

Elena Battaglia and Johanna Miecznikowski

3 Hearsay in Italian talk-in-interaction

Abstract: In this chapter we explore hearsay as a subcategory of information source in Italian, focusing on its semantic properties and its contribution to epistemic stance-taking in talk-in-interaction. The notion of *evidential frame* is used to describe components of the acquisition of knowledge through hearsay such as the current speaker and experiencer of hearsay S_0 , the cited speaker S_i , the modality of the cited discourse (written vs. spoken) or the spatio-temporal circumstances. We ask which semantic components are explicitly encoded and how participants orient to them in interaction. The analysis is carried out on a collection of 126 hearsay constructions in dinner table conversations and on a subcollection of repair sequences, hypothesizing that reformulation in repair exposes semantic micro-contrasts that are particularly relevant to participants in the local context. In Italian, hearsay is primarily conveyed through verb-centered constructions, especially with *dire* ('to say'), which specify frame components in varying degrees of detail. In the collections, we often encounter explicit reference not only to S_i , but also to S_0 's involvement. In repair sequences, adding more details about S_i 's expertise or S_0 's direct access to the source discourse enhances the reliability of the hearsay source and supports claims of epistemic primacy, while persistent vagueness can be seen to reduce such claims. Our findings highlight the experiential nature of knowledge acquisition, including indirect sources such as hearsay, and challenge assumptions about the prevalently hedging function of this category, suggesting that hearsay tends to serve justificatory and boosting functions when expressed through semantically specific lexical constructions.

Keywords: evidentiality, information source, hearsay, Italian, repair, epistemic stance

3.1 Introduction

Hearsay is an evidential category by which speakers present a piece of information as originating in a discourse they have heard (or read). In the present paper, we discuss this category with reference to the relevant literature and investigate it in a set of dinner and lunch table conversations in Italian. We adopt a collection-based

Elena Battaglia, Johanna Miecznikowski, USI Università della Svizzera italiana

interactional approach to evidential meaning that focuses both on conceptual structure and on the contribution of evidential meaning to epistemic stance-taking, with special attention to its reformulation in repair sequences. Assuming that references to hearsay sources in discourse vary along several lines (for example, the author and type of discourse referred to or the moment and manner in which the speaker has accessed that discourse), we explore which parameters are particularly relevant in conversation and which pragmatic functions they fulfill. We will see that different modules of the investigation converge to suggest that the degree of specificity with which hearsay sources are encoded plays an important role in the strategic management of the co-participants' epistemic positioning.

More detailed reference to the author of the discourse and to the circumstances of the experience is associated with claims of epistemic primacy, while generic references to hearsay achieve the opposite effect. As to the functions of single parameters, explicit reference to the speaker, as well as details about their uptake and memory of others' discourse, are highly salient aspects of hearsay in the examined data. We will argue that this finding highlights the experiential nature of knowledge acquisition and the speaker's role in the hearsay frame.

In Italian, hearsay is mainly conveyed by constructions centered around verbs of saying, writing, thinking, perception, appearance, understanding, and reading. These constructions are sometimes combined with techniques of direct and indirect reported speech that include deictic shifting or prosodic mimesis and may stretch over larger units of discourse, relying not only on morpho-syntax, but also on textual relations to connect the hearsay source with the information in its scope. Often these constructions are not grammaticalized, nor lexicalized, but are "trivial" (Wiemer 2010:62) under the aspect of compositionality, i.e. have fully compositional meaning (e.g. *recita* 'it says', *si legge* 'you (can) read' and *sta scritto* 'it's written', cf. Miecznikowski 2009). Some verb-centered constructions are grammaticalized to a certain degree, especially *dice* (*che*), lit. 'says' (Calaresu 2004:39–42, Pietrandrea 2007:58, 67, Giacalone and Topadze 2007:27, Wiemer 2010:103), Sicilian *dicica* (Cruschina and Remberger 2008), and *a quanto pare* 'apparently' (Squartini 2008:932–33). The literature on Italian mentions one hearsay construction with a lexical core that is not a verb, i.e. *secondo X* 'according to X' (e.g. Pietrandrea 2007:58), whereas no hearsay adverbs have been described. Towards the grammatical end of the cline between discourse, lexicon and grammar, we find certain uses of the conditional forms of the modal verbs *dovere* 'must' and *potere* 'can' (*dovrebbe*, *potrebbe* according to Pietrandrea 2005:87–88, see however Rocci 2012 for a different analysis of *dovrebbe*) and, finally, extensions of moods and tenses, especially the conditional form *per se* (Squartini 2001, 2002; Wiemer 2010:78) and certain uses of the imperfect (Bazzanella 1990:450–452; Squartini 2001:308–314; Wiemer 2010:75–76).

The way we just presented the verbal resources to encode hearsay in Italian, including a vast array of formal means, is rooted in an understanding of this category as a conceptual and functional one, at the intersection of information source and reported speech. In the present study, this approach is applied more generally to the superordinate category of information source, which we consider here as a conceptual and functional category that is prominent within the larger domain of epistemicity (Boye 2012). A function to form approach is indeed necessary to raise and investigate the issue of how meaning related to information source is encoded and becomes relevant in interaction. We develop this functional orientation by making further theoretical assumptions. On the semantic level, drawing on the notion of *evidential frame* (Miecznikowski 2020), we will describe information source as an experience of knowledge acquisition relevant to the speaker's current utterance, which relates multiple components whose encoding is subject to variation in discourse. Note that in this paper, for convenience, we use the adjective *evidential* in a narrow sense with the meaning 'related to information source', while putting aside other potentially relevant meanings of this adjective and of the derived noun *evidentiality*.¹ On the pragmatic level, referring to the broader framework of interactional linguistics, we see information source as part of epistemic stance taking (Stivers, Mondada and Steensig 2011; Heritage 2012), an activity that depends on the sequential unfolding of talk.

Raising the question of the interactional relevance of semantic distinctions in the domain of hearsay implies a perspective that pays attention to contextualized meaning and *in situ* interpretations by participants. In this perspective, as anticipated at the beginning of this introduction, we ask two interrelated questions. First, we ask which semantic properties of hearsay frames tend to be encoded explicitly and in some detail, thereby becoming prominent in discourse, as opposed to having implicit and/or vague meaning. Second, we focus on sequences in which hearsay sources are reformulated as part of a repair and ask which semantic properties are concerned and what participants achieve pragmatically by modifying their encoding.

In the following sections, we first give a conceptual and functional definition of information source as an evidential frame (3.2.1) and an overview of its main pragmatic functions (3.2.2). Then we narrow down the scope to hearsay: we discuss its relation to reported speech (3.3.1, 3.3.2), reflect on the pragmatic functions that

¹ We take the noun *evidentiality* to mainly refer to a grammatical category. We remain agnostic about the question whether information source is central to evidentiality. Information source has quite clear-cut conceptual boundaries and is, in our view, cross-linguistically an important category at the pragmatic and interactional level, independently of its role in the grammaticalization of epistemic linguistic means.

are actualized in this subcategory of information source (3.3.3) and come back to our research questions (3.3.4). A survey of the main properties of talk-in-interaction in general and of repair sequences in particular is provided to ground our interactional approach (3.4). We move on to present the data and methodology of our empirical study on conversational Italian (3.5). The findings are discussed in two sections, addressing each of the research questions above. In a first step, we describe the formal and semantic properties of the hearsay strategies attested in the corpus (3.6). Subsequently, we present a collection of repair sequences and analyze several exemplary cases in depth, highlighting semantic contrasts and pragmatic effects related to epistemic stance-taking (3.7). Finally, we summarize and discuss the findings and sketch future perspectives (3.8).

3.2 The category of information source

3.2.1 Conceptual, deictic and m-performative features

In this study, we define the category of information source by its conceptual core and its specific relation to the speaker's on-going action. Following a proposal by Miecznikowski (2018, 2020), we define the category's conceptual core as referring to (a) an experience (b) made in the present or the past (c) by the speaker or a set of people that includes him/her, (d) by which the experiencer acquires/acquired a piece of information (e) that information being a proposition *p* that can be said to be true or false (see Boye 2012:183–275, who underlines the importance of propositional scope as a criterion to define evidential operators). This relational structure can be conveniently described as a *configuration* (Miecznikowski 2018:80) or *frame* (Fillmore 2006; Bazzanella 2014:69–72; Miecznikowski 2020:45–47).² We propose a visual representation in Figure 1. Further entities and features can be added to the basic evidential frame to specify the type of experience, deictic properties as well as possible constraints on the nature of *p*. We moreover posit that in order for such an experience to count as an information source, (f) the truth of the proposition *p* resulting from it must be at stake in the speaker's action.

² The concept of *frame* is typically used to describe processes with several participants and is situated at the interface between language-specific semantics and more general cognitive schematizations rooted in experience. It is therefore well-suited to model the category of information source intended as a process of knowledge acquisition.

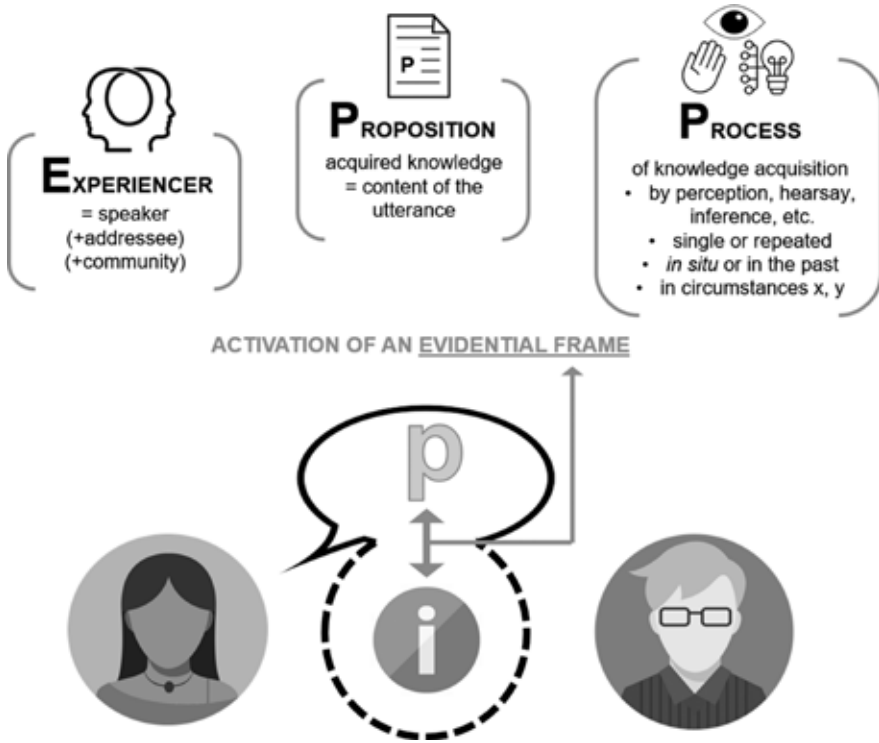


Figure 1: Evidential frame. The diagram pictures a speaker, a hearer, and a discourse with a propositional content *p* related to an information source *i*, analyzed in further detail in the upper part of the diagram.

Condition (f) is a somewhat broader formulation of Miecznikowski's (2018:79–82, 2020:46) criterion according to which the speaker must perform an assertive speech act and express some degree of commitment to *p*. It recalls Anderson's (1986:274) criterion according to which "[e]videntials are not themselves the main predication of the clause, but are rather a specification added to a factual claim ABOUT SOMETHING ELSE" (uppercase in the original), where "something else" corresponds to our proposition *p*. We however prefer not speaking of "factual claims" alone, but broaden the scope to a variety of acts in which the truth of *p* is at stake, including acts with very weak assertive force. The criterion excludes reports of perception, speech and thought that fulfill the conditions a-e, but in which the speaker's assertive commitment regards the entire report, i.e. the fact that such acts and experiences occurred, rather than merely the truth of the content perceived, told or thought of. In languages such as Italian, or English, in which evidential constructions include full verbs taking scope over syntactically embedded clauses, criterion

(f) requires the analyst to evaluate the pragmatic prominence of both the main and the embedded clause. In the following invented examples, according to this criterion, the underlined expressions in (i) specify the speaker's source of information for *p*, while their counterparts in (ii) do not:

- (1) (i) [*The surface is scratched*]_{*p*}, *I'm afraid – I saw [it]_{*p*} quite clearly when I took a close look.*
- (ii) *It was her who first noticed [that the surface was scratched]_{*p*}. At a closer look I saw [it]_{*p*} too, and got worried: had I done the damage?*
- (2) (i) [*He's a liar and a thief*]_{*p*}, *Everybody says [that]_{*p*}.*
- (ii) *I often hear them fight. She says [that he's a liar and a thief]_{*p*}, he replies that their marriage has been a huge mistake, and so on and so forth.*

In the (i) cases, the truth of *p* is at stake and could be challenged by an interlocutor in an adjacent turn; the underlined expressions are interpreted in that context and, accordingly, acquire a particular pragmatic relevance. On the other hand, the reports in (ii) are part of narratives and the underlined expressions are prominent components of the propositional content, whereas the embedded *p* is, respectively, presupposed (1) or its truth is currently irrelevant (2). Therefore the underlined expressions, even if formally and semantically similar to those in the (i) examples, have a quite different pragmatic status.

Criterion (f) underlines that the category of information source is both deictic and performative (“a mental act of evaluation of a state of affairs” which is “performed here and now”, Nuyts 2001:40), or rather *m-performative* (Faller 2002:211), a term whose *m*-prefix is reminiscent of Nuyts' characterization of the act in question as “mental”.³ In both works just cited, the notion of *performative* is opposed to *descriptive* and highlights the fact that epistemic and evidential markers contribute to the formation of the speaker's on-going action. *M-performativity* is central in grammaticalized evidentiality and co-varies also with the form and meaning of constructions with a lexical core, suggesting its importance in processes of grammaticalization (Miecznikowski 2017:354–355).

³ “In order to distinguish Nuyts' notion of performative from the standard speech act theoretic notion, I will call it *m-performative* based on his characterization of it being a mental act of evaluation.” (Faller 2002:211-212).

3.2.2 Pragmatic and interactional functions

The way an expression of information source may contribute to action formation varies a great deal,⁴ but based on the existing literature it is possible to identify its most recurrent pragmatic functions: hedging or boosting illocutionary force, claiming or disclaiming epistemic primacy, distancing.

The set of functions that overall has been discussed most in linguistics and the neighbouring fields regards the assessment of the certainty of *p* based on an assessment of the source's reliability, with effects of epistemic modalization and, as a consequence, either boosting or hedging of the act's assertive force. This function motivates the use of the term *evidence* (cf. Willett's 1988:57 well-known "types of evidence") and of its derivations to refer to information sources, but also the term of *epistemic justification* introduced more recently (see Boye 2012). It is underlined by speech act theory, e.g. Searle and Vanderveken (1985) and Sbisà (2014:480), who consider sources of information necessary preparatory conditions warranting assertions, or Faller (2002:25), who maintains that they modulate an act's sincerity conditions. It is also central to the much discussed issue of the relation between evidentiality and epistemic modality (see, again, Boye 2012 as well as the recent literature review by Robin 2024) and has recently been revisited in an argumentative perspective, reconstructing expressions of information source as arguments from a reliable procedure of knowledge acquisition (Miecznikowski 2018, 2020; Battaglia and Miecznikowski in press).

A second set of functions has to do with the categorization of sources in social terms. Experiences of knowledge acquisition are embedded in social practices and participants' references to them imply self- and other-categorizations that are linked to social and professional roles, rights and obligations (Stivers, Mondada and Steensig 2011; also see Geddo, in preparation, for a detailed discussion). As underscored by conversation analytical work, participants treat these aspects as pre-existing categories that become relevant in specific interactions (*epistemic status*, Heritage 2012, *territories of information*, Kamio 1997), but also negotiate and adapt them during interactions, paying special attention to the mutual positioning of different co-participants (*epistemic stance*). Taking an epistemic stance with regard to a specific information can be viewed as claiming or disclaiming epistemic *primacy*, i.e. "relative rights to know" (Stivers, Mondada and Steensig 2011:13) or as taking a

4 We use the term *action formation* to refer to the way "the resources of the language, the body, the environment of the interaction, and position *in* the interaction [are] fashioned into conformations designed to be, and to be recognized by recipients as, particular actions – actions like requesting, inviting, granting, complaining, agreeing, telling, noticing, rejecting, and so on" (Schegloff 2007:xiv).

position – and assigning one to the interlocutor – on a +/-K gradient of knowledge claims (Heritage 2012:7; Heritage and Raymond 2005; Sandman and Grzech 2022).

A third set of pragmatic functions is related to the deictic aspects of information source and regards the management of the speaker's personal involvement. Referring to an information source entails evoking a state of affairs and cognizers that are different from the current speech event. That is why information source is conceptualized as a device of mediation in the French tradition (*médiativité*, see Guentchéva 2011; Dendale and Miecznikowski 2023) and evidential marking can have a distancing effect. Distancing, in turn, can be a means for speakers, to *shield* themselves from their own current verbal action and reduce their responsibility for it.⁵

Not only semantic aspects of information source, but also its various pragmatic functions can be encoded explicitly by verbal means or be conveyed more implicitly by textual strategies, multimodal resources and pragmatic inferencing (see Michael 2012:344–348 for a discussion of the role of implicature with particular reference to reported speech). Languages differ as to which meanings and functions are encoded explicitly, especially by grammatical means. This raises descriptive challenges, as for example in the case of the French conditional form: Is the main encoded meaning the attribution of a discourse to S_i , i.e. a referential, semantic property, which can have pragmatic overtones of uncertainty? Or, on the contrary, does the form primarily encode S_0 's lack of commitment, i.e. a pragmatic function, with evidential overtones (for a discussion of the issue see Dendale 2018)? The high degree of variation in this regard also makes it notoriously difficult to define the functional core of evidentiality as a grammatical category cross-linguistically: Mediated information (Guentchéva 2011), information source (Aikhenvald 2004, 2021) or epistemic authority (Bergqvist and Grzech 2023)? In our approach, which proceeds from meaning and function to form, these issues are secondary, however: the starting point of our analysis remains the category of information source, irrespectively of the precise role information source plays in grammaticalized evidential systems cross-linguistically. Maintaining this functional approach, in Section 3.3 we will now focus on the category of hearsay, which we locate at the intersection of information source and reported speech.

⁵ According to Caffi (2007), *shields* are one of three strategies of mitigation alongside with *bushes*, which alter propositional content or make it vague, and *hedges*, which alter illocutionary force or make it vague.

3.3 Hearsay at the intersection of reported speech and information source

3.3.1 Reported speech

Inspired by Calaresu (2004),⁶ who elaborates on Ducrot (1984) and Mortara Garavelli (1985), we define reported speech as an operation by which the current speaker S_0 represents a discourse authored by a different speaker $S_{i \neq 0}$. In what follows, we will also refer to Goffman's (1979) analysis of speaker roles, which will prove useful to reflect on the pragmatic functions of reported speech.

The term *speaker* is to be understood here as referring to the *speaker-as-such*, i.e. the instance S that produces the discourse (*locuteur-en-tant-que-tel* in Ducrot 1984:204, *locutore* in Calaresu's translation, cf. especially Calaresu 2004:84–91) and roughly corresponds to Goffman's (1979:16–18) *author* (the instance responsible for the discourse's wording). That instance theoretically differs from the speaker as an empirical producer of the discourse (roughly, Goffman's *animator*) and as a person or entity-of-the-world, who can become a referent of discourse, for example when speaking about oneself in the past (*locuteur-en-tant-qu'êtré-du-monde* in Ducrot 1984:99). Accordingly, the same person speaking in different moments of their life, or in different imaginary worlds, will be considered a set of variously indexed instances S . Any instance S differs, moreover, from what Ducrot calls an *enunciator* (*énonciateur*), i.e. an agent who is responsible for a point of view expressed (roughly corresponding to Goffman's *principal*). Accordingly, there is a difference between reported speech, which involves various instances S , and certain types of polyphony (such as irony) that multiply enunciators and points of view, but not necessarily speakers-as-such (see Dendale 2006 for a discussion of various types of polyphony and a comparison of various approaches to the phenomenon).

Besides the multiplication of instances S , or 'enunciative levels' (*piani enunciativi*, Calaresu 2004:112), the definition of reported speech requires that the discourse authored by S_i be represented. The representation can take the form of direct reported speech (characterized by a shift of the origin of personal deixis, i.e. 1st person singular deictic markers refer to S_i) or of various forms of indirect reported speech (1st person singular deictic markers refer to S_0). In contrast, a mere summary description of speech acts and topics (e.g. *She told him who had called, During the hearing the managers disclosed crucial information about the incident*) does not allow one to infer the content of what was said and is therefore not to be considered an instance of reported speech (Calaresu 2004:118–120).

6 For a brief review of the literature on reported speech in Romance cf. also Hassler (2002:2-14).

Reported speech can be expressed by a variety of formal and semantic means, for example mimetic techniques that imitate the voice, style or linguistic variety of S_i ; constructions with verbs of saying, writing, hearing and reading that take scope over an embedded discourse; sentence adverbs, adverbials, parenthetical clauses, particles, quotes/air quotes or morphemes placed within the reported discourse or adjacent to it.

3.3.2 The relation between reported speech and information source and the opposition between quotation and hearsay

Among the possible expressions of reported speech in Italian, Calaresu (2004:36–38) includes a set of grammatical and lexical markers of information source. She thereby acknowledges a functional overlap between the two categories.

Inversely, instances of reported speech, independently of their formal expression, can be used to convey the speaker's information source. Aikhenvald (2004:20) states that “reported speech can be viewed as a universal evidential strategy” because of important semantic and functional affinities between the two categories (cf. also Aikhenvald 2004:105, 132 ff.). It is important to specify that the evidential markers Aikhenvald considers as functionally equivalent to reported speech include *quotatives* on one side and evidentials that mark a piece of information as *reported*, or *hearsay*, on the other. According to Aikhenvald (2004:140), there tends to be a “division of labor” between them: Quotatives are typically used when a text is presented as corresponding verbatim to a discourse uttered by a specific S_i ⁷ and S_0 does not intend to take an epistemic stance towards the information. Hearsay markers, on the other hand, prefer contexts in which S_i and the precise wording are left unspecified; moreover, they tend to acquire epistemic extensions. Within our approach, hearsay evidentials are considered genuine expressions of information source, whereas prototypical quotatives can be expected to not always correspond to all the defining criteria of information source.⁸ This entails that, for us, as far as the evidential markers and strategies examined by Aikhenvald are concerned, the

⁷ Cf. also Wiemer (2010:100): “Literal reproduction of speech. This is what quotatives proper do.”

⁸ This view is compatible with Boye's (2012:32): “Meanings that are quotative in Aikhenvald's sense are considered non-evidential in the present study.” See also Michael's (2012:344–348) discussion, with regard to markers of others' discourse, of the contrast between those that express “informational source”, corresponding to the category of hearsay in our study, and those that express “illocutionary source”, i.e. quotation.

functional overlap between reported speech and information source is instantiated mainly by hearsay markers.

Despite the division of labour observed by Aikhenvald with regard to grammatical quotative and hearsay markers, in a functional perspective the distinction between quotation and hearsay is often not quite straightforward. Many reported speech constructions are polyfunctional. A symptom of this polyfunctionality is the fact that grammaticalization processes which originate in expressions of reported speech can yield both quotatives and hearsay markers, as shown by particles such as American Spanish *dizque* (Travis 2006; Wiemer 2010:92) and corresponding particles in other languages that agglutinate a form of the verb ‘to say’ and a complementizer (cf. the comprehensive study of such SayC particles in Romance conducted by Cruschina and Remberger 2008). As far as Italian varieties are concerned, Cruschina and Remberger (2008) analyze the Sicilian marker *dicica*, to which they attribute mainly quotative functions, but also hearsay functions when S_i is not specified.⁹ Another example is the grammaticalized use of *dice* (*che*) in Italian (cf. the literature referred to in Section 3.1). This marker originates in the third person singular present tense form of *dire* ‘to say’ but has lost the morphological categories of tense and number. Calaresu’s examples from a spoken corpus suggest a certain degree of polyfunctionality of *dice*: it mainly encodes quotation but is also compatible with hearsay.

When analyzing tokens of reported speech, the decision whether a given token indicates quotation or hearsay depends on several factors. In our view, reported speech is an expression of hearsay whenever the reported discourse conforms to the defining conditions of information source a-f described in Section 3.2.1 – independently of formal means and of the degree of precision with which S_0 refers to S_i or to the original wording. In example (2) cited earlier, both (i) and (ii) can be classified as reported speech, but we argued that only (i) indicates S_0 ’s information source, whereas (ii) does not satisfy the m-performativity condition (f). Other cases where reported speech does not indicate information source are, for example,

9 For Cruschina and Remberger (2008), more generally, the presence vs. absence of reference to a specific S_i is a major functional contrast. According to the authors, it not only coincides with the contrast between quotation and hearsay (Cruschina and Remberger 1998:98, fn. 2), but also divides second-hand information from third-hand information in the sense of Willett (1988:57, 96), to whom they refer several times. We are inclined to doubt that this particular interpretation of Willett’s chapter is correct, since the author consistently stresses the status of S_i as a direct witness as a criterion to distinguish second- vs. third-hand evidence, rather than the degree of specificity with which S_i is referred to. This is coherent with the overall nature of Willett’s typology, in which the direct vs. indirect contrast plays a major role. These theoretical issues notwithstanding, the finding we underlined regarding multiple grammaticalization paths for SayC markers emerges clearly from Cruschina and Remberger’s (2008) discussion.

imagined reported speech (*My brother would probably say this is nonsense*, condition b not satisfied), reports in which the speaker is not an experiencer (*They told you I sold the house, didn't they?*, condition c not satisfied), self-quotations (*I've told you a thousand times / I tell you this is nonsense*, condition d not satisfied because the speaker has not acquired the proposition 'this is nonsense' by hearing their own discourse),¹⁰ or, finally, reports of discourses that do not contain propositions in the sense of entities that can be said to be true or false (cf. the reported greeting in *She said "Hi everyone"* and the reported promise in *She promised she would come*, condition e not satisfied).

3.3.3 Interactional functions of hearsay

It is challenging to gain an overview of the interactional functions of hearsay based on the literature. On the one hand, these are treated in several fields: in research on rhetoric and argumentation, where instances of hearsay are analyzed as arguments from authority (e.g. Walton 1997), on discourse modulation in relation with speaker subjectivity (e.g. Ducrot 1974; Goffman 1979; Authier-Revuz 1995; Caffi 2007), on reported speech in conversation (e.g. Calaresu 2004; Clift 2006), on epistemic stance taking (see Section 3.2.2 and Jacquin 2022) and on specific evidential markers and constructions (e.g. Mushin 2001:193–202; Michael 2012). On the other hand, often quotation and hearsay are examined jointly, making it difficult to discern the specific pragmatics of hearsay.

Among the possible functions of information source in general (see Section 3.2.2), a distancing effect is often attributed to hearsay, also formalized as */+other/* in some evidential typologies (cf. Frawley 1992; Squartini 2001, 2002). This effect tends to be viewed as a means to reduce speaker commitment compared to unmarked utterances, in the sense of Caffi's (2007) shields. Also, in grammaticalized evidential systems, hearsay markers generally indicate a lower degree of source reliability than direct evidentials, assuming epistemic overtones of reduced certainty. These findings apparently conflict with evidence from argumentation studies, which show that arguments from authority can have considerable justificatory force, based on the expertise of S_i , S_i 's direct access to information as a witness (cf. also

¹⁰ The quotation of S_0 's discourse in the past and the performative, or metacommunicative, duplication of S_0 instances in the present have a rich array of pragmatic functions (see Authier-Revuz 1995; Michael 2012), among which, in our view, the acquisition of information plays only a very marginal role (e.g. when speakers use their own texts as sources to bridge a gap of memory). For a different view see Robin (2024, e.g. p. 57, 77, 198 ff.), who includes self-quotation *per se* (*discours rapporté authophonique*) in the domain of information source.

Willett's 1988 category of second-hand evidence) and, to a lesser degree, consensus ('everybody agrees that p'). Research on epistemic stance taking suggests that hearsay may both reduce and boost S_0 's epistemic primacy, depending on whether citing S_i in context is interpretable as showing S_0 's privileged access to the territory of information containing p.

3.3.4 The linguistic encoding of hearsay frame components and the question of their interactional relevance

We now return to the semantics of hearsay and formulate our research questions sketched in the introduction in more detail. Starting from the definition of information source as an experience in the past or present that involves S_0 acquiring a proposition the truth of which is relevant for S_0 's current action (conditions a-f), hearsay can be described as a frame that inherits these defining elements and constrains the properties of the experience, requiring that the proposition be contained in reported speech, as part of a discourse by $S_i \neq 0$. This basic hearsay frame allows for considerable semantic variation, depending on

- i. the degree of explicitness with which S_0 refers to participants and circumstances of the experience;
- ii. the degree of specificity and detail of the information available about these frame components, including the difference between S_i that are individuals vs. more vaguely defined groups, or the difference between strategies that unambiguously indicate hearsay vs. indirectness strategies that neutralize that contrast and are disambiguated as hearsay in context;
- iii. the properties attributed to the frame components, e.g. basic event-related properties such as temporal deixis, aspect and Aktionsart, which contribute to situate the hearsay experience in time and, in the case of past events, may indicate different degrees of current relevance; but also the written vs. spoken modality of S_i 's discourse, subjective vs. intersubjective reference to S_0 , and more contingent attributes and circumstances that may become relevant in context.

We believe that the various ways of encoding frame components expose different aspects of the experience of knowledge acquisition, which, in relation with their sequential position, may have a differentiated impact on S_0 's epistemic stance. As outlined in the introduction, we therefore ask, first of all, which hearsay components and attributes are most prominent in interaction in terms of their frequency and detail of explicit encoding. Secondly, we will look at contexts in which semantic contrasts can be observed during the sequential unfolding of talk, more specifically,

at sequences of repair. In such contexts, which frame components do participants orient to particularly and which pragmatic effects do their encoding, lack of encoding, and reformulation have?

3.4 Talk-in-interaction with a focus on repair practices

To investigate the issues raised in 3.3.4, naturally occurring interaction is a highly informative context of observation. More generally, conversational data have a potential for renewing our understanding of evidentiality as a linguistic category, as has been highlighted recently by Bergqvist and Grzech (2023, cf. 3.2.2) and by Mushin (2013:628), who underlines that the study of information source and related categories in conversation lends “important support for a model of language as emergent and ultimately subject to the local needs of the interactive context”. In what follows, we recall some fundamental notions that need to be integrated into the theoretical and methodological toolkit to approach information source from that angle.

Talk-in-interaction is a specific mode of communication (the “speech mode”, Voghera 2017), characterized by a dialogic infrastructure based on turn-taking and action sequences (on sequentiality, see Schegloff 2007), the audio-visual channel, and the synchronous production and reception of talk. These situational constraints correspond to specific linguistic “correlates” in the textual, syntactic and semantic structure of talk (cf. also Bazzanella 2005:40). For instance, the co-presence of the speaker and the hearer in the same spatio-temporal context favors deictic devices, references to implicit shared knowledge and common ground, as well as practices to communicate the speaker’s stance towards their discourse and to maintain mutual understanding and affiliation with co-participants. Other traits, e.g. the online planning and volatility of spoken discourse and the impossibility of erasing previous formulations favor “light” constituents (Voghera 2017:189 ff.) in turns and sequences, which are characterized by modulations, corrections, repetitions and other forms of redundancy. Within the framework of Interactional Linguistics, grammar-in-interaction has been described as underlining its temporal unfolding (Hopper 2011, Mushin and Pekarek Doehler 2011): Participants renegotiate the syntactic makeup and the completion of units in their turns moment by moment, in order to adapt to continuously changing communicative needs (“local contingencies”, Haselow 2016:79).

The situational constraints of face-to-face interaction operate at the semantic level as well. The construction of meaning is rarely linear, but rather dis-

plays a “spiral” progression, as speakers move back and forth between vague, “low-resolution” formulations and more specific ones (Voghera 2017:163). The desired representation is approximated step-by-step, crucially relying on the cooperation and feedback by the co-participants. Recent research on the construction of categories in interaction has built on this assumption, showing how reference to entities, groups and complex event frames is performed incrementally and collaboratively through successive specifying reformulations, achieving a “zoom-in” effect (Mauri 2021). Along similar lines, the enterprise of interactional semantics (Deppermann and De Stefani 2023) highlights the sequential grounding of practices to achieve “*Bedeutungskonstitution*” (Deppermann 2002, roughly, the establishment of meaning) – practices that centrally include specifications and (re)formulations (Deppermann 2023).

Like other categories, information source and its subcategories can be viewed as resources that are shaped by the sequential and incremental construction of talk (cf. also Battaglia in preparation). In one module of our study, we observed this process through the lens of repair as a universal practice that operates at the intersection of sequential organization, the incremental construction of turns at talk, meaning units, and intersubjectivity (Dingemanse et al., 2015).

Repair has been described as “a locally managed, interactionally organized, procedural architecture through which participants preserve intersubjective understanding” (Fox et al., 2013:1), resolving issues related to speaking, hearing, understanding, and reference, as well as agreement, acceptability, and expectations halting the progressivity of talk. Since early work by Schegloff, Jefferson and Sacks (1977), conversation-analytic and interactional linguistic research has unpacked the main structural properties of repair (for an overview see Couper-Kuhlen and Selting 2018:112–210): (i) Repair proceeds in two phases: the initiation phase, where the trouble is identified, and the outcome phase, where the issue is addressed and resolved. (ii) Both phases of repair can be performed by either the speaker (self) or another participant (other), resulting in several possible configurations. Self-initiated self-repair is the most frequent and preferred type. (iii) Repair tends to occur in specific, preferential positions or slots, such as within the same turn, the transition space after a potential turn completion, the next turn, or the third turn after a co-participant’s reaction (Schegloff 1992).

We investigated how hearsay sources are (re)formulated in repair sequences, examining the emerging semantic contrasts and dynamics of specification in a double perspective: against the background of the frame semantic model outlined earlier, on the one hand, and looking at the pragmatic effects of reformulation on the other hand, especially with regard to epistemic stance taking. This combined analysis gives insights into which frame components are foregrounded or backgrounded in precise sequential moments, in relation to a problem to be

repaired, and allowed us to explore the interactional relevance of specific semantic components of information source. In our analysis, we integrated insights from a few papers – the role of repair in epistemic stance taking has received little scholarly attention so far – which show that participants are sensitive to asymmetrical distributions of knowledge when initiating and performing repair (Bolden 2013, 2018; Robinson 2013) and sometimes use this practice to “remediate infelicitous epistemic stances” (Bristol and Rossano 2022).

3.5 Data and methods

This study draws on conversational data from the TIGR corpus of spoken Italian (Infinita, FNS grant no. 192771). The corpus was video-recorded in the Italian-speaking regions of Switzerland (Ticino and Grisons) and transcribed according to the GAT 2 conventions (Selting et al. 2011). We employed the “fine transcript” level of granularity with minor adaptations.¹¹ For this study, we selected a sub-corpus of four dinner and lunch table conversations (six hours in total, see Table 1). The conversations involve seventeen participants, all of whom share close relationships, such as friends, classmates, family members, or couples. As is typical for table conversations, turn-taking is free, and the choice of topics is quite unconstrained.

Table 1: Dinner and lunch table conversations contained in TIGR.

Event code	Length	Participants
EV2	01:05:06	3
EV4	01:25:15	3
EV5	01:07:34	3
EV6b	01:05:05	4
EV7	01:22:03	4
total	6:05:03	17

We adopted a broad conversation-analytic approach to examine the data. As a starting point, we inspected the transcripts and built a collection of 126 instances of hearsay based on the functional criteria defined in 3.2 and 3.4. Each identified case corresponds to a single hearsay construction applied to a content *p* and some surrounding co-text. In instances where multiple hearsay constructions had scope

¹¹ A tilde sign ~ has been added to the GAT 2 conventions to mark word truncation.

over the same p , each instance was counted separately. The analysis proceeded in two phases.

In the first phase, we coded formal and semantic parameters. The coding parameters and a closed set of values were drawn from an annotation scheme developed within the *InfinIta* project, which is grounded in the theoretical framework outlined in 3.2.1–3.3.3 and informed by repeated cycles of qualitative analysis using the TIGR corpus and other spoken Italian corpora. While a thorough justification of this scheme is beyond the scope of this paper, its application to hearsay offers a preliminary overview of this evidential category in Italian, which is essential to our argument developed in Section 3.7. At the level of form, we distinguished several types of relations between the hearsay strategy and its propositional scope (morphological, syntactic, textual), and identified the constructions' core lexemes (see the results in 3.6.1.) At the level of meaning, we described the components of hearsay frames as outlined in 3.3.4. We assessed whether these elements were explicitly verbalized in each strategy and distinguished possible values at varying levels of granularity (see the results in 3.6.2.).

In the second phase, we conducted an in-depth sequential and interactional analysis of repair practices involving hearsay strategies. The analysis was narrowed down to a subset of 48 hearsay constructions, representing 38% of the initial dataset, which either contributed to or were affected by a repair involving the propositional content p . We delimited 32 sequences of repair of p in which a hearsay construction with scope over p was present either in the repairable segment or in the repairing segment or in both. We examined the repair structure (self- vs. other-initiated, self- vs. other-repair), the semantic operations performed (e.g., addition, specification, correction), the type of problem targeted by the repair, and the effects of reformulation on the participants' epistemic positioning. In cases where several hearsay strategies were present, we traced the subsequent encodings of particular hearsay frame components.

3.6 Hearsay in the corpus

3.6.1 Formal properties

The formal classification of hearsay strategies in the corpus yields the results in Table 2.

The corpus contains only 3 instances of the imperfect and 1 instance of a modal verb in the conditional form, suggesting that the most grammaticalized strategies, which have been much discussed in the existing literature, are relatively marginal

Table 2: Hearsay constructions in the TIGR corpus.

Formal properties	N=	%
Imperfect	3	2%
Modal verb	1	1%
Adverbial	18	14%
Complement taking predicate	75	59%
Coreference relations	17	14%
Narrative coherence relations	12	10%
total	126	100%

in everyday conversation. Some lexicalized adverbials in the form of prepositional phrases, such as *in teoria* ('supposedly'), *a quanto pare* ('apparently'), and *da quello che ho capito* ('as far as I understood'), together account for 18 instances in the dataset. The majority of constructions in our corpus, however, feature a lexical predicate that takes semantic (and possibly syntactic) scope over the propositional content *p* and whose argument structure allows for the specification of various components of the hearsay frame (cf. 3.6.2). These lexical predicates conform to a Zipfian distribution: the verb *dire* ('say') is overwhelmingly frequent, occurring 70 times, while other verbs such as *parlare* ('talk'), *vedere* ('see'), *leggere* ('read'), *scrivere* ('write'), *raccontare* ('tell'), *sentire* ('hear'), and *ascoltare* ('listen') appear between 2 and 7 times.

Within this group, in most constructions (75 instances, 59%) the lexical predicate embeds *p* as a complement through a syntactic relation. This set exhibits variation around the type [(S_i) SAY *p* (to S₀)], depending on whether arguments are explicitly encoded, on the temporal and aspectual properties of the verb, and on the presence or absence of the complementizer *che* ('that'). Examples include *PERSONNAME9 ha detto che p* ('PERSONNAME9 has said that *p*'), *diceva* ('he/she used to say'), *sta dicendo che p* ('he/she is saying that *p*'), *mi hanno fatto notare* ('they pointed out to me'), *mio fratello dice che p* ('my brother says that *p*'), and *mia NONna: dice* ('my grandma says').

Lexical predicates referring to hearsay experiences can also operate over *p* through textual relations. These strategies account for 24% of the data in the set. One possibility is through co-reference relations (17 instances), where the lexical predicate locally governs an element that refers back to *p* via anaphora. Examples include *me l'ha detto* ('he/she told me that'), *è famosissima questa cosa* ('this is well known'), *lo vedevo, anche su Will* ('I used to see that on Will'), and *m'ha=m'ha raccontato tutto*. ('he/she told me everything').

Another possibility involves coherence relations (12 instances) between an utterance₁, describing an event of discourse production or reception, and an utterance₂, describing a propositional content *p* that is compatible with hearsay acquisition. Although utterance₁ encodes a potential hearsay frame through a lexical predicate and its argument structure, the evidential relation between utterance₁ and utterance₂ is implicit and must be inferred in virtue of its contextual salience (cf. 3.2.2.). This is the case when textual coherence prompts one to interpret the information *p* in utterance₂ as acquired during the event described in utterance₁. Examples include *ci ha parlato;* *un professore, di una=un †nuovo libro della Treccani* (‘a professor told us about a new book edited by Treccani’, followed by information *p* about the book’s price), *leggevo stamattina, le notizie* (‘I was reading the news this morning’, followed by information *p* about Covid), *avevano fatto dei servizi su Will* (‘they did reports on Will’, followed by information about vegetarianism covered by the media service Will), and *ho visto un v:ideo::; su: su Instagram* (‘I saw a video on Instagram’, followed by information *p* reported in the video).

3.6.2 Semantic properties

3.6.2.1 S_i

In our collection, the most frequent category (57%) are hearsay strategies that refer to a specific S_i, often via a proper name (e.g., *PERSONNAME9 ha detto che* ‘PERSONNAME9 said that’) or the title of a written text (e.g., *nella Bibbia si dice che* ‘in the Bible it says that’). In the remaining cases, S_i’s identity is left vague, sometimes allowing for an interpretation of the proposition as being an element of folklore (Kittilä 2020, Kotwica 2023). Speakers then refer to groups of people (e.g. *lo dicono tutti* ‘everybody says that’) or do not mention S_i at all (e.g., *questo l’avevo letto* ‘I read that’). In about 11% of the cases, the construction *per se* is even compatible with inferential readings (e.g., *a quanto pare* ‘apparently’), the hearsay interpretation being just the most plausible one in context. Results are reported in Table 3.

Table 3: Specification of S_i.

S _i : Other speaker/document	N=	%
Unspecified hearsay/inferential	14	11%
Implicit S _i	25	20%
Group	15	12%
Individual	72	57%
total	126	100%

3.6.2.2 Modality (spoken vs. written)

Speakers have the possibility to indicate the modality of the cited discourse, spoken vs. written, a contrast that entails, on S_0 's side, different ways of receiving the reported information. Some hearsay strategies are neutral in this regard (e.g., *dicono che p* 'they say that p' is compatible both with oral and written sources), but the speakers in our collection generally prefer communicating the discourse modality explicitly, as shown by results in Table 4. In almost 80% of the cases, hearsay strategies clarify through lexical means whether the speaker has heard the information (e.g., *l'ho sentita da qualche parte* 'I've heard that somewhere') or has read it (e.g., *questo l'avevo letto* 'I read that').

The parameters S_i and modality vary independently of one another: a greater degree of specification as to the modality can be paired with indeterminacy as to S_i , as shown by the expressions just cited.

Table 4: Specification of the modality of access to the reported information.

Modality	N=	%
Unspecified hearsay/inferential	14	11%
Hearsay, modality unspecified	13	10%
Hear – Oral discourse	84	67%
Read – Written discourse	15	12%
total	126	100%

3.6.2.3 Experiencer

Table 5 shows that in 38% of the examined cases, the speaker is explicitly encoded as the recipient of the reported information and thus foregrounded as a direct participant in the reported speech event (e.g., *mi hai detto che* 'you told me that'). In a few cases, an exclusive *we* referring to S_0 's in-group is profiled as a recipient (e.g., *ci ha parlato un professore* 'a professor told us'). The information can also be accessed intersubjectively, either by the participants in the current interaction (e.g., *hai visto che p* 'have you seen [= read] that p'),¹² or by a wider community (e.g., *questo è risaputo* 'this is well-known'). In little over a half of the cases, the hearsay strategy does not explicitly refer to any experiencer (e.g., *lo diceva anche lui* 'he also said/used to say that') and S_0 's access to the information is merely implied.

¹² See Miecznikowski, Battaglia and Geddo (2023) for an analysis of second person forms of *vedere* as conveying reference to an intersubjective experiencer.

Table 5: Specification of the experienter of the report.

Experienter	N=	%
Unspecified	68	54%
Generic community	5	4%
Interaction participants	3	2%
In-group	2	2%
Speaker	48	38%
total	126	100%

3.6.2.4 Spatio-temporal circumstances

As to the spatio-temporal circumstances of the report, most hearsay experiences are presented as having taken place in the past, usually once (e.g., *mi hai detto che* ‘you told me that’, where the aspectual properties of the Italian Perfect forbid an iterative reading). In some cases, the coordinates of the event are even specified with a fair amount of detail (e.g., *qualche settimana dopo che eravamo andati era uscito un articolo sul giornale, che...* ‘a few weeks after we went there a newspaper article came out, which...’). These two categories account for half of all cases in the collection, as shown in Table 6.

In the other half of the cases, the temporal deixis and aspectual properties are less clear. We find strategies with verb forms that are compatible both with a single or a repeated hearsay experience in the past (e.g., *lo diceva anche lui* ‘he also said/used to say that’, where the Imperfect tense does not impose either unique or iterative reference). The most indeterminate strategies, with regard to temporal and aspectual properties, are expressions without verb forms, which we find in about 10% of all cases (e.g., *in teoria* ‘supposedly’). Note that grammaticalized atemporal *dice (che)* (cf. 3.3.2.) is not attested in our data.

There are a few examples, finally, where the hearsay experience takes place during the interaction (S_i is a co-participant, e.g., *sta dicendo che* ‘he’s saying that’).

Table 6: Specification of the spatio-temporal circumstances of the report.

Spatio-temporal circumstances	N=	%
Temporal deixis unspecified (past, in situ?)	13	10%
Undefined past (single event, repeated event?)	45	36%
Past (single event)	52	41%
Past (single event) + spatio-temporal details	13	10%
In situ	3	2%
total	126	100%

3.7 Hearsay in repair sequences

3.7.1 Sequential properties and semantic operations: overview

Our collection of 32 repair sequences includes both self- and other-repair, with a preponderance of self-repair. More precisely, we found 26 instances of self-initiated self-repair, 3 instances of other-initiated self-repair and 3 instances of other-initiated other-repair.

The first, most frequent, category is illustrated by example (3) taken from a dinner conversation among fellow students:

(3) TIGR_EV6B

- 1 (0.53)
- 2 REBECCA [è gia partita?]
[has she moved?]
- 3 ROBERTO [e son partiti?]
[and have they moved?]
- 4 FIONA allora (.) ↑PERSONPERSONNAME11 sì,
so (.) ↑PERSONPERSONNAME11 has,
- 5 (.) cè s~ allora; sono andati, tutti e due;
(.) I mean th~ so; they left, both;
((side sequence on a different topic, ca. 30s))
- 6 FIONA ((laughs)) (--) °hh ehm:; (.) °h no allora sono e~ [a]desso
((laughs)) (—) °hh ehm:; (.) °h well they're b~ [n]ow
- 7 REBECCA [eh]
[eh]
- 8 FIONA **dovrebbero** essere su entra~ cè allora; non mi ricordo
they should both be there I mean well; I don't remember
- 9 precisamente.
exactly.
((Fiona adds details and finally produces a precise answer))

Just before this exchange, Fiona narrated a recent amusing encounter with a couple her co-participants are acquainted with as well. Rebecca and Roberto take the opportunity to inquire about these friends' whereabouts (l. 2–3), knowing that they were to move to Berlin. Fiona starts responding, showing some hesitation (l. 5), but the sequence is suspended because of a series of turns related to the interactants' current activity. The self-repair that is of interest here occurs at l. 6 and 8, when Fiona returns to the previous topic to complete her answer. She changes the epistemic qualification of her statement by replacing an unmarked indicative

present tense *sono* ('they are') with the modal evidential *dovrebbero* ('they should be'). The conditional form of *dovere* 'must' is a marker of indirect evidentiality that is compatible with hearsay and with inferential readings. This token allows for the interpretation that a well-informed person (a member of the couple or someone else) recently gave Fiona the exact information she is formulating, i.e. that both partners are in Berlin (hearsay); furthermore, it is compatible with a situation in which Fiona infers the current situation from an earlier announcement made by someone concerning the couple's plans or from other statements or observations more indirectly linked to the current situation.

After this operation of self-repair, Fiona produces a further repair, introduced by the discourse markers *cè allora* ('I mean'), disclaiming responsibility in remembering exact details; this disclaimer preludes to a lengthy reasoning, not reported here, by which she will eventually complete her answer and have it accepted by the participants who requested the information.

Other-initiated self-repair is exemplified by (4):

(4) TIGR_EV6B

- 1 FIONA no pa~ è più comodo, (.) e:: ci s~ rischi meno malattie.
 no gi~(ving birth) is more comfortable, (.) a:nd there a~ you risk less
 diseases.
- 2 REBECCA in casa?
 at home?
- 3 FIONA in teoria sì.
 supposedly yes.

This short extract is part of a longer debate about the advantages and risks of giving birth at home. At l. 1, Fiona reacts to immediately preceding turns by Roberto and Rebecca: she confirms an advantage mentioned by Roberto (giving birth at home is more comfortable) and addresses a concern voiced by Rebecca, who observed that there are a lot of germs circulating, suggesting that there is a high risk of contracting diseases. Fiona claims that, on the contrary, home birth is safer (than birth in a hospital) in this regard. The repair sequence that is relevant here is initiated at l. 3 by Rebecca, who does not ratify Fiona's statement, but rather formulates a confirmation request (*in casa?* 'at home?'). Considering Rebecca's stance taken up to that moment, her initiation of repair, even if formally similar to a request for clarification, is likely to be interpreted as challenging Fiona's opinion. Fiona confirms Rebecca's candidate understanding (*sì* 'yes'), thus restating the same content as in l. 1, and adds the evidential strategy *in teoria* ('supposedly', lit. 'in theory'). In our view, *in teoria* is best described as quite a generic indirectness marker; it often

occurs with hearsay and certain types of inference.¹³ In the context of this example, a plausible interpretation is that the information is based on other people's discourses; we will return to the pragmatic function of this repairing segment later. As far as the sequential development is concerned, Fiona's turn at l. 3 concludes the repair sequence at a micro-level (anyway without verbal uptake by Rebecca), whereas the basic question is far from settled; the participants continue debating it for quite some time.

Example (5) illustrates other-initiated other-repair during an interaction in the kitchen. The excerpt reproduces the last part of a longer sequence, where participants are discussing whether the ingredient Marianna is manipulating is an onion, or rather a type of sprout or seed.

(5) TIGR_EV7

- 1 MARIANNA ah ma forse, non è cipolla; cipo:lla.
 oh but maybe, that's not onion; onion:n.
- 2 (0.41)
- 3 LUCIANO i germogli di cipolla, c'è [scritto.]
 onion sprouts, it [says.]
- 4 MARIANNA [eh sì]
 [that's it]

At l. 3 Luciano reformulates a statement by Marianna made at l. 1. He replaces the negated nominal categorization *non [...] cipolla cipolla* (lit. 'not onion onion', where the repetition means 'not onion proper') by *i germogli di cipolla* ('onion sprouts') and adds the evidential strategy *c'è scritto* ('it is written'). The video recording shows that the information source he refers to is the label of the food packet she is manipulating. The repair is accepted by Marianna at l. 4.

The sequences of the collection further differ as to the semantic and pragmatic relation between the target to be repaired and the repairing segment. The examples (3)–(5) discussed above all illustrate a configuration in which the repairable segment does not contain any hearsay strategy and the repair reformulates the proposition

¹³ Beyond hearsay, *in teoria* seems to occur mainly with inferences of the *Reasoning* type (Willett 1988:57, Plungian 2001:354), called *Assumed* by Aikhenvald (2004:391) and *generic inference* by Squartini (2001), whereas its compatibility both with perception per se and with perception-based inference (*Results* in Willett 1988:57; *Inferred* in Aikhenvald 2004:393, *circumstantial inference* in Squartini 2001) is doubtful. Preliminary explorations of the TIGR corpus suggest that the construction is quite frequently used with evidential meaning, besides its literal meaning, which suggests a contrast between what is predicted by a "theory" and what is encountered in "practice". It has not been mentioned so far, let alone described, in the literature on lexical evidential means in Italian.

in question adding such a strategy, with the effect of clarifying the basic type of source for that proposition. This configuration is present in 13 of the 32 instances of repair in the collection and will be discussed in more detail in Section 3.7.2. Another frequent case (14 out of 32 repairs) is a configuration in which a hearsay strategy is present in the repairable segment and the repairing segment contains one or more further hearsay strategies that add more detail, targeting the accuracy and specificity of hearsay marking. The semantic contrasts that emerge from this kind of practice regard various frame components (S_i , the experiencer, spatio-temporal circumstances) and will be discussed in Section 3.7.3. Finally, in 5 instances, the speaker first employs a hearsay marker and then, inversely to the previous case, produces a self-repair that takes the form of a disclaimer, suggesting that no further details can be provided (e.g., ‘but I don’t know precisely’, ‘I can’t remember exactly’, cf. example (3), l. 8–9). We will comment on this case in Section 3.7.4.

3.7.2 Adding a hearsay source to clarify the basic type of information source

Repair can be an opportunity, for speakers, to add a hearsay source to a repairable that is not qualified evidentially or contains only very generic reference to knowledge (e.g., in our data, *so* ‘I know’ or *ricordo* ‘I remember’). When hearsay markers, or indirectness markers compatible with hearsay, are added as part of a repair, our data suggest that they allow speakers to acknowledge and manage referential problems while maintaining a K^+ stance.

In (3), the repair is placed in Fiona’s answer to a question, i.e. in a situation in which she is attributed epistemic primacy, and *dovrebbero* suggests access to relevant information given by people in a position to know, thus allowing her to maintain that primacy even if she is uncertain about some elements of her answer. In (4), *in teoria* might have mitigating functions after Rebecca’s potentially challenging other-initiation of repair, but is followed anyway by Fiona reasserting her standpoint rather than relinquishing her claim to have reliable knowledge about home birth. The hearsay source, which suggests a reference to expert discourse in this case, allows her to maintain epistemic primacy in a situation in which Rebecca, the challenger, merely based her concerns on personal inferences. The other-initiated other-repair by Luciano in (5) occurs in a situation of epistemic symmetry and shared perceptual access to the relevant source (the pasta packet Marianna holds in her hands). The reference to what is written on the packet allows Luciano to claim epistemic authority and Marianna accepts that, while underlining (via the discourse marker *eh*) that she has access independently.

We will now comment on two examples of this semantic configuration in repair that contain more complex and specific expressions of hearsay. This will allow us to reflect on the way further hearsay details contribute to maintaining epistemic authority.

Excerpt (6) reproduces part of a sequence in which Roberto, who was asked about his upcoming exam of Hebrew literature, tells his friends about the contents of the course. The topic here is King Salomon:

(6) TIGR_EV6B

- 1 ROBERTO cè perché; (.) di fatto salomone, viene (-) poi rivi:sto;
well because; (.) in fact salomon, is (-) later reconsidered;
 2 nel medioevo e nel rinascimento; (--)^{°h} <<p> come se mh cè>
in the middle ages and the renaissance; (--)^{°h} <<p> as if mh I mean>
 3 avendo ascoltato una volta; (-) le cose,
having heard; (-) these things once,
 4 mh mh perché non è un coso così difficile,
mh mh because it's not so complicated,
 5 (-)^{°h} viene visto come una forma di;;
(-)^{°h} he is seen as a kind of;
 6 mh: intellettuale, (--)^{°h} universale.
mh: (-)^{°h} polymath.
 7 FIONA hm_hm ah sì.
mh mh oh right.

Roberto formulates a statement, at l. 1–2, about king Salomon being reconsidered during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. After a first transition relevance place, in l. 2 Roberto starts to expand his turn by producing the beginning of a subordinate clause (*come se* ‘as if’), but then aborts this syntactic project and, after the reformulative discourse marker *cè* (‘I mean’), produces a self-repair that targets the entire rhematic part of the utterance. The repair slightly changes the verb (*viene rivisto* > *viene visto*) and, more importantly, adds a complement (*intellettuale universale* ‘polymath’) that specifies the idea about Salomon that prevailed in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance and is new, focused information. The repair comes to a conclusion at l. 6 right after this complement and is taken up by Fiona at l. 7.

While the first version of the statement (l. 1–2) is not qualified evidentially, Roberto inserts a reference to a hearsay source in the self-repair right after the reformulative marker *cè* ‘I mean’. First of all, he states that he has ‘heard these things once’. The verb *ascoltare* (‘to listen, hear’) foregrounds *S*₀ as an experiencer rather than *S*_i and, besides temporal and aspectual properties (past, perfect aspect, *una volta* ‘once’), does not specify any circumstances; in context, the construction

refers to the course teacher as S_i and indicates that Roberto has acquired the information by listening to him in class. Moreover, Roberto adds an expansion about the simplicity of the content in question, which arguably targets the reliability of the experience as an information source; indeed, the reliability of ephemeral spoken discourse as a source depends on the receiver's capacity to understand and memorize it immediately, which in turn depends (among other factors) on the complexity of the discourse.

Pragmatically, the addition of this hearsay source to Roberto's self-repair has various effects. The most obvious effect is that it delays important focal information. This, in turn, is interpretable both as a rhetorical device to increase the interlocutors' attention towards that information and as a sign of dispreference, indicating something problematic about the categorization of Salomon as a polymath (e.g. that it could be somewhat imprecise, or inappropriate, or contrary to the interlocutors' expectations). That the categorization is problematic is suggested also by various hesitations and "bushes" (according to Caffi 2007) that increase vagueness (the 'as if' construction and *una forma di* 'a kind of'). As to epistemic stance taking, in this context, and considering the frame components foregrounded by Roberto, we think it is safe to say that the main function of this hearsay strategy is to enhance Roberto's epistemic authority regarding the propositional content. It is true that the strategy resonates with hesitations and vagueness markers to signal dispreference and evokes a possible issue regarding the reliability of the source. But common hedging effects of hearsay are actually avoided: not only Roberto minimizes distancing by choosing a construction focused on S_0 , but S_i is also clearly an expert with regard to the content at issue and therefore a priori reliable. Also Roberto, eventually, explicitly downplays the risk of misunderstanding the teacher's discourse. Finally, Fiona's immediate ratification by means of the change of state token *ah* and confirming *sì* treats Roberto's statement – and especially the final categorization in focus – as a (new) fact and confirms Roberto's $K+$ status.

Consider now example (7), in which Marica opens a sequence to inform her co-participants Carola and Marcella about an association in Ticino (Switzerland) that represents the interests of highly sensitive people:

(7) TIGR_EV4

- 1 MARICA °h ma, eh: in tiCIno, <<laughing> so che c'è>,
°h but eh: in tiCIno, <<laughing> I know there is>,
- 2 (.) eh:: (.) ascoltavo la radio non l'ascolto mai,
(.) eh::: (.) I was listening to the radio station I never listen to it,
- 3 eh: però (.) quando ho cambiato l'auto;
eh: but (.) when I changed my car;

- 4 (-) n:=mh h° (.) non c'è praticamente,
 (-) n:=mh h° (.) *basically there's not;*
- 5 no=non c'è neanche una chiavetta usb,
 no=*there's not even a usb drive,*
- 6 per poter ascoltare un po' di musica,
 to listen to some music,
- 7 allora ascolto la radio. (--) °h e parlavano,
 so I listen to the radio. (--) °h and they were talking
- 8 delle <<len> perso:ne:> a:d ↑alta sensibilità.
 about, highly sensitive peo:ple:.
- 9 e c'è proprio u:n'associazione, che,
 and actually there is a:n association, which,
- 10 (.) mh::: chiaramente rappresenta,
 (.) *clearly, represents ((their interests)),*

The topic is occasioned by a previous sequence in which Carola had told a not-too-serious anecdote to position herself as a highly sensitive person and the co-participants had joked about this personality trait of hers. The sequence takes place during a long interaction over dinner where the three friends manifest their intimacy by often doubting each other's credibility in a humorous tone (see also example (9) in Section 3.7.3). Marica at l. 1 projects the proposition that will become the object of repair: she utters the initial part of a topicalizing structure composed of a spatial complement (*in ticino*) followed by a generic epistemic verb + complementizer (*so che* 'I know that') and the existential construction *c'è* ('there is'). The projection is interrupted as Marina engages in a repair sequence to specify what her information source is. She narrates having listened to a radio show while driving her car, thereby setting up a hearsay frame relevant to the statement just suspended. The quite rich details she provides have similar effects of delay to those observed in the previous example, and, more importantly, underline the uniqueness of the experience and Marica's good memory of it, such as to boost the reliability of the experience as a source. The repair is completed at l. 7–10 in two steps, first by narrativized others' discourse to reintroduce the topic of highly sensitive people and then by resuming the suspended existential construction *c'è* ('there is') to complete the rhematic part of the proposition. Marica's self-repair reduces the vagueness of *so che*, anticipates any possible doubts by the co-participants, and strengthens Marica's epistemic stance.

In the subset of repair sequences discussed in this section, speakers add a hearsay source to a proposition *p* that at first was not qualified evidentially. When an author or document *S_i* is specified, we argued that *S_i* can be considered to possess expertise or firsthand information about *p* examples (5)–(7). In some cases,

speakers moreover underline their personal involvement as a recipient and cognizer in examples (6) and (7) or display that involvement multimodally by displaying attention to a currently present written source example (5),¹⁴ a finding that confirms the relevance of the experiencer parameter, as suggested by the quantitative results presented in Section 3.6.2.3. A recurrent pragmatic function of indicating a hearsay source during repair is that it contributes to signal K+ stance. Concurrent indicators of K+ stance we encountered in our data were S' turn being an answer to a question addressed to S example (3), S reasserting p even after a challenge examples (3) and (4), and the interlocutor acknowledging the formulated information by signaling shared access *eh sì*, example (5) or change-of-state *ah sì*, example (6).

3.7.3 Correcting and specifying components of hearsay frames

As anticipated in 3.7.1, in almost half of the repairs collected (14 out of 32), a hearsay construction is present both in the repairable segment and the repairing segment. In the majority of cases, speakers add more detail in the repairing segment; only few cases of correction are attested, which did not change the basic type of source (hearsay), but single frame components. Like in the subcollection discussed in 3.7.2, at the semantic level, repair is thus mainly used for evidential specification. At the pragmatic level of epistemic stance taking, the second subcollection confirms the tendency observed in 3.7.2, which shows that evidential specification occurs in contexts where speakers claim, or maintain, a K+ stance with regard to p. Communicating a hearsay source more precisely seems to be a means for speakers to appear well-informed and entitled to assert the proposition, or rather, in relative terms, to appear better informed and more entitled than their interlocutors.

A first example that illustrates these tendencies is excerpt (8), which follows a sequence in which four friends discussed the relocation abroad of some friends. Rebecca here claims that there are moving companies specializing in the international transport of furniture. The formulation of this idea p, which includes several repairs, starts from an incomplete syntactic projection at l. 1 (*per il* 'for the'), proceeds with a generic cataphoric announcement at l. 4 (*esiste sta cosa* 'that thing exists') and is eventually completed at l. 7–8. It is presented as hearsay information from the very start and several phases of repair, including a last other-initiated repair at l. 10, target various components of the hearsay frame.

¹⁴ See Geddo (in preparation) for an in-depth analysis of multimodal practices by which participants refer to knowledge sources that are present *in situ*.

(8) TIGR_EV6B

- 1 REBECCA <<len>°h io non mi ricordo, chi mi ha detto che per il;>
I can't remember; who told me that for
- 2 (.)↑ah no, forse la giulia.
 (.) *oh no, giulia perhaps.*
- 3 FIONA ((laughs))mh s[i?]
 ((laughs)) *mh re[ally?]*
- 4 REBECCA [no,](-) no=no però esiste sta cosa.
 [no,](-) *no=no but this thing exists.*
- 5 e forse, (.) n:on lo so, anche perché non è il suo caso che
and maybe, (.) I do:n't know, also because in her case she doesn't need
- 6 debba spostare dei mobili,
to move furniture,
- 7 che praticamente, ci sono delle (---) ((tsk)) agenzie, servizi,
that basically, there are some (---) ((tsk)) agencies, services,
- 8 che fanno: apposta. (.) cè che (.) ti (.) ti (.) inViano
 la roba,
that do: exactly that. (.) that is (.) they (.) send you the stuff.
- 9 FIONA sì va be':,
sure whatever:er;
- 10 REBECCA o forse è uno di noi, che va in erasmus; forse che me l'ha
 detto.
or perhaps it's one of us, leaving for erasmus; maybe who told me that.

Our comment will focus on the way Rebecca progressively builds the hearsay frame. Initially (l. 1), Rebecca signals hearsay from an unspecified source. Her formulation with an embedded interrogative question, *non mi ricordo, chi mi ha detto* ('I can't remember who told me'), presupposes 'someone told me' and presents this hearsay experience and her personal involvement as factual; at the same time, in the focused part of the utterance she laments lack of memory about the identity of S_i, suggesting a particular relevance of this part of the frame. A first reformulation of the source occurs in a self-initiated self-repair after a short pause and a high pitch change of state token *ah* + negation particle, displaying sudden remembering; at l. 2, she gives a tentative answer (*forse* 'perhaps') to her own indirect question, referring to her friend Giulia as possibly being S_i. After a surprised reaction by Fiona at l. 3, Rebecca addresses two problems at once, i.e. maintaining her assertive commitment (l. 4) and trying to identify S_i. To the latter aim, Rebecca makes an interesting argumentative move. She produces a counter-argument against her own hypothesis that Giulia is S_i, specifying that Giulia has not moved furniture recently. This counter-argument

implies that recent direct experience with the subject matter of *p* would be a decisive criterion to cite someone as a *S_i*, probably both in the sense of second-hand evidence for *p* – a source whose reliability is warranted by *S_i*'s status as a direct witness – and because of some expertise that *S_i* could have acquired from others' discourses while preparing his or her own relocation. At l. 10, Rebecca makes a last attempt to identify *S_i* after having completed *p* (l. 7–8) and having obtained a less than convinced reaction by Fiona (l. 9): she now attributes the report to an unidentified classmate who is preparing for a student exchange, maintaining her cautious epistemic stance on the matter. This last hypothesis confirms the relevance of direct experience with moving abroad as a relevant criterion and warrant of reliability.

This example shows the pragmatic relevance of both the properties of *S_i* and *S₀*'s personal involvement when indicating a hearsay source. In a situation of persistent uncertainty about who exactly said *p* (*forse*, l. 2, 5, 10, *non ricordo*, l. 1, *non lo so*, l. 5), Rebecca uses various means to underline that, anyway, some *S_i* factually said *p* and *S_i* has a specific kind of relevant experience. Her personal involvement regards both the hearsay experience per se (*mi/me*, l. 1, 10) and her general familiarity with *S_i* (a friend or classmate), which might be considered relevant to assess the entitlement of *S_i* to give correct information about moving abroad. Let's note, finally, that, despite uncertainty and Fiona's skeptical reactions, the maintenance of a *K+* stance is ultimately successful, since Fiona does not claim to have better access to the domain of knowledge in question than Rebecca.

Example (9) shows similar dynamics of specification affecting hearsay frame components, which is however part of a more confrontational sequential development of epistemic stance taking. The proposition *p* under scrutiny in this example is that one dose of Covid vaccine is sufficient for people who have had the disease previously. It is uttered by Marica at l. 1–2, who has been infected previously, has had a first dose of the vaccine and has displayed her reluctance to take a second shot of the vaccine earlier in the conversation. *P* is an argument in favor of Marica's plan to not take a second dose and is qualified by a quite generic hearsay strategy: *dicono che* ('they say that'). Subsequently, *p* is disputed by Marcella and the two friends engage in a lengthy sequence of repair that regards both *p* and its source.

(9) TIGR_EV4

- 1 MARICA mh tanto, ho fa=ho avuto il covid; ehm: dicono che chi ha avuto
avuto
mh anyway, I di=had covid; ehm: they say that if you had
- 2 il covid ne basta uno so*lo, (.)tutte bal*+le? eh: (xxx xxx)+
covid just one shot's enough, (.) is that bullshit? eh: (xxx xxx)
- marcella *shakes her head*
+nods-----+

- 3 MARICA era ↑una leggenda metropo#litana; (.) eh; (.)#
that was ↑an urban legend; (.) right; (.)
marcella #nods-----#
- 4 MARICA peccato.
too bad.
- 5 (0.16)
- 6 MARCELLA questa se l'è inventata proprio così;
she made it up entirely;
- 7 (0.33)
- 8 MARICA ((coughs)) ↑io. (-) ↑no:; ↑giu:ro; (.) l'ho sentita da
qualche
((coughs)) ↑me. (-) ↑no:; I ↑swe:ar; (.) I heard that somewhere;
- 9 parte; qualcuno l'ha detto. me l'ha detto anche la:
bianchi.
somebody said that.= also professor bianchi told me.
- 10 CAROLA ah sì?
oh really?
- 11 MARICA sì,
yes,
- 12 (0.98)
- 13 quando io mi son scu↑sata; le ho detto guardi io oggi
when I apo↑logized (to the professor for being sick in class); I told her
look today
- 14 sono, come se non ci <<laughing> fossi,
I am as if <<laughing>> I were not here,>

As evidenced by the multimodal transcription in l. 2,¹⁵ Marcella initiates repair by shaking her head as a sign of disapproval. Marica then backs off to take a K-stance. She produces two candidate self-repairs, confirmed by Marcella's nodding her head, which simultaneously deny the truth of p and the reliability of her hearsay experience, while maintaining the idea of having heard a discourse containing p: the labels *balle* ('bullshit', 'lies') and *leggenda metropolitana* ('urban legend') both refer to (untrue) discourses. This phase of the repair is concluded by an assessment by Marica at l. 4 that seems to signal reluctant acceptance. The sequence however had unfolded in a playful way (Marica producing vocal discourse and Marcella head gestures only) and Marica's giving in completely appears to be somewhat exaggerated, suggesting a share of irony. This interpretation is consistent with Marcella's

15 The multimodal transcription uses Mondada's (2018) conventions.

next move at l. 6, which hyperbolically (and using a strong device of distancing, which is the use of the third person singular to refer to the interlocutor) accuses Marica of having no information sources at all – a rhetorical climax after the two preceding denials by Marica.

This climax triggers a change of tone from l. 8 onwards, as Marica starts to contradict Marcella and defend her standpoint, confirming that she did not really mean to disclaim p. In this second phase of the repair, Marica specifies relevant components of the hearsay frame. She encodes three progressively more specific hearsay strategies: *l'ho sentita da qualche parte* ('I heard that somewhere': S₀ has experienced a specific speech event in the past); *qualcuno l'ha detto* ('somebody said that': a specific S_i was involved); *me l'ha detto anche la bianchi* ('also Bianchi told me': S_i is professor Bianchi). These foreground Marica's own experience of the hearsay and eventually reduce the indeterminacy of S_i, who turns out to be a professor of Marica's and Carola's classes and apparently is granted some basic trust as an academic authority. Failing to have p accepted (l. 10–11), Marica expands her telling of the circumstances in which the report was produced: she refers to a conversation she had with that professor the day after her first dose of the vaccine, when she was not feeling well enough to pay attention in class. Her narrative, which includes her own direct reported speech, underlines the social and affective relation of familiarity and trust between Marica and the professor, the factuality of the event and Marica's detailed memory of it, defeating the accusation of having made things up (cf. Clift 2006, who analyzes direct reported speech in interaction as implying the speaker's participation in an event). All aspects potentially contribute to presenting the interaction with Professor Bianchi as a reliable source. They add up to the repeated expressions of personal involvement and assertiveness in l. 8 and 9 to stress Marica's personal commitment to p against Marcella's doubts, in strong contrast to the generic and impersonal initial formulation *dicono che*.

The excerpts discussed in this section further corroborate the observations made in 3.7.2, showing how details about different semantic parameters of hearsay boost the justificatory function of this type of information source and help strengthen the speaker's K+ stance. The hearsay frame components that speakers add during repair regard, on the one hand, the identity of S_i and properties of S_i that enhance their authority to tell the truth about the matter p, e.g. as a direct witness or – more often, in our data – as an expert of some sort. On the other hand, speakers narrate in detail the event during which they learnt about p, in ways that suggest the factuality of the event, the experiencer's correct and precise uptake of others' discourse and the experiencer's good memory of it. All mentioned frame components contribute to presenting the experience as a reliable source.

role. The prosodically marked repetition *dicono* ('they SAY') and the addition of the comment clause *non lo so io poi* ('I don't know really') repair and cancel these implications. Stressing the evidential strategy *dicono* highlights the indeterminacy of the source, and Marianna's reluctance to specify it further. Any implicature that she might know something more about S_i , or that she might have been directly involved in the speech event, is canceled. In so doing, Marianna refrains from presenting herself as responsible for the information and disclaims epistemic primacy regarding this specific aspect of the fruit, before re-establishing a K+ stance in the following question-answer sequence (lines 6–7).

Against the background of the data discussed in the previous sections, disclaimers like the one just illustrated appear to serve an opposite goal compared to specifying repairs (3.7.3). While details about hearsay sources sustain a speaker's knowledge claims, signaling a hearsay source without providing details reduces the certainty of p (compared to a formulation without any evidential qualification) and lowers the speaker's position on the knowledge scale.

3.8 Conclusions

In this paper, we presented a frame-based and interactional approach to the functional category of information source and applied it to the study of hearsay in a corpus of dinner and lunch table conversations in Italian.

We described information source as a cluster of multiple parameters (components and their attributes) related to each other within a frame structure. When describing a language such as Italian, which lacks a paradigm of evidential markers, this theoretical choice allows for a fine-grained description of various patterns of evidential encoding, which partition the semantic space of information source without obeying any constraints imposed by grammar. Our analysis of a set of 126 hearsay constructions showed how components of hearsay frames can be verbalized with precision, referred to rather vaguely, and also be left completely unspecified. Among the more specific evidential means, we mainly find constructions with verbs, especially *dire* ('say'). These are particularly frequent, have temporal and aspectual properties, and their argument structure allows one to specify event participants (S_0 , S_i). Therefore, they are suited to encode a hearsay frame with a fair amount of detail and to actualize various combinations of parameters. More grammaticalized or lexicalized strategies are less specific and less flexible. Similarly to fully grammaticalized evidential morphemes, especially in languages with simple two-fold systems, they may even neutralize quite basic semantic distinctions such as the difference between hearsay and inference ('indirect' evidence).

The semantic variation attested in the corpus raises the question of its pragmatic significance, which we investigated through the lens of repair practices. Participants use repair to repeat, correct and specify hearsay components as part of their epistemic stance-taking, exhibiting semantic and functional contrasts that are relevant to them and therefore constitute important data in a context-sensitive and participant-centered perspective on meaning. When repair targets previous formulations of *p* lacking evidential indications (3.7.2), the addition of a hearsay source usually has the effect of maintaining the epistemic primacy claimed by the speaker. Especially when details of the experience are specified, hearsay tends not to achieve an effect of distancing or downgrading. In sequences where hearsay is present both in the repairable and in the repairing segment (3.7.3), we compared the semantic structure of frames evoked by successive formulations. It emerged that speakers progressively fine-tune their references to frame components, an important function being to present the source as a reliable one and, again, maintain a K+ stance. Finally, we discussed the rarer case in which participants perform repair by disclaiming knowledge and remembering, with the effect of lowering their epistemic authority (3.7.4). The disclaimers seem to target and cancel the implicatures of speaker involvement, accuracy of reporting, precision of memory, and expertise of *S_i* activated by previous references to a hearsay frame.

Across the strands of our analysis, two features of hearsay frames have emerged as particularly relevant: the identity and properties of *S_i* and the involvement of *S₀* as an experiencer in the reported speech event. Participants clearly orient to these aspects, since they are frequently encoded explicitly and often become the object of repair. At a theoretical level, the prominence of the experiencer parameter is well accounted for by the frame-based conception of information source we adhered to in this paper, which models the category as an experience of knowledge acquisition. It also entails that in hearsay not only the ‘other’ (*S_i*), but also the ‘self’ (*S₀*) are important, a semantic affinity with inferential sources that might not have received sufficient attention in existing accounts of indirect knowledge.

Given the maintenance of a K+ stance that we observe generally in our collection of repairs, a probable pragmatic reason for speakers to foreground both the properties of *S_i* and the involvement of *S₀* is that precise reference to *S_i* and claiming *S₀*’s direct access to *S_i*’s discourse contribute to presenting the hearsay source as reliable. The details in question indeed allow participants to assess several critical aspects such as the position to know of *S_i* as an expert or witness, but also *S₀*’s good memory and understanding, which can be expected to influence the accuracy of the report. Inversely, markedly generic, or lacking, reference to *S_i* and to *S₀*’s involvement appears to diminish the speaker’s epistemic primacy.

Our findings are compatible with an argumentative view on evidentiality, which foregrounds the justificatory function of evidential constructions (cf. Section

3.2.2). At first sight, they contradict existing research about grammaticalized evidentiality that underlines the hedging function of hearsay markers. We can think of two possible explanations for this apparent divergence. First, grammaticalized hearsay evidentials merely provide generic information about the hearsay event, in line with the propensity of grammar to encode abstract and/or generic meaning. If there is a relation between the justificatory potential of an evidential construction and the construction's degree of specificity, possibly grammaticalization processes drive hearsay markers in the direction of hedging; in contrast, lexical constructions like the ones we examined in our study, which have more specific content, could be more suitable to signal reliable sources for precisely that reason. A second possible explanation lies in the methodological differences between our study, which included sequential analysis, and classical corpus-linguistic investigations, which consider quite short windows of context, or even research based on decontextualized invented examples. Evidential constructions regarding a given proposition may spread over several utterances (also see Battaglia in preparation) and indicators of K+ stance emerge from the sequential unfolding of talk-in-interaction. A narrow focus risks missing information and may be blind to certain phenomena we showed in our analysis.

In conclusion, we would like to emphasize that linguistic research on information source and interactional research on the sequential and epistemic organization of talk benefit from engaging in mutual dialogue. It is by exploring conversational data that the interplay between variation in formal encoding, semantic values, and pragmatic functions comes to light. Our findings also call for further empirical investigation. For example, our observations on hearsay sources could be developed to hypothesize more generally a critical role of evidential specificity to claim reliable sources and epistemic primacy, an idea that could have implications also regarding processes of grammaticalization. We believe this avenue of research is worth pursuing further, examining larger and more variegated datasets across languages.

References

- Aikhenvald, Alexandra Y. 2004. *Evidentiality*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Aikhenvald, Alexandra Y. 2021. *The Web of Knowledge*. Leiden: Brill.
- Anderson, Lloyd B. 1986. Evidentials, paths of change, and mental maps: Typologically regular asymmetries. In Wallace Chafe & Johanna Nichols (eds.), *Evidentiality: The Linguistic Coding of Epistemology*, 273–312. Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishing.
- Authier-Revuz, Jacqueline. 1995. *Ces mots qui ne vont pas de soi: Boucles réflexives et non-coïncidences du dire*. Paris: Larousse.

- Battaglia, Elena. 2022. Sources d'information et savoir en interaction en italien parlé: Le cas des catégorisations incrémentales. In Moa Hagafors, Lena Heiden & Louise Tarrade (eds.), *ICODOC 2021: Le savoir au prisme du langage. Acquisition, transmission, manifestations, SHS Web of Conferences* 146. 05002. Available at <https://doi.org/10.1051/shsconf/202214601001>.
- Battaglia, Elena. 2025. *Evidenzialità e interazione in italiano*. Lugano: Università della Svizzera italiana & Lille: Université de Lille dissertation.
- Battaglia, Elena & Johanna Miecznikowski. In press. Evidential marking and its argumentative functions: Insights from the analysis of Italian conversation. In Thierry Herman (ed.), *De l'argumentativité à l'argumentation*. Bern: Peter Lang.
- Bazzanella, Carla. 1990. "Modal" uses of the Italian *indicativo imperfetto* in a pragmatic perspective. *Journal of Pragmatics* 14(3). 439–457. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0378-2166\(90\)90092-9](https://doi.org/10.1016/0378-2166(90)90092-9).
- Bazzanella, Carla. 2005. *Linguistica e pragmatica del linguaggio: Un'introduzione*. Rome: Laterza.
- Bazzanella, Carla. 2014. *Linguistica cognitiva: Un'introduzione*. Rome: Laterza.
- Bergqvist, Henrik & Karolina Grzech. 2023. The role of pragmatics in the definition of evidentiality. *Sprachtypologie und Universalienforschung* 76(1). 1–30. <https://doi.org/10.1515/stuf-2023-2001>.
- Bolden, Galina B. 2013. Unpacking "self": Repair and epistemics in conversation. *Social Psychology Quarterly* 76(4). 314–342. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0190272513498398>.
- Bolden, Galina B. 2018. Speaking "out of turn": Epistemics in action in other-initiated repair. *Discourse Studies* 20(1). 142–162. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1461445617734346>.
- Boye, Kasper. 2012. *Epistemic Meaning: A Crosslinguistic and Functional-Cognitive Study*. Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton.
- Bristol, Rachel & Federico Rossano. 2022. Remediation of infelicitous epistemic stance. *Journal of Pragmatics* 199. 60–71. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2022.07.004>.
- Caffi, Claudia. 2007. *Mitigation*. Amsterdam: Elsevier.
- Calaresu, Emilia. 2004. *Testuali parole: La dimensione pragmatica e testuale del discorso riportato*. Milan: FrancoAngeli.
- Clift, Rebecca. 2006. Indexing stance: Reported speech as an interactional evidential. *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 10(5). 569–595. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9841.2006.00296.x>.
- Couper-Kuhlen, Elizabeth & Margret Selting. 2018. *Interactional Linguistics: Studying Language in Social Interaction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Cruschina, Silvio & Eva-Maria Remberger. 2008. Hearsay and reported speech: Evidentiality in Romance. *Rivista di Grammatica Generativa* 33. 95–116.
- Dendale, Patrick. 2006. Three linguistic theories of polyphony/dialogism: An external point of view and comparison. *Sproglig Polyfoni: Arbejdsrapporter* 5. 3–32.
- Dendale, Patrick. 2018. Évidentialité ou non-prise en charge? Le cas du conditionnel épistémique en français: Une réanalyse. *Langue Française* 200. 63–76. <https://doi.org/10.3917/lf.200.0063>.
- Dendale, Patrick & Johanna Miecznikowski. 2023. On inferential evidentiality: Is "evidential" inference abductive? In Marta Carretero, Elena Domínguez Romero, M. Victoria Martín de la Rosa & Javier Martín Arista (eds.), *Evidentiality and Epistemic Modality: Conceptual and Descriptive Issues*, 17–71. Bern: Peter Lang.
- Deppermann, Arnulf. 2002. Von der Kognition zur verbalen Interaktion: Bedeutungskonstitution im Kontext aus Sicht der Kognitionswissenschaften und der Gesprächsforschung. In Arnulf Deppermann & Thomas Spranz-Fogasy (eds.), *Be-deuten: Wie Bedeutung im Gespräch entsteht*, 11–33. Tübingen: Stauffenburg.
- Deppermann, Arnulf. 2023. Meta-semantic practices in social interaction: Definitions and specifications provided in response to *Was heißt X* ("what does X mean"). *Interactional Linguistics* 3(1/2). 13–39. <https://doi.org/10.1075/il.23005.dep>.

- Deppermann, Arnulf & Elwys De Stefani. 2023. Meaning in interaction. *Interactional Linguistics* 3(1/2). 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.1075/il.23026.dep>.
- Dingemanse, Mark, Seán G. Roberts, Julija Baranova, Joe Blythe, Paul Drew, Simeon Floyd, Rósa S. Gísladóttir et al. 2015. Universal principles in the repair of communication problems. *PLOS ONE* 10(9). e0136100. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0136100>.
- Ducrot, Oswald. 1984. *Le dire et le dit*. Paris: Minuit.
- Faller, Martina. 2002. *Semantics and pragmatics of evidentials in Cuzco Quechua*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University dissertation.
- Fillmore, Charles J. 2006. Frame semantics. In Dirk Geeraerts (ed.), *Cognitive Linguistics: Basic Readings*, 373–400. Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton.
- Fox, Barbara A., Trevor Benjamin & Harrie Mazeland. 2012. Conversation analysis and repair organization: Overview. In Carol A. Chapelle (ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Applied Linguistics*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781405198431.wbeal0218>.
- Frabley, William. 1992. *Linguistic Semantics*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Geddo, Christian. In preparation. *L'evidenzialità nel parlato: Comunicazione esplicita e implicita delle fonti percettive in situ*. Lugano: Università della Svizzera italiana dissertation.
- Giacalone Ramat, Anna & Manana Topadze. 2007. The coding of evidentiality: A comparative look at Georgian and Italian. *Italian Journal of Linguistics* 19(1). 7–38.
- Goffman, Erving. 1979. Footing. *Semiotica* 25(1/2). 1–29. <https://doi.org/10.1515/semi.1979.25.1-2.1>.
- Guentchéva, Zlatka. 2011. L'opération de prise en charge et la notion de médiativité. In Patrick Dendele & Danielle Coltier (eds.), *La prise en charge énonciative*, 117–142. Brussels: De Boeck/Duculot.
- Haselow, Alexander. 2016. A processual view on grammar: Macrogrammar and the final field in spoken syntax. *Language Sciences* 54. 77–101. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.langsci.2015.12.001>.
- Hassler, Gerda. 2002. Evidentiality and reported speech in Romance languages. In Tom Güldemann & Manfred von Roncador (eds.), *Reported Discourse: A Meeting Ground for Different Linguistic Domains*, 143–172. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing.
- Heritage, John. 2012. The epistemic engine: Sequence organisation and territories of knowledge. *Research on Language and Social Interaction* 45(1). 30–52. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08351813.2012.646684>.
- Heritage, John & Geoffrey T. Raymond. 2005. The terms of agreement: Indexing epistemic authority and subordination in talk-in-interaction. *Social Psychology Quarterly* 68(1). 15–38. <https://doi.org/10.1177/019027250506800103>.
- Hopper, Paul J. 2011. Emergent grammar and temporality in interactional linguistics. In Peter Auer & Stefan Pfänder (eds.), *Constructions*, 22–44. Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton.
- Jacquin, Jérôme. 2022. A contrastive corpus study of a semantically neutral French evidential marker: *tu dis/vous dites* [you say] and its relationship with agreement and disagreement. *Journal of Pragmatics* 199. 75–90. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2022.07.005>.
- Kamio, Akio. 1997. *Territory of Information*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing.
- Kittilä, Seppo. 2020. Folklore as an evidential category. *Folia Linguistica* 54(3). 697–721. <https://doi.org/10.1515/flin-2020-2058>.
- Kotwica, Dorota. 2023. Speaker commitment in reportative and folklore evidentiality: The case of Spanish “o eso dicen”. In Marta Carretero, Elena Domínguez Romero, M. Victoria Martín de la Rosa & Javier Martín Arista (eds.), *Evidentiality and Epistemic Modality: Conceptual and Descriptive Issues*, 227–250. Bern: Peter Lang.
- Mauri, Caterina. 2021. Ad hoc categorization in linguistic interaction. In Caterina Mauri, Ilaria Fiorentini & Eugenio Gorla (eds.), *Building Categories in Interaction: Linguistic Resources at Work*, 9–34. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing.

- Michael, Lev. 2012. Nanti self-quotation: Implications for the pragmatics of reported speech and evidentiality. *Pragmatics and Society* 3(2). 321–357. <https://doi.org/10.1075/prag.3.2.11mic>.
- Miecznikowski, Johanna. 2009. 'Recita il testo. . .': il rinvio a fonti scritte nella stampa economico-finanziaria. Working paper, <http://www.modality-in-argumentation.ils.com.usi.ch/>.
- Miecznikowski, Johanna. 2017. Predicati di percezione ed evidenzialità in italiano: L'esempio di *impressione*. In Bruno Moretti, Elena M. Pandolfi, Sabine Christopher & Matteo Casoni (eds.), *Linguisti in contatto II: Atti del convegno, Bellinzona, 19–21 novembre 2015*, 242–259. Bellinzona: Osservatorio linguistico della Svizzera italiana.
- Miecznikowski, Johanna. 2018. Evidential and argumentative functions of dynamic appearance verbs in Italian: The example of *rivelare* and *emergere*. In Steve Oswald, Thierry Herman & Jérôme Jacquin (eds.), *Argumentation and Language – Linguistic, Cognitive and Discursive Explorations*, 73–105. Cham: Springer.
- Miecznikowski, Johanna. 2020. At the juncture between evidentiality and argumentation. *Journal of Argumentation in Context* 9(1). 42–68. <https://doi.org/10.1075/jaic.00007.mie>.
- Miecznikowski, Johanna, Elena Battaglia & Christian Geddo. 2023. Costruzioni evidenziali intersoggettive basate su verbi riferiti al destinatario: Il caso di *vedi/vede/vedete + che*. *Studia Linguistica Romanica* 9. 88–118. <https://doi.org/10.46502/issn.2707-546X/2023.9.05>.
- Mondada, Lorenza. 2018. Multiple temporalities of language and body in interaction: Challenges for transcribing multimodality. *Research on Language and Social Interaction* 51(1). 85–106. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08351813.2018.1413878>.
- Mortara Garavelli, Bice. 1985. *La parola d'altri*. Palermo: Sellerio.
- Mushin, Ilana. 2001. *Evidentiality and Epistemological Stance: Narrative Retelling*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing.
- Mushin, Ilana. 2013. Making knowledge visible in discourse: Implications for the study of linguistic evidentiality. *Discourse Studies* 15(5). 627–645. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1461445613497557>.
- Mushin, Ilana & Simona Pekarek Doehler. 2021. Linguistic structures in social interaction: Moving temporality to the forefront of a science of language. *Interactional Linguistics* 1(1). 2–32. <https://doi.org/10.1075/il.20011.mus>.
- Nuyts, Jan. 2001. *Epistemic Modality, Language, and Conceptualization*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing.
- Pietrandrea, Paola. 2005. *Epistemic Modality: Functional Properties and the Italian System*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing.
- Pietrandrea, Paola. 2007. The grammatical nature of some epistemic-evidential adverbs in spoken Italian. *Italian Journal of Linguistics* 19(1). 39–64.
- Plungian, Vladimir A. 2001. The place of evidentiality within the universal grammatical space. *Journal of Pragmatics* 33(3). 349–357. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0378-2166\(00\)00006-0](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0378-2166(00)00006-0).
- Robin, Clotilde. 2024. *Marquer la source de l'information: Approches interactionnelle, énonciative et multimodale de l'évidentialité en français-en-interaction*. Lausanne: University of Lausanne dissertation.
- Robinson, Jeffrey D. 2013. Epistemics, action formation, and other-initiation of repair: The case of partial questioning repeats. In Makoto Hayashi, Geoffrey Raymond & Jack Sidnell (eds.), *Conversational Repair and Human Understanding*, 261–292. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Rocci, Andrea. 2012. Modality and argumentative discourse relations: A study of the Italian necessity modal *dovere*. *Journal of Pragmatics* 44(15). 2129–2149. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2012.09.007>.

- Sandman, Erika & Karolina Grzech. 2022. Egophoricity and evidentiality: Different categories, similar discourse functions. *Interactional Linguistics* 2(1). 79–109. <https://doi.org/10.1075/il.21009.san>.
- Sbisà, Marina. 2014. Evidentiality and illocution. *Intercultural Pragmatics* 11(3). 463–483. <https://doi.org/10.1515/ip-2014-0020>.
- Schegloff, Emanuel A. 1992. Repair after next turn: The last structurally provided defense of intersubjectivity in conversation. *American Journal of Sociology* 97(5). 1295–1345. <https://doi.org/10.1086/229904>.
- Schegloff, Emanuel A. 2007. *Sequence Organization in Interaction: A Primer in Conversation Analysis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Schegloff, Emanuel A., Gail Jefferson & Harvey Sacks. 1977. The preference for self-correction in the organization of repair in conversation. *Language* 53(2). 361–382. <https://doi.org/10.2307/413107>.
- Schegloff, Emanuel A. 2007. *Sequence Organization in Interaction: A Primer in Conversation Analysis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Searle, John R. & Daniel Vanderveken. 1985. *Foundations of Illocutionary Logic*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Selting, Margret, Peter Auer, Dagmar Barth-Weingarten, Jörg Bergmann, Pia Bergmann, Karin Birkner, Elizabeth Couper-Kuhlen, Arnulf Deppermann, Peter Gilles, Susanne Günthner, Martin Hartung, Friederike Kern, Christine Mertzlufft, Christian Meyer, Miriam Morek, Frank Oberzaucher, Jörg Peters, Uta Quasthoff, Wilfried Schütte & Susanne Uhmann. 2011. A system for transcribing talk-in-interaction: GAT 2 translated and adapted for English by Elizabeth Couper-Kuhlen and Dagmar Barth-Weingarten. *Gesprächsforschung* 12. 1–51.
- Squartini, Mario. 2001. The internal structure of evidentiality in Romance. *Studies in Language* 25(2). 297–334. <https://doi.org/10.1075/sl.25.2.04squ>.
- Squartini, Mario. 2002. Futuro e condizionale nel discorso riportato: Postille a Mortara Garavelli (1995). In Gian Luigi Beccaria & Carla Marengo (eds.), *La parola al testo: Scritti per Bice Mortara Garavelli*, 451–462. Alessandria: Edizioni dell'Orso.
- Squartini, Mario. 2008. Lexical vs. grammatical evidentiality in French and Italian. *Linguistics* 46(5). 917–947. <https://doi.org/10.1515/LING.2008.030>.
- Stivers, Tanya, Lorenza Mondada & Jakob Steensig. 2011. Knowledge, morality and affiliation in social interaction. In Tanya Stivers, Lorenza Mondada & Jakob Steensig (eds.), *The Morality of Knowledge in Conversation*, 3–24. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Travis, Catherine E. 2006. *Dizque*: A Colombian evidentiality strategy. *Linguistics* 44(6). 1269–1297. <https://doi.org/10.1515/LING.2006.040>.
- Voghera, Miriam. 2017. *Dal parlato alla grammatica: Costruzione e forma dei testi spontanei*. Rome: Carocci.
- Walton, Douglas N. 1997. *Appeal to Expert Opinion*. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press.
- Wiemer, Björn. 2010. Hearsay in European languages: Toward an integrative account of grammatical and lexical marking. In Gabriele Diewald & Elena Smirnova (eds.), *The Linguistic Realization of Evidentiality in European Languages*, 59–130. Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton.
- Willett, Thomas. 1988. A cross-linguistic survey of the grammaticization of evidentiality. *Studies in Language* 12(1). 51–97. <https://doi.org/10.1075/sl.12.1.04wil>.

