

## Evidentiality in Modern Western Aramaic

Evidentiality is commonly viewed as obligatory marking of speaker's source of information about the reported situation. While many languages do not have special grammatical means for expressing evidential values, some systematically use this marking. According to Aikhenvald (2004) 'about a quarter of the languages of the world have grammatical evidentials'. It is believed that among Semitic languages grammaticalization of evidentiality is not widely represented. Some Arabic dialects use the active participle to express evidential information, especially those that are in contact with the Turkic languages (Henkin, 1992; Isaksson, 2000). According to our data Modern Western Aramaic encodes evidential meanings via QTĪL and QATTĪL inflected bases, which appear in complementary distribution depending on the transitivity value and the root structure of an individual verb (Barsky, Loesov, 2018). Cf. an example from the dialect of Jubbʿadīn (Arnold, 1990, 61.80):

aḳam	hū,	iṣmeṣ	b=ō	xabəṭ-t-a,	inḩeč	l=erraṣ,
get.up.PST	he	hear.PST	IO=this.F	noise-FS-ABS	go.down.PST	to=downstairs
ṣaynē=la		b=arṣ-i	dōr-č-a	ičber	muḩḩ=ah	hōxa
look.PST=IO.3fs		on=floor-HD	house-FS-ABS	be.broken.PRF	head=POSS.3fs	here
w	sakḳīt-a	b=arṣ-a.				
and	fall.PRF-FS	on=floor-ABS				

„He got up, heard the noise, went downstairs and saw her on the floor of the house; her head was smashed (right) here, (she looked like) she fell to the floor.“

The speaker did not see the fall event. He heard a sound and found the girl lying dead with her head smashed. And then he concluded that she apparently fell down the stairs (i.e. inferring evidentiality). Evidential QTĪL/QATTĪL can be found in all types of predicates, regardless of their lexical aspect, while the rest of the values of QTĪL/QATTĪL clearly depends on it.

List of additional glossing abbreviations:

ABS = absolute, i.e., the free, non-incorporated form of the noun.

HD = marks the head of a noun or verb phrase to indicate an immediately following, definite dependent.

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