

## L2 acquisition of evidential marking in French and English

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# L2 acquisition of evidential marking in French and English

- What is evidentiality?
  - How is it expressed in French and English?
  - How do learners of French and English use this concept at three proficiency levels?
    - lower intermediate (LI)
    - upper intermediate (UI)
    - advanced (A)
- Functional and developmental perspective
- Discursive approach: oral narrative task
- A research project with Eric Mélaç, EMMA, Université Paul Valéry Montpellier 3

# Evidentiality in French and English

- Evidentiality: the linguistic encoding of the mode of access to information (direct perception, inference, hearsay)
- Bergqvist (2017, p. 10): “evidentials cannot be satisfactorily described without taking into account the context of their use in a communicative and social sense”.
- Non-grammaticalized notion in French and English expressed through a variety of means.

# Evidentials in French and English

Type of marker	English	French
<b>Perception verbs</b>	see, hear, feel...	voir, entendre, sentir...
<b>Copular verbs</b>	look, sound, feel, seem...	sembler, sentir...
<b>Cognition verbs</b>	I guess, I suppose...	j'imagine, je suppose...
<b>Epistemic-inferential modals</b>	must, should, may...	devoir, pouvoir...
<b>Adverbs</b>	presumably, reportedly...	apparemment, notoirement...
<b>Idioms</b>	be said to, they say...	avoir l'air, il paraît...
<b>Tense/mood</b>		conditional mood

# Evidentiality in French

- see Dendale & Izquierdo, 2014 for a list of references and short summary of research on evidentiality in French
  - Research on overlap between evidential, temporal and modal categories (Caudal, 2012; de Mulder, 2012; de Saussure, 2012; Dendale, 1994; Kronning, 2012; Rossari, 2012; Vetters, 2012)
  - Research on the evidential use of some discourse markers (Hassler, 2015; King & Nadasdi, 1999, Rossari, 2012)
  - Research on perception verbs (Franckel & Lebaud, 1990; Grossmann & Tutin 2010).
- No comprehensive analysis of evidential marking in French.

# Evidentiality in English

- Squartini (2007, 2018): description of a few English (and French) evidentials
- Cappelli (2007): analysis of evidential meaning of cognition verbs
- Whitt (2010): analysis of English perception verbs
- Gujarek (2010) compared English/Polish evidential means
- Mélac (2014): corpus-based analysis of Tibetan and English evidentiality. His main results for English:
  - Direct perception markers are fairly infrequent (695 pmw)
  - Inferential markers are the most frequent (5,978 pmw)

# Second language acquisition of evidentiality

Abundant literature on L1 but few studies on L2 acquisition of evidentiality.

Kamada (1990), Ishida (2006) and Narita (2011) study the expression of hearsay by English learners of Japanese in an instructed setting

Arslan et al. (2015) focus on the processing of direct and indirect grammatical evidentiality by early and late bilingual speakers of German and Turkish.

Leclercq (2009) analysed the use of “on voit” in oral narrative discourse

Leclercq & Edmonds (2017) studied the expression of inference through modal verbal markers.

# Second language acquisition of evidentiality

- Main results:
  - L1/L2 transfer phenomena are observed (Ishida 2006, Kamada 1990, Leclercq 2009)
  - Sensitivity to L2 input (Arslan 2015, Leclercq & Edmonds 2017)
  - Appropriate pedagogical methods help learners develop more target-like evidential marking (Narita 2011)
- How do learners acquire means of expression of a conceptual domain that is never taught in the classroom, and that is relatively non-salient in the input?



# Research questions

- RQ1. What evidential markers do French and English native speakers use to express direct perception and inference in an oral narrative, and with which discursive function?
- RQ2. How do learners of French and English express direct perception and inference at three proficiency levels?



# Methodology: task

- Film retelling task eliciting narrative discourse.
- A task which includes direct perception and should therefore elicit evidential markers (direct and inferential).
- Stimulus: Reksio, 5mn long cartoon featuring a little dog and his master.
- Task instruction: « Watch the cartoon and then tell the interviewer what happened. »
- Proficiency tests :
  - English L2: Oxford Proficiency Test
  - French L2: in-house test (AUP)



# Database

- FrL1 n=10
- EngL1 n=10
- FrL1 EngL2
  - Lower Intermediate (LI) n=10
  - Upper Intermediate (UI) n=10
  - Advanced (A) n=10
- EngL1 FrL2
  - Lower Intermediate (LI) n=10
  - Upper Intermediate (UI) n=10
  - Advanced (A) n=10
- Database: 4,667 utterances
- *then the boy falls into the lake (UIFE08): 1 utterance*
- *then he might be able to pull her back to safety (E07): 1 utterance*
- All recordings were transcribed using CLAN conventions and checked by another researcher.


# Coding scheme

Speaker	Utterance	Nature of marker	Type of evidential
<b>AFE04</b>	So <b>apparently</b> it's cold	Adverb	Inference
<b>AFE01</b>	And the boy is very grateful <b>I guess</b> <for> [//] to the dog	Cognition verb construction	Inference
<b>E07</b>	Oh at the beginning <b>we see</b> a dog's kennel	Perception verb	Direct perception

# Discursive functions of direct perception and inferential markers

E07 EngL1


oh at the beginning **we see** a dog's kennel #  
and a little dog pops his head out of it #  
the dog's got white and brown spots on his back  
... that's all  
I can remember



Evidential framing with 'we see'  
(narrative anchoring + source of  
information – visual information),  
maintained throughout

AFE09

but basically **we see** a little doggy  
in his dog house digging out  
<it 's> [//] **i guess** it 's morning  
so he 's yawning  
he looks tired ...



Inference marker used for a specific  
episode in the narration

# Results: Description of database – evidential markers

	M length of productions (in number of utterances) by group, SD and range	Total # participants producing evidentials	Total # evidential types/ tokens	% utterances with evidentials	Range of use among participants
EngL1 N=10	M 115.6 SD 29.7 Range 82-169	10	14/52	4.5	1-17
FrL1 N=10	M 85.7 SD 47.1 Range 20-180	6	17/24	2.8	0-11
EngL1 FrL2 LI N=10	M 30.2 SD 14.5 Range 14-55	4	2/5	1.6	0-2
EngL1 FrL2 UI N=10	M 54.4 SD 26 Range 20-98	7	6/20	3.6	0-6
EngL1 FrL2 A N=10	M 45.7 SD 16 Range 25-69	7	8/19	4.1	0-8
FrL1 EngL2 LI N=10	M 38.5 SD 15.5 Range 20-68	6	6/11	2.8	0-4
FrL1 EngL2 UI N=10	M 41.6 SD 14.1 Range 30-64	6	10/21	5	0-5
FrL1 EngL2 A N=10	M 57.9 SD 26.2 Range 21-113	10	16/56	9.6	1-14

Total: 208 tokens

# Results: % of evidentials

- % of evidentials: clear increase over proficiency levels. Strikingly enough, advanced learners of English use more than twice the % of English natives (but a look at tokens show a fairly similar number).
- Two one-way ANOVAs were carried out in order to investigate the impact of group membership on the percentage of use of evidential markers.
  - ANOVA on the English data (EngL1, EngL2 LI, UI, A) showed a significant difference by group,  $F(3, 36) = 5.28314, p = 0.004015$ .
  - Post-hoc comparisons using Tukey's HSD revealed a **significant difference between the advanced learners ( $M = 9.11, SD = 6.15$ ) and the lower intermediate learners ( $M = 2.72, SD = 3.23$ )**.
  - ANOVA on the French data (FrL1, FrL2 LI, UI, A) showed no significant difference by group,  $F(3, 36) = 1.62784, p = 0.199992$ .

# Types (and tokens) of evidential markers in the French L1/L2 data

EngL1FrL2 LI	EngL1FrL2 UI	EngL1FrL2 A	FrL1
Je pense (4)	A l'air (1)	A dû (1)	A dû (1)
On a vu (1)	Je crois (5)	Je crois (3)	A l'air (3)
	Je pense (4)	Je pense (1)	Apparemment (1)
	J'imagine (4)	J'imagine (4)	Certainement (1)
	On voit (4)	On a l'impression (1)	Devait (1)
	Peut-être (2)	On dirait (1)	Doit être (1)
		On voit (5)	Il faut imaginer (1)
		Peut-être (3)	Je crois (1)
			Je pense (2)
			Normalement (1)
			On peut penser (1)
			On sent (1)
			On suppose (1)
			On voit (4)
			Pourrait (1)
			Semble (1)
			Sûrement (1)
			Très certainement (1)



# Types (and tokens) of evidential markers in the French L1/L2 data

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EngL1FrL2 LI	EngL1FrL2 UI	EngL1FrL2 A	FrL1
Je pense (4)	A l'air (1)	A dû (1)	A dû (1)
On a vu (1)	Je crois (5)	Je crois (3)	A l'air (3)
	Je pense (4)	Je pense (1)	Apparemment (1)
	J'imagine (4)	J'imagine (4)	Certainement (1)
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			On sent (1)
			On suppose (1)
			On voit (4)
			Pourrait (1)
			Semble (1)
			Sûrement (1)
			Très certainement (1)

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# Types (and tokens) of evidential markers in the English L1/L2 data

FrL1EngL2 LI	FrL1EngL2 UI	FrL1EngL2 A	EngL1
I think (1)	Apparently (1)	Apparently (3)	As far as I can tell (2)
Look (2)	can see (1)	Appear (3)	I believe (1)
Maybe (1)	I guess (2)	I guess (12)	I guess (1)
Seem (1)	I think (2)	I think (12)	I think (15)
We can see (4)	I've just seen (1)	I would assume (1)	Look (3)
We see (1)	May (1)	I would say (3)	Maybe (1)
We suppose (1)	Maybe (8)	Look (5)	Might (4)
	Seem (2)	Maybe (1)	Must (2)
	We can see (1)	Obviously (2)	Obviously (8)
	We see (1)	Presumably (1)	Presumably (2)
	We suppose (1)	Probably (1)	Probably (2)
		Seem (3)	Seem (8)
		We can guess (1)	Sound (1)
		We can see (3)	We see (1)
		We hear (1)	You see (1)
		We see (4)	

# Types (and tokens) of evidential markers in the English L1/L2 data

FrL1EngL2 LI	FrL1EngL2 UI	FrL1EngL2 A	EngL1
I think (1)	Apparently (1)	Apparently (3)	As far as I can tell (2)
Look (2)	can see (1)	Appear (3)	I believe (1)
Maybe (1)	I guess (2)	I guess (12)	I guess (1)
Seem (1)	I think (2)	I think (12)	I think (15)
We can see (4)	I've just seen (1)	I would assume (1)	Look (3)
We see (1)	May (1)	I would say (3)	Maybe (1)
We suppose (1)	Maybe (8)	Look (5)	Might (4)
	Seem (2)	Maybe (1)	Must (2)
	We can see (1)	Obviously (2)	Obviously (8)
	We see (1)	Presumably (1)	Presumably (2)
	We suppose (1)	Probably (1)	Probably (2)
		Seem (3)	Seem (8)
		We can guess (1)	Sound (1)
		We can see (3)	We see (1)
		We hear (1)	You see (1)
		We see (4)	

# Results: Type

- Type: increase in variety of types across proficiency levels in both groups, with advanced learners of English using even more varieties of types than English speakers (although learners and natives display different preferences regarding the use of specific markers)
- Two one-way ANOVAs were carried out in order to investigate the impact of group membership on the diversity of types of evidentiality markers.
  - ANOVA on the English data (EngL1, EngL2 A, UI, LI) showed *a significant difference by group*,  $F(3, 36) = 4.043068$ ,  $p = 0.0141408$ . Post-hoc comparisons using Tukey's HSD revealed **a significant difference between the advanced learners (M = 5.6, SD = 4.74) and the lower intermediate learners (M = 1.1, SD = 1.37)**.
  - ANOVA on the French data (FrL1, EngL2 LI, UI, A) showed no significant difference by group,  $F(3, 36) = 1.201166$ ,  $p = 0.323218$ .

# Conclusion

- **RQ1. What evidential markers do French and English native speakers use to express direct perception and inference in an oral narrative, and with which discursive function?**
  1. Inference >> direct perception, probably due to the nature of the task and the discursive function of marker (*we see*: maintained evidential reference through narrative ; inferential markers for individual episodes)
  1. Slightly more consistent use of evidential markers in English (systematic use) than in French (no systematic use) → evidentiality concept slightly more grammaticalized in English???

# Conclusion

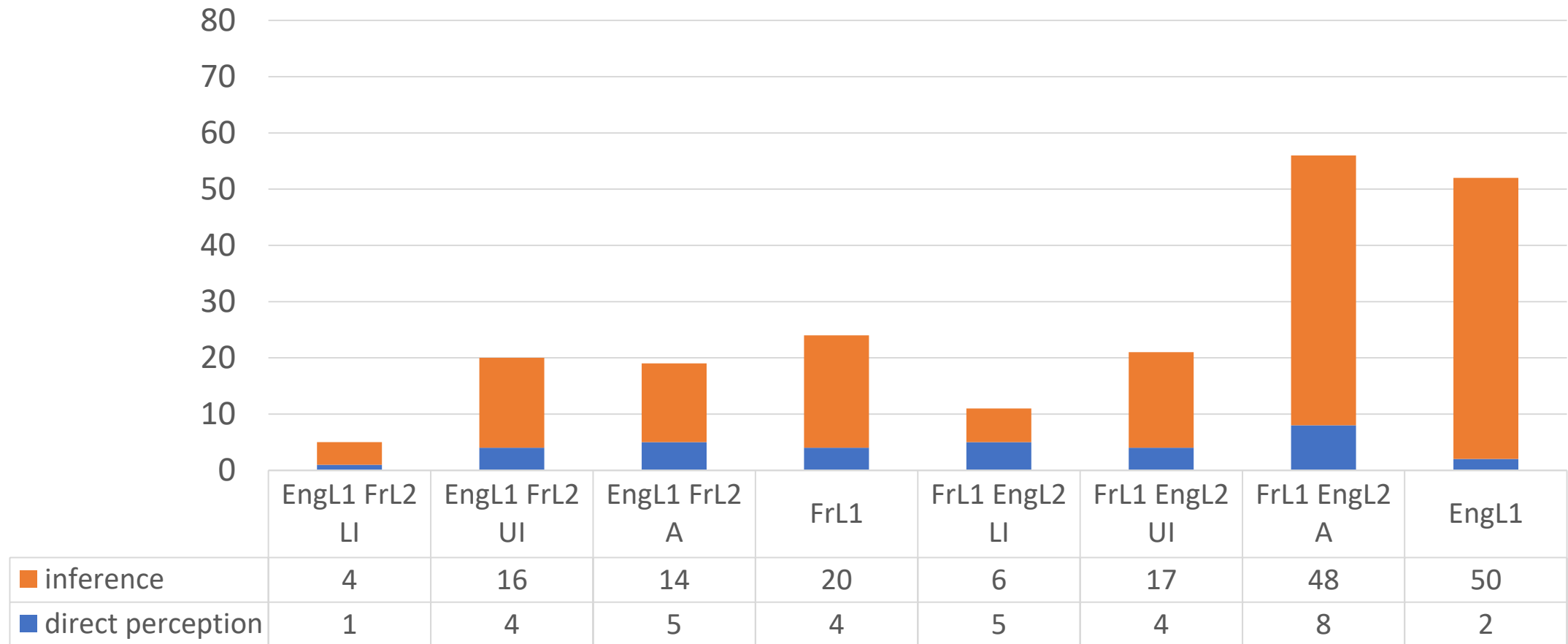
- **RQ2. How do learners of French and English express direct perception and inference at three proficiency levels?**
    1. Clear development from L1 to A (% , type, tokens) with advanced learners even using higher % of evidentials than native speakers in their productions (overexplicitness?)
    2. Inference >> direct perception: Sensitivity to the discursive function in the L1
    3. Choice of marker suggests specific interlanguage choices (ex. FrL2: *peut-être*, never used by FrL1; EngL2 use 'I guess' where EngL1 use 'I think')
    4. Different progression patterns in the L2 French and L2 English data:
      - % use of evidentials by learners of English soars at advanced level
      - Less spectacular progress by advanced learners of French → sensitivity to the fact that these forms are seldom used in the FrL1 input?
- **Need to do research on larger databases and/or other tasks.**



¡Gracias!  
Thank you!  
Merci!



# Category of evidentiality in the database (number of occurrences)





Inferential markers (circumstantial and generic)

	FrL1 LI	EngL2 UI	FrL1 EngL2 A	EngL1	EngL1 FrL2 LI	EngL1 UI	FrL2	EngL1 FrL2 A	FrL1
<b>Circumstantial</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>10</b>		<b>9</b>	<b>8</b>
<i>adverb</i>	1	2	6	8				1	1
<i>cognition verb construction</i>	1	2	15	17	4	9		5	2
<i>copular predicate</i>	3	2	11	12		1			4
<i>modal verb</i>								1	
<i>other construction</i>				2				2	
<i>perception verb</i>									1
<b>Generic</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>11</b>		<b>6</b>		<b>5</b>	<b>12</b>
<i>adverb</i>		7	2	5		2		2	5
<i>cognition verb construction</i>	1	3	11			4		3	4
<i>modal verb</i>		1	3	6					3
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>16</b>		<b>14</b>	<b>20</b>