

Toward an Integrated Theory of the Perfect and the Indirect Evidential

The goal of this paper to provide an analysis that can account for both the perfect (Perfect) and the indirect evidential (I-evidential) by integrating Izvorski's (1997) analysis of the I-evidential and Portner's (2003) modal analysis of Perfect. Based on the Korean suffix *-ess*, which has two functions—as a perfect and an I-evidential, I propose that Perfect and the I-evidential share the three core meaning components: a prior event described by the sentence in question (or perfect proposition p), its consequence state (CS) at the reference time, and the epistemic necessity modal operator that connects these two. However, they differ in how these meaning components are combined.

Izvorski (1997) has claimed that the I-evidential in languages like Bulgarian, which is expressed by the present perfect, is semantically an epistemic modal operator, although it differs from regular modals in terms of the modal base. She argues that the modal meaning of I-evidential sentences like (1a) is asserted, and the I-evidential meaning (i.e. that the speaker has indirect evidence) is presupposed, as in (1b). In addition, the semantics of Perfect (prior event) and the present tense (its CS) give rise to the interpretation of I-evidentiality. I agree that the semantics of the present perfect contribute to the semantics of I-evidential. However, Izvorski's analysis has some problems, which can be better dealt with if we adopt Portner's (2003) modal analysis of Perfect. First, since her definition of Perfect does not contain the epistemic modal operator, where does the modal operator of the I-evidential come from? She claims that the temporal-aspectual meanings of Perfect turns into an epistemic modal meaning, which is suggested as an analogy with the past tense and its use as a counterfactual in English (cf. Iatridou 2000). This means that, according to her, Perfect only has the temporal-aspectual meaning, whereas the I-evidential only has the epistemic modal operator meaning. Recently, Portner (2003) argues that the English perfect has, as its presupposition, an epistemic necessity modal operator, which relates the perfect p to the present consequence, making use of the common ground of the speaker and the hearer.

Adopting Portner's (2003) claim that that Perfect has an epistemic necessity modal operator as its presupposition, I argue in this paper that Perfect and I-evidential share the three meaning components mentioned above, contrary to Izvorski. First, consider the Korean data with the suffix *-ess* in (2): a perfect sentence (2a) vs. an indirect evidential sentence (2b). Sentence (2a), where *-ess* occurs with the declarative ending *-ta*, is neutral about the evidentiality; that is, it does not matter whether or not the speaker witnessed the event of Mary's reading *Middlemarch*. In contrast, (2b) conveys an I-evidential meaning (i.e., the speaker did not witness the event) because the following suffix *-ney* triggers the evidential meaning of *-ess* (cf. Choi 1995). In addition, I show that Perfect and I-evidential differ in how these meaning components are combined and thus they differ in terms of inference process. For example, in a situation where we need to get an explanation of George Eliot's style, the question *Who can we ask?* can be followed by the perfect sentence in (2a). Assuming that, right before (2a) is uttered, the conversational background (CB) in (3) has been established, we can have the logical reasoning in (4). The CB in (3) and the perfect p (2a) are the premises, while the CS p' with the epistemic necessity modal operator is the conclusion. However, in the case of the I-evidential, the ordering of the inference is reversed, as illustrated in (5). In a situation where Mary is talking about the story and the characters in *Middlemarch* and about George Eliot's style, the I-evidential sentence in (2b) can be uttered. In this case, the CS p' is the premise along with the CB and the necessity modal operator with p is the conclusion.

Therefore, the difference is that a perfect sentence, by asserting the perfect p , presupposes ' $\Box p'$ (CS of p)', whereas an I-evidential sentence asserts ' $\Box p'$ ', given the CS p' . Furthermore, both the Perfect and the I-evidential require the epistemic necessity operator; that is, in a perfect sentence, the operator applies to the CS of the perfect proposition, whereas, in an I-evidential sentence, it applies to the perfect proposition. Thus we can conclude that, just like Perfect has the epistemic necessity operator as its presupposition, the I-evidential has the built-in modal operator to relate a prior event (p) to its CS (p').

I conclude the paper with a brief discussion of other issues associated with the universal force of the modality of I-evidential and the definition of Perfect, the use of the different sentential mood forms for the perfect *-ess* and the I-evidential *-ess* (see (2)), and the implications of my analysis for the evidential sentence and the regular (non-evidential) sentence in general.

Data

- (1) a. Az sâm dořal
I be-1SG.PRES come-P.PART
'I apparently came.'
- b. **Interpretation of an Indirect Evidential Proposition:**
Assertion: $\square p$ in view of the speaker's knowledge state
Presupposition: Speaker has indirect evidence for p .
(Izvorski 1997)
- (2) a. mary-ka middlemarch-lul ilk-ess-ta.
Mary-NOM Middlemarch-ACC read-ESS-DEC
'Mary has read *Middlemarch*.'
- b. mary-ka middlemarch-lul ilk-ess-ney.
Mary-NOM Middlemarch-ACC read-ESS-NEY
'[I infer] Mary read *Middlemarch*.' Or 'Mary apparently read *Middlemarch*.'
- (3) CB = {if someone who isn't stupid reads an authors' book, they understand her style; Mary is smart; George Eliot wrote *Middlemarch*}
- (4) CB = $\{p_1, p_2, p_3, \dots\}$ ----(3)
Mary has read *Middlemarch*: Perfect p ----(2a)
 \square **Mary can explain Eliot's style**: Consequent State (CS) p' of p
- (5) CB = $\{p_1, p_2, p_3, \dots\}$
Mary knows things about *Middlemarch*: CS p'
 \square **Mary has read *Middlemarch***: Perfect p --- (2b)

References

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