



**EVIDENTIAL FUNCTIONS OF THE PARTITIVE WITH VERB
THAT INDICATE ACQUISITION OF KNOWLEDGE:
A COMPARISON OF ERZYA AND ANCIENT GREEK**

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EVIDENTIAL FUNCTIONS OF THE PARTITIVE

Marking one's information source indicates how one learnt something (Aikhenvald 2004).

Linguistic evidentiality → the explicit encoding of a source of information or knowledge (i.e. evidence) which the speaker claims to have made use of for producing the primary proposition of the utterance. (Diewald & Smirnova 2010)

- *direct* (first-hand, witnessed) vs. *indirect* access to information
- *personal* vs. *non-personal* access to information

(Aikhenvald 2004, Plungjan 2010)

EVIDENTIAL FUNCTIONS OF THE PARTITIVE

Visual → (direct/firsthand)

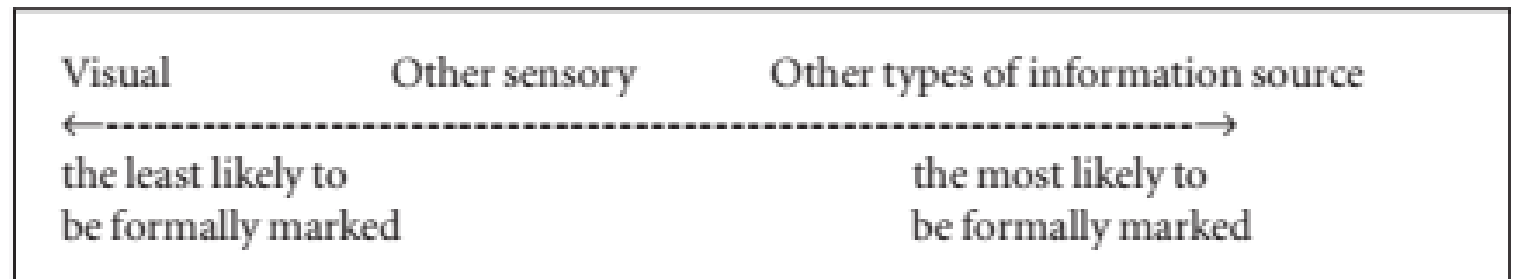
Sensory

Inference → (inferred/non-firsthand)

Assumption

Hearsay → (reported/non-firsthand)

Quotative



EVIDENTIAL FUNCTIONS OF THE PARTITIVE

Hearing verbs

Dik & Hengeveld (1991) four types of situations:

- Immediate perception of individuals (*I heard Luciano Pavarotti several years ago.*)
- Immediate perception of state-of-affairs (*I heard him singing.*)
- Mental perception of propositional content (*I heard that Mary had been crying (e.g., I realized from the sound of her voice).*)
- Reception of the propositional content of a speech act (*I hear he went up to London. / I hear he's going up to London.*)

EVIDENTIAL FUNCTIONS OF THE PARTITIVE

Ancient Greek

- visual perception → first-hand experience
- evidence from hearsay → does not require attending a situation

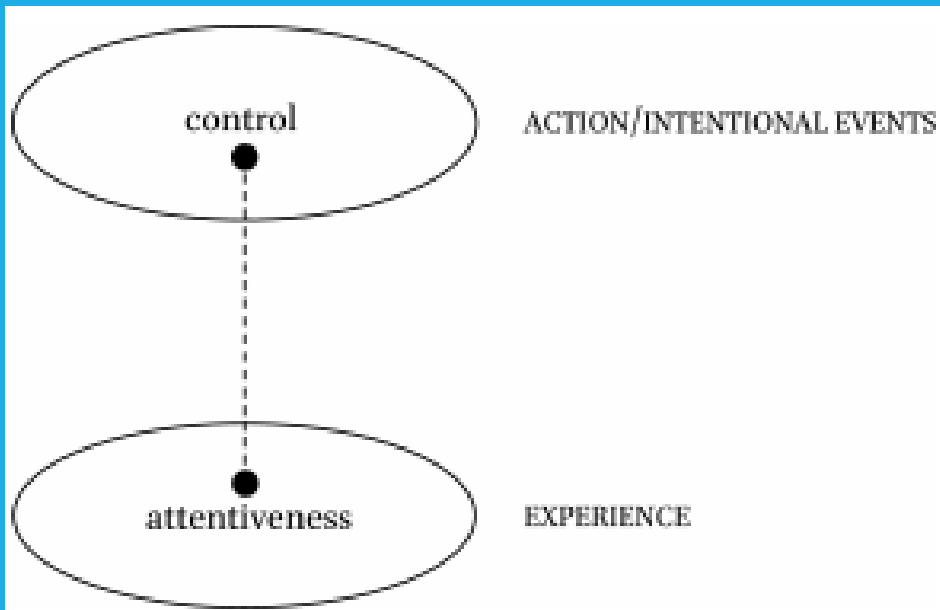
ἔ *αὐτὸς* *παρεὼν* *ἔ* *ἄλλου*
or self.NOM be_present.PTCP.PRS.NOM or other.GEN

ἀκούσας

hear.PTCP.AOR.NOM

‘(As though) you had been present yourself, or had heard from someone else.’ (*Od.* 8.491)

EVIDENTIAL FUNCTIONS OF THE PARTITIVE



Argument structure constructions of perception verbs in Ancient Greek

		Touch
Sight	Hearing	Taste
		Smell
NomAcc		NomGen

Transitive prototype: NomAcc

Sight: attention directed toward stimulus → experiencer controls situation



The mapping of control onto the domain of experience

EVIDENTIAL FUNCTIONS OF THE PARTITIVE

Hearing verbs: what motivates argument structure variation?

- a) NPs second arguments: inanimate NomAcc/NomGen; animate only NomGen
- b) NP+Ptcp second arguments: NomAcc also (marginally) possible with animates



Does source of information motivate the distinction?

EVIDENTIAL FUNCTIONS OF THE PARTITIVE

Homeric Greek – NomGen

<i>autàr</i>	<i>Odussêos</i>	<i>talasíphronos</i>	<i>oú</i>	<i>pot'</i>
but	Odysseus.GEN	steadfast_heart.GEN	NEG	NEG
<i>éphasken,</i>	<i>zōoû</i>	<i>oudè</i>	<i>thanóntos</i>	<i>epikhtoníon</i>
say.IMPF.3SG	alive.GEN	NEG	dead.PTCP.AOR.GEN	mortal.GEN.PL
<i>teu</i>	<i>akoûsai</i>			
INDF.GEN	hear.INF.AOR			

'Yet concerning Odysseus steadfast heart, whether living or dead, he said he had heard from no man on earth.' (*Od.* 17.114–115)

EVIDENTIAL FUNCTIONS OF THE PARTITIVE

Homeric Greek – NomGen → direct perception

toîsi *dè deksiòn hêken* *erōdiòn* *eggùs hodoîo* *Pallàs*

3PL.DAT PTC right send:AOR.3SG heron:ACC near road:GEN P.:NOM

Athēnaíe: *toi* *d' ouk ídon* *Øi* *ophthalmoîsi núkta* *di'*

A.:NOM 3PL.NOM PTC not see:AOR.3PL eyes:DAT night:ACC through

orphnaíēn allà *Øi klágksantos* *ákousan*

dark:ACC but scream:PART.GEN.SG.M hear:AOR.3PL

“Athena sent them an heron to the right of their route: they could not see it in the dark night, but **heard it screaming**.”, Hom. Il. 10.274-276

EVIDENTIAL FUNCTIONS OF THE PARTITIVE

Homeric Greek – NomAcc (single occurrence) → direct perception, irrealis

<i>toùs</i>	<i>nûn</i>	<i>ei</i>	<i>ptóssontas</i>	<i>huph'</i>	<i>Héktori</i>
DEM.ACC.PL	now	if	flee.PTCP.PRS.ACC.PL	under	Hector.DAT
<i>pántas</i>	<i>akoúsai</i>				
all.ACC.PL	hear.OPT.AOR.3SG				

'If he were to hear now all of them cowering before Hector.' (*Il.* 7.129)

EVIDENTIAL FUNCTIONS OF THE PARTITIVE

Homeric Greek – NomGen → indirect knowledge

<i>eí</i>	<i>pou</i>	<i>éti</i>	<i>zṓontos</i>	<i>akoúete</i>
if	somewhere	still	live.PTCP.PRS.GEN	hear.PRS.2PL
<i>paidòs</i>	<i>emoío</i>			
son.GEN	POSS.1SG.GEN			

'If you hear somewhere that my son is still alive.' (Od.11.458)

<i>è</i>	<i>autèn</i>	<i>pothésai</i>	<i>kaí</i>	<i>aphormēthéntos</i>	<i>akoûsai</i>
or	DEM.ACC	miss.INF.AOR	and	depart.PTCP.AOR.MID.GEN	hear.INF.AOR

'Either in case that she misses (me) or learns that (I) have left.' (Od. 2.375)

EVIDENTIAL FUNCTIONS OF THE PARTITIVE

Herodotus (2+1 occurrences)

NomGen → direct perception

epeite de Sōkleos ēkousan eipantos eleutherōs

S.GEN hear.AOR.3PL speak.PTCP.GEN

‘When they heard Socleus speaking freely’ 5.93.2

[*kai ou phōneuntos akouō*. 1.47.3 (Oracle)]

and not speak.PTCP.GEN hear.PRS.1SG

NomAcc → knowledge by hearsay

akousesthai ... Mardonion ... hupo kunōn te kai ornithon

M.ACC

diaphoreumenon

tear_apart.PTCP.ACC

‘(someone will) hear that Mardonius, torn apart by dogs and birds,, ...’ 7.1003

EVIDENTIAL FUNCTIONS OF THE PARTITIVE

Attic tragedy

NomGen → direct perception

kai taut' Akhaioi pantes ēkouon saphōs / Odusseōs legontos

hear.AOR.3PL O.GEN say.PTCP.GEN

“And all the Achaeans clearly heard Odysseus saying these things”

Sophocles Philoct. 595-596

NomAcc → direct perception

kai tauth' hopōs ēkous' ho Laertou tokos / ton mantin eipont'

hear.AOR.3SG seer.ACC speak.PTCP.ACC

“And, as soon as he heard the seer prophecy this, Laertes' son”

Sophocles Philoct. 614/615

EVIDENTIAL FUNCTIONS OF THE PARTITIVE

Attic and Koine

NomAcc = {
a. inanimate stimulus → direct perception
b. animate stimulus {
b₁ realis: **knowledge by hearsay**
b₂ irrealis: direct perception (1 occurrence in Plato)

NomGen = **direct perception** (animate and inanimate stimuli)

(NomAcc around 15% of total occurrences, other exceptions may exist)

(Cepraga 2021)

EVIDENTIAL FUNCTIONS OF THE PARTITIVE

Summary on Greek

Homeric Greek

NomGen+PTCP → direct perception & knowledge by hearsay

NomAcc+PTCP → residual (cf. Vedic Sanskrit)

Post-Homeric Greek

NomGen:

- typical of perception verbs
- only possible construction with verbs of hearing and animate stimuli without PTCP

NomAcc

- without PTCP only possible with inanimate stimuli → low referentiality
- animate NPs+Ptcp → irrealis, knowledge by hearsay

EVIDENTIAL FUNCTIONS OF THE PARTITIVE

Erzya & Moksha

Prototypical transitive construction

Verb: objective (definite) conjugation

DO: definiteness based DOM → basic form (indefinite DOs) / genitive-accusative case (definite DOs)

EVIDENTIAL FUNCTIONS OF THE PARTITIVE

Erzya & Moksha – Objective conjugation + gen-acc

(1) Erzya

- *Er'za-n kel'-enť parš'te soda-sak?* - *Škola-so ejs-enze tonavťn-in di kudo-so=jak.*

erzya-gen language-def.gen well know-prs:2sg>3sg school-ine pp:?-poss:3sg learn-pst.1sg and home-ine=clt

'Do you know well the Erya language? I have learned some of it at school and also at home.'

(Syatko-2004_5_50-74:348)

(2) Moksha

Ťä päk para, mzārda lomat-t'ňə soda-saž' es käl'-snən i šarkəd'-saž' soň äräviksši-nc, (...).

this very good when person-pl.def know-prs:3pl>3 own language-poss:3pl-gen and understand-prs:3pl>3 3sg.gen importance-poss:3sg.gen

'It is a good thing when people know their own language and understand the importance of this fact.' (Moksha-2007_8_120-129:247)

EVIDENTIAL FUNCTIONS OF THE PARTITIVE

Erzya & Moksha

subjective conjugation + gen-acc

(restricted to conventional expressions)

(1) Erzya

Ańśak mašina-ń veřića-tńe řev-est pařśťe soda-šť: koso-koso lotkit' di učit' žarskak, mejl'e bojkasto ardoževit'.

but car-gen leader-pl.def work-poss:3pl well know-pst.3pl

'But the car drivers know well their work: they stop here and there and they wait a while, then they drive fast.' (Syatko-2007_7_122-127:49)

objective conjugation + basic form (nom)

(ndefinite objects)

(1) Moksha

Soda-šť-vanńǰkšńǰ-šť para koJ-t'ila-t.

know-pst.3pl-defend-pst.3pl good tradition-pl feast-pl

'They knew and defended good traditions and feasts.' (Moksha-2007_3_59-80:864)

EVIDENTIAL FUNCTIONS OF THE PARTITIVE

Erzya subjective conjugation + ablative-partitive: indirect knowledge?

(1) Erzya

Siń (Vaša at'ań pokš ćoraťne) a sod-it' zijan-do-ńť.

3pl neg know-prs.3pl accident-abl-def

'They do not know about the accident' (Syatko-2004_8_3-9:114)

(2) Erzya

Meł-ťne prá-so-n veła-ź veła-šť: ko-sto Ńina sod-i ava-nzo marto ikeleń vašťnevema-do-nok?
idea-def.pl head-ine-poss:1sg rotate-ger rotate-pst.3pl: adv.loc-ela Nina know-prs.3sg mother-
poss:3sg.gen pp:with previous dealings-abl-poss:1pl

'The thoughts turned and turned in my head: how does Nina know about our previous dealings with her mother?' (Syatko-2007_2_15-21.:191-192)

(1) negation (no direct or indirect knowledge)

(2) source of knowledge uncertain, no direct knowledge

EVIDENTIAL FUNCTIONS OF THE PARTITIVE

(1) Erzya

Pařak, kijak sod-i Aga baba-ń ćora-do-nzo-jak?

well who know-prs.3sg A. Baba-gen man-abl-poss:3pl-clt

'Well, and who knows about the sons of baba Aga?' (Syatko-2006_11_124-125)

(2) Erzya

— Ťeř'a-t=kak sod-i śorma-t'ńe-d'e?

dad-poss.2sg-clt know-prs.3sg letter-def.pl-abl

'Does your father know about the letters?' (Syatko-2007_2_15-21:218)

Dubitative sentences → knowledge uncertain (source cannot be unspecified)

EVIDENTIAL FUNCTIONS OF THE PARTITIVE

Partial knowledge

(1) Erzya

Di a veše lovnića-t'ńe sod-it' A. Doronin-de koda žurnálist-te
and neg all reader-def.pl know-prs.3pl A. D-abl as journalist-abl

'And not all the readers knows A. Doronin as a journalist.' (Syatko-2004_12_102-112:19-20)

(2) Erzya

(...) kona-t'ńe-d'e Šošin-Gerxardt soda-ś koda pař'izan-tne-ńeń lezdića-t'ńe-d'e.
which-def.pl-abl S-G know-pst.3sg as partisan-def.pl-dat helper-pl.def-abl

'(people) which he knew as supporters of the partisans' (Syatko-2006_3_40-64:397)

(1) partial subject

(2) knowledge about the stimulus only concerns an aspect

EVIDENTIAL FUNCTIONS OF THE PARTITIVE

(1) Erzya

Vid'e, koj-kit', konat soda-śt' stakado staka orma-do-nzo

interj some/few which-pl know-pst.pl heavy-abl heavy illness-poss:3sg

'Just a few people who knew about his extremely heavy illness' (Syatko-2004_3_83-91:321)

Context supports direct knowledge: 'Certainly, the few people who knew about his extremely heavy illness, did not talk about it with anyone (about what torments he used to go through during their visits)

Possible explanation → 3rd person possessive refers to non-direct experience by the experiencer

(1) Erzya

Burlak-t'ne-d'e, sin-st staka važod'ema-do-st sod-it' veše (...)

puller-pl.def-ab 3pl.gen heavy work-abl-poss:3pl know-prs.3pl everyone

'Everyone knows about towpath pullers and about their heavy work' (Syatko-2004_5_104-123:368)

EVIDENTIAL FUNCTIONS OF THE PARTITIVE

Ablative-partitive differently motivated

(1) Erzya

Ist'a, Andréjkin Vaša lamo sod-i nadobijaks t'ikše-tńe-d'e,

so A V a.lot know-prs.3sg remedy herb-pl.def-abl

And so, A V knows a lot about the remedy herbs. (Syatko-2006_9_74-79:114)

Quantifier occurs – construction also available in Moksha

«Mordvaś sodaj lama t'ışeda. Finćńəń noľäsińə (...)

Mordvin-def.nom know-prs.3sg much herb-abl

'Mordvinians knows a lot about herb(s).' (Moksha-2006_9_101-111:16)

EVIDENTIAL FUNCTIONS OF THE PARTITIVE

Summary on Erzya (tentative)

Ablative-partitive apparently motivated by

- uncertain source of information
- reporting of someone else's experience
- partial knowledge

EVIDENTIAL FUNCTIONS OF THE PARTITIVE

Comparison between Ancient Greek and Erzya

AG → knowledge by hearsay NOT motivated by partitive meaning of the genitive: motivation internal to construction variation with hearing verbs

Erzya → uncertain/indirect/partial knowledge motivated by partitive meaning of the ablative

Thank you for your attention!



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