an experiential origo perceives evidence for information and assesses that information. I further suggest that making a strict distinction between the two categories is not an essential goal, but that characterizing each in relation to the other is key to better grasping the nature of the debate and the nature of evidentials and epistemic modals themselves.

The second major question discussed in this paper was whether the evidential/epistemic modal meaning of *-mi* can be functionally extended to explain its use as a focus marker. I argued that the evidential/epistemic modal function is conceptually related to the function of encoding focus in that, in both cases, the origo’s attention is directed to the cognitively more salient portion of the relevant stimulus. In evidential/epistemic modal contexts, the target event is cognitively salient, whereas the origo’s mode of access to the information and her degree of belief in its validity is presupposed and backgrounded. In discourse focus contexts, the focused element is cognitively salient while the other elements in the construction are given less attention.

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**REPORT 15**

**SURVEY OF CALIFORNIA AND  
OTHER INDIAN LANGUAGES**

*Structure and Contact in  
Languages of the Americas*

**John Sylak-Glassman and Justin Spence, Editors**

**Andrew Garrett and Leanne Hinton, Series Editors**

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