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10 From source of information to speaker commitments: a reanalysis of Quechuan evidentials

Abstract: Quechuan languages are known for having a (variable) number of enclitics traditionally classified as markers of evidentiality. However, recent research shows that their functions go beyond the marking of the source of information, or may not relate to it at all. This chapter focuses on the enclitic =*mi*, attested throughout the Quechuan language family, and traditionally analysed as a direct evidential. We analyse the cognates of the marker in Upper Napo Kichwa and Conchucos Quechua, where it has been analysed as a marker of epistemic authority and assertional force, respectively. Previous studies acknowledge that =*mi* plays a central role in the interpersonal negotiation of knowledge, but do not satisfactorily explain speakers' motivations for using the enclitic. In this chapter, we propose that the occurrences of =*mi* in Upper Napo Kichwa and Conchucos Quechua can be explained by analysing the marker as a device for strengthening speaker commitments. We describe the parallels in the use of =*mi* in Upper Napo Kichwa and Conchucos Quechua, and we argue that the commitment-based analysis allows for placing intersubjectivity at the core of its meaning. We also postulate that a commitment-based account opens interesting new avenues of research into the cognates of =*mi* across Quechuan languages, and allows for a systematic incorporation of contextual and cultural factors into the analysis of this and other evidential/epistemic markers attested in Quechuan languages.

Keywords: commitment, evidentiality, intersubjectivity, Quechua, semantics

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10.1 Introduction

This paper proposes that evidential markers in Quechuan languages can be analysed as strengthening the public commitments of speech act participants (cf. Gunlogson 2008; Geurts 2019; Krifka 2019, 2023). This account, based on analyses of two geographically and genetically distant Quechuan varieties, allows for a more systematic explanation of speakers' motivations for using =*mi*, and provides a framework for accounting for the intersubjective semantics of the marker.

The issues concerning the communicative motivations for using Quechuan evidentials have to date not been analysed in detail. Descriptive literature on Quechuan has prioritised the analyses of the markers' meaning and functions, dedicating less attention to the reasons for their occurrence. In the typological literature, this issue has been overlooked completely, most likely due to the fact that Quechuan has come to be known as a family of 'languages with obligatory evidentials' (Aikhenvald 2004:12), in spite of data from across the family showing that Quechuan evidential marking is not obligatory for the grammaticality of utterances. In sum, while the occurrence of Quechuan evidentials is highly context-dependent, the speakers' interactional motivations for using those markers are still poorly understood. The main aim of the present chapter is to contribute to bridging this knowledge gap.

The discussion in the following sections is based on the analyses of the enclitic =*mi* in two Quechuan languages: Upper Napo Kichwa (ISO 693-3: quw; henceforth UNK), spoken in the Amazonian lowlands of Ecuador, and Conchucos Quechua (ISO 693-3: qxo; henceforth ConQ), spoken on the eastern slopes of the Cordillera Blanca in central Peru.[1] These languages belong to two distinct branches of the family, spoken across the Andean region by approximately 8 million speakers (Cerrón-Palomino 2003). ConQ belongs to the Quechuan I branch spoken in central Peru, while UNK belongs to the Quechua II branch spoken in Colombia, Ecuador, northern and southern Peru, Bolivia, Chile and Argentina (Torero 1964, cf. also Blum et al. 2023). Typologically, Quechuan languages are agglutinative, exclusively suffixing and exhibit a flexible SOV order. They also have a relatively large number of discourse-related enclitics, including a subset of evidential markers.

Most Quechuan languages exhibit a tripartite division of their evidential systems, distinguishing between markers of direct/first-hand evidence, reportative/hearsay evidence and conjectural/inferential evidence, as shown in example (1).

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1 This language is also called South Conchucos Quechua in the literature (see Hintz and Hintz 2017, for example).

(1) **Cuzco Quechua evidential system**

    a. *Para-sha-n=**mi***
        rain-PROG-3=**MI**
        p= 'It is raining.'
        EV= speaker sees that *p*

    b. *Para-sha-n=**si***
        rain-PROG-3=**SI**
        p= 'It is raining.'
        EV= speaker was told that *p*

    c. *Para-sha-n=**chá***
        rain-PROG-3=**CHÁ**
        p= 'It is raining.'
        EV= speaker conjectures that *p*

<div align="right">(adapted from Faller 2002:122)</div>

As mentioned above, this chapter focuses on the enclitic =*mi*. The most extended analysis of =*mi* treats it as a direct evidential, i.e. as a marker of a first-hand source of information, (Faller 2002 for Cuzco Quechua; Weber 1989 for Huanuco Quechua; Shimelman 2017 for Yauyos Quechua a.o.). However, already early analyses of the enclitic emphasised other aspects of its meaning, e.g. Adelaar's (1977) analysis of Tarma Quechua describes the marker as 'validational'. More recent research, focusing on natural and/or naturalistic speech data, recovers some of this early focus on non-evidential semantics, as it shows that the functions of =*mi* in the different varieties cannot be accounted for by the notion of evidentiality alone. This is shown in the work of Howard (2014) on Huamalíes Quechua, Nuckolls (2014) on Pastaza Quichua, Grzech (2016a, 2016b, 2020a, 2020b) on UNK, Hintz and Hintz (2017) and Bendezú-Araujo (2021, 2023a, 2023b) on ConQ, where =*mi* is analysed as marking speaker perspective and/or epistemic authority, or as a marker increasing the force of the assertion (see Section 10.2). Another substantial body of work analyses =*mi* as a focus marker (Muysken 1995 and Sánchez 2010 for Cuzco Quechua; Muntendam 2009 for Bolivian and Ecuadorian Quechua), but these analyses also do not satisfactorily account for the enclitic's distribution in discourse (we come back to this issue below). Furthermore, the evidential and focus-related aspects of the enclitic's meaning and distribution are rarely analysed jointly (see Faller 2019 and Grzech 2016a). Consequently, the understanding of the possible relations between these two aspects of the marker's meaning and use remain underdeveloped.

    In the remainder of this paper, we propose that the distribution of =*mi* in discourse can be explained if we relate the marker's meaning to the notion of speaker commitment. To instantiate this analysis, we will first briefly account for how =*mi* has been analysed in Cuzco Quechua, UNK and ConQ (Section 10.2), so as to give

the readers the background information required for understanding the need for expanding those accounts. In Section 10.3, we introduce the notion of commitment and develop a preliminary commitment-based account of the data from UNK and ConQ. Finally, Section 10.4 presents the conclusions and implications of our proposal.

10.2 Previous accounts of *=mi* in three Quechuan languages

In this section, we briefly introduce three analyses of *=mi* that have been proposed for different Quechuan languages. We begin with the most well-known account, namely the analysis of *=mi* in Cuzco Quechua (Faller 2002), and contrast it with the analyses of its cognates in Upper Napo Kichwa and Conchucos Quechua. As we will see, despite the empirical, theoretical, and methodological differences, there are relevant points of convergence between these analyses.

10.2.1 Cuzco Quechua: *=mi* as marker of best possible grounds

As observed by Faller, the main difficulty in providing a satisfactory characterisation of *=mi* in Cuzco Quechua (Quechua II) stems from the fact that, while it can be used to indicate a first-hand source of evidence, as in (1a), it is also licensed in cases where no direct evidence is available to the speaker. That is, speakers can use *=mi* e.g. when talking about the inner emotional state of others (accessible only through reported or conjectural means) or their own encyclopaedic knowledge, as shown in (2).

(2)   **Cuzco Quechua *=mi* in contexts with no direct evidence**
    a. *Inés=qa   llakiku-n=**mi***
        Inés=TOP   be.sad-3=**MI**
        'Inés is sad'
    b. *Yunka-pi=**n**   k'usillu-kuna=qa   ka-n*
        Rainforest-LOC=**MI** monkey-PL=TOP   be-3
        'In the rainforest, there are monkeys'
    c. *Africa-pi=**mi**   elefante-kuna=qa   ka-3*
        Africa-LOC=**MI**   elephant-PL=TOP   be-3
        'In Africa, there are elephants'   (adapted from Faller 2002:126, 133, 52)

To account for the use of *=mi* in cases like these, Faller (2002) proposes a new evidential category: *best possible grounds* (*bpg*). According to this analysis, in Cuzco

Quechua =*mi* is licensed when the speaker has the best possible source of information for the type of event being described. This can mean different things depending on the type of information and the relationship between the information and the speaker. In (2a), *bpg* means having been told by Inés that she is sad. In (2b) the source is the speaker's own knowledge of the world as a member of the Quechua culture, and in (2c), general world knowledge acquired from a trusted source (a teacher/a textbook, a TV programme etc.), since the speaker has never been to Africa and could not have seen the elephants in person.

This analysis satisfactorily explains why =*mi* is not licensed in Cuzco Quechua in cases where the speaker has only partial direct evidence, as in example (3), where the enclitic =*chu hina* must be used instead (Faller 2002:174–176).

(3)   Context: the speaker sees something and it looks to the speaker like Mario is painting his house.
      Mario=qa   *wasi-n-ta=**chu***   ***hina***   *llimpi-sha-n*
      Mario=TOP   house-3-ACC=**CHU**   **HINA**   paint-PROG-3
      'Mario is painting his house'   (Faller 2002:175)

For the type of event described here, the best possible grounds would be visual access. However, since the source of information is compromised – the speaker is standing too far away to properly see what is going on – it does not meet the requirements of *bpg*, and thus the use of =*mi* is not licensed. As we will show in the next section, Cuzco Quechua crucially differs from UNK and ConQ in this respect.

Faller's analysis of Cuzco Quechua =*mi* as a marker of *bpg* accounts for all permitted cases of the maker's use, but it only briefly addresses the question of why speakers choose to use it in the first place. Assertions where =*mi* would be felicitous, but is not used, are very common (as mentioned in Section 10.1, evidentials are not syntactically obligatory in Quechuan languages), and they "are usually interpreted in the same way as sentences with -*mi*" (Faller 2002:145). Therefore, an explanation is needed as to why speakers choose to use =*mi* when a plain assertion would have the same effect. Faller approaches this question by distinguishing between encoded and implicated meanings. She argues that while *bpg* is encoded in assertions with =*mi*, it is only implicated in plain assertions, and that speakers will choose to explicitly encode *bpg* when they anticipate a challenge from their interlocutors, indicating that such a challenge would fail because the speaker is able to defend the claim with strong evidence (Faller 2002:165).

10.2.2 Upper Napo Kichwa (UNK): *=mi* as a marker of epistemic authority

UNK is spoken in the Ecuadorian Amazon. Although it belongs to the Quechua II branch of the family, it is geographically distant from Cuzco Quechua and there is no evidence of contact between these groups of speakers.

Grzech (2016a) analyses the use of *=mi* in UNK and shows that its distributional properties make it incompatible with the *bpg* analysis. As mentioned above, in Cuzco Quechua *=mi* can only be used when the speaker has *bpg* for their claim, which rules out cases of partial direct evidence, such as that shown in example (3). This is not the case in UNK, where *=mi* can be used in such contexts, as shown in (4).

(4) Context: The speaker hears footsteps outside, and was expecting his father to come home.

   ñuka   *yaya*   *shamu-w=**mi***   *yachi-n*
   1SG   father   come-PROG=**MI**   seem-3
   'It seems my father is coming.'   (Grzech 2016b:89)

In this case, the best source of information for knowing who is coming is to actually have (uncompromised) visual access. Furthermore, note that in (4) *=mi* is embedded under a modal epistemic: *yachi-n* '(it) seems', a distribution that is not possible for *=mi* in Cuzco Quechua (Faller 2012, 2014). This shows that, despite a significant overlap in the distribution of *=mi* in Quechuan languages, its formal and functional properties can differ in important ways.

Based on a corpus of interactional data (Grzech 2020c), the UNK *=mi* can be analysed as a marker of speaker-exclusive epistemic authority and common ground management (Grzech 2016a, 2020a, 2020b, 2021). Epistemic authority is understood as the 'relative right to know or claim' (Stivers, Mondada and Steensig 2011:13), and is conceptually distinct from the source of evidence (evidentiality) or degree of certainty (epistemic modality). Claiming epistemic authority is most often felicitous in cases where the speaker has direct evidence and/or is certain of what they are is saying, but this does not need to be the case. Such authority can also be derived from a particular social status (parent, preacher, shaman, teacher), as well as other epistemically-relevant sociocultural and situational factors.

The analysis of *=mi* in terms of epistemic authority helps explain why the enclitic can be used in contexts where the speaker is not certain of the veracity of what they are saying (as in (4) above). Moreover, in UNK, utterances marked with *=mi* do not need to be based on any particular type of evidence. The enclitic is also felicitous in contexts of guessing, inference, or conjecture. The latter is shown in (5), which comes from a retelling of the 'Pear Story' video (Chafe 1980):

(5) *Chi*   *rumi-ta*   *payguna=**mi*** *chura-sha* *chapa-nushka* *chi-pi*
     DIST.DEM   stone-ACC   3PL=**MI**   put-COR   wait-3PL.ANT   DIST.DEM-LOC
     'They have put this stone…they've waited having put it there…'

                                                    (el_25092014_03 048 cf. Grzech 2016a:347)

The speaker was retelling the film, but the described event was never shown in it, so the use of *=mi* here is based on conjecture. Furthermore, in UNK, both *=mi* and the 'inferential' enclitic *=cha* can be used to describe events based on the same type of evidence/access to events, which goes to show that they cannot be analysed as expressing different evidential values. This is shown in (6).

(6) *Muyu-ra* *piti-w-n…*   *ima…*   *coco…*   *mana,* *coco=**mi***   *ni-ni,*
     fruit-ACC cut-PROG-3   what   coconut NEG   coconut=**MI**   say-1
     coco   *=**cha**…*
     coconut   =**CHA**
     'He is cutting [harvesting] fruit… what… [It's a] coconut…no, I said coconut, [is it a] coconut?'   (el_24092014_03 003-5, cf. Grzech 2016a:359)

In (6), *=mi* and *=cha* are used to talk about the event which was accessed in the same way – the speaker saw it in the 'Pear Story' video. The speaker realises mid-utterance that the fruit he is talking about is not a coconut. He then reports his previous utterance, using *=mi* – not present in the original utterance – despite already knowing that he was mistaken. Immediately after that, still unsure of what the fruit is, the speaker uses *=cha*. Thus, the two markers contrast not in terms of the evidence on which the respective statements are based, but in terms of the speaker's willingness to assume epistemic authority. When he uses *=mi*, he reports his immediately preceding statement, when he was still convinced the fruit is a coconut, but at the moment of uttering the *=cha*-marked statement, he does not want to assume authority over what he is saying.

As mentioned above, *=mi*, as well as other UNK epistemic clitics (for description of the paradigm, see Grzech 2016a, 2020a), is not required for the grammaticality of utterances. There is one particular context, however, where *=mi* is needed for felicity, namely utterances with corrective foci.

(7) *Mana* *ñuka* *ushi=chu,*   *ñuka* *warmi=**mi*** / **warmi* / **warmi=tá*
     NEG   1SG   daughter=Q/NEG   1SG   woman=**MI** / woman / woman=VER
     'She's not my daughter, she's my wife.'   (el_28112014_05, cf. Grzech 2020a:90)

This is congruent with the epistemic authority semantics of the marker, as well as with the analysis proposing that it marks speaker-exclusive information,

unexpected for the addressee. However, the optionality of =*mi* with other types of foci suggests that it is associated with focus, but cannot be analysed as a focus marker (Grzech 2016a, 2020a). The discursive motivation for its use is the speaker's intention to manage the common ground (henceforth CG) by countering potential misgivings by the addressee to integrate unexpected information into the CG. This is analogous to Faller's (2002) analysis of Cuzco Quechua =*mi* as occurring when the speaker anticipates being challenged.

10.2.3 Conchucos Quechua (ConQ): =*mi* as a marker of assertional force

ConQ is spoken in Peru and belongs to the Quechua I branch of the family. Besides being geographically and genetically distant from both Upper Napo Kichwa and Cuzco Quechua, there is no evidence of any type of direct contact having taken place among these groups of speakers.

As with UNK, the *bpg* analysis is incompatible with the distributional properties of =*mi* in ConQ (contra Hintz and Hintz 2017). As shown in (8), in this variety =*mi* is licensed in partial direct evidence contexts.

(8) Context: speaker is trying to guess the contents of a box from the sounds it makes, without opening it.
*Plumon=**mi**   ayllu-u   aw=ku   mana=ku?   Ma*
marker=**MI**   believe-1   yes=Q   no=Q   let's.see
'I think it's a marker pen. . . yes or no? Let's see.'   (Bendezú-Araujo 2023a:85)

In this case, the best source of information for knowing what is in the box is to actually have (uncompromised) visual access. Note that as in UNK, here too, =*mi* is embedded under a modal epistemic: *ayllu-u* 'I believe', a distribution that, as noted above, is not possible in Cuzco Quechua (Faller 2012, 2014). Likewise, an analysis of =*mi* as a direct evidential is also incompatible with the ConQ data, as =*mi* can be used in context where direct evidence is not available, as in (9).

(9) Context: A mother is talking about her daughter who is in a different, non-contiguous room. It is late at night and the mother has not seen her daughter since she sent her to bed.
*Tracy=qa   punu-yka-n=**mi***
Tracy=TOP   sleep-PROG-3=**MI**
'Tracy is sleeping.'   (attested by Bendezú-Araujo)

In this example, the speaker uses =*mi* even though she does not have direct evidence for her assertion. However, she knows that this is what happens every night at around this time. Thus, the speaker is relying on her own world-knowledge as the basis for her assertion.

Here it is worth noting that the characterisation of =*mi* as a focus marker (cf. Muysken 1995, Muntendam 2009, Sánchez 2010) does not explain its distribution in Conchucos Quechua either. Although =*mi* often occurs on the focal constituent of utterances, it also occurs on non-focal constituents (Bendezú-Araujo 2023b). This strongly suggests that the relationship between =*mi* and focus is not categorical, much like the association with focus reported above in UNK.

Bendezú-Araujo (2021, 2023a) argues that the use of =*mi* in cases like (8) and (9) can be explained by characterising it as marker of assertional force (cf. Behrens 2012), based on a corpus of dialogical naturalistic data and elicited data (partially available in Bendezú-Araujo, Buchholz and Reich 2019), collected in 2015 and 2017. In this analysis, the speakers use =*mi* to increase the force of their assertions as a way to signal to the hearer that the content of the utterance must be included in the CG.

Given that =*mi* is syntactically optional, the additional effort involved in using it would be justified when the speaker believes that the hearer would have difficulties accepting the contents of the utterance. This analysis explains the distribution of =*mi* in example (10), in which a pair of speakers is trying to resolve a map task (Anderson et at. 1991). Each participant has received a map on which different figures serve as landmarks. One participant received the map with a road drawn from bottom to top and was tasked with guiding the other participant, whose map has no road. However, they do not know that the maps are not identical. The participants of example (10), ZR29 (f, 19) and HA30 (f, 19), are friends and classmates. At this point, they have already realised that their maps are different, and they are discussing the position of the figures in the upper half. Immediately prior to the start of the example, they have agreed on the figure of the fox being at the top of the map, but there are still issues with the other figures. Note that HA30 has the map with the road.

(10)   **Conchucos Quechua**
    a. HA30:
       Atuq   witsay-pa   subi-yka-n
       fox   above-GEN   go.up-PROG-3
       'The fox is going up over there'
    b. ZR29:
       Aja
       OK

c. HA30:

y	*tsay*	*hana*	*laadu-n-chaw=na=mi*	*este*	*huk*	*manka*
and	DIST.DEM	over	side-3-LOC=DISC=MI	*ehm*	a	pot

'And on that upper side there is *ehm* a pot.'

d. ZR29:

Ya

OK

e. HA30:

Tsay	*manka-pita*	*washa-man-pa-chaw=**mi***	*vuela-yka-n*	*huk*
DIST.DEM	pot-ABL	DIST.DEM-DEST-GEN-LOC=**MI**	fly-PROG-3	a

este	*anka*
ehm	eagle

'From that pot, on the side over there an eagle is flying.'

(Bendezú-Araujo 2023a:86)

In (10) we find three assertions that could be marked with =*mi*: (10a), (10c) and (10e), but only the latter two are. Given that there are no syntactic or referential reasons that explain this difference, it shows that HA30 is deliberately packaging the information in a special way. This is likely due to the fact that while the participants have agreed on the location of the fox, the locations of the other two figures have not yet been established. In this context, there is no need for =*mi* to be added to (10a), as using it on a proposition that has been agreed upon would not be worthwhile. Conversely, it does make sense to add it to (10c) and (10e), precisely because there is no agreement about them yet. Considering also that HA30 has the map with the road (i.e. the "correct" one), it is reasonable to assume that =*mi* is being used to increase the force of her assertion, to ensure that it is accepted by ZR29 and that they can proceed with the task.

Characterising =*mi* as an assertional strengthener accounts both for the distribution of =*mi* and its optionality by assuming that its use in ConQ is determined by two factors: (a) the speaker's intention of persuading the hearer to accept the proposition as part of the CG, and (b) the speaker's calculation of the likelihood that their proposition is included in the CG, taking into account the preceding linguistic context and their inferences about the knowledge state of their interlocutor. As can be seen, the terms of this analysis are analogous to the way Faller (2002:165) and Grzech (2016a, 2016b, 2020a) explain the difference between plain assertions and assertions with =*mi*, namely that a speaker will use =*mi* when they anticipate a challenge by the hearer.

10.2.4 Interim summary

As can be seen, despite the differences, there are important points of convergence between the three analyses presented in this section. In particular, they all agree on (a) the need to explain the optionality of =*mi* (although this is a much more central concern in the UNK and ConQ analyses) and (b) the effect that =*mi* has in the communicative interaction, as speakers expect that its use will make the hearer more likely to accept the content of the utterance as true. This points to significant similarities in its communicative use that might have been obscured by the fact that the authors have focused on different aspects of evidential semantics and pragmatics, and used different types of data.

In all three languages, the use of =*mi* seems to be motivated by intersubjectivity, understood as the interactants' considerations of each other's cognitive stance and status (cf. Heritage 2012). Indicating the source of information might be the main factor behind the use of =*mi* in Cuzco Quechua, but it cannot explain the distribution we observe in UNK and ConQ, nor does it clarify why =*mi* occurs when it does in interaction. The same is true for focus. Thus, an account of *why* speakers choose to use of =*mi* needs to address the fact that (a) it is not obligatory and (b) it is deeply intertwined with the construction of meaning in interaction. In the remainder of this chapter, we propose that the notion that has the potential to account for both of these requirements is speaker commitment.

10.3 A commitment-based account of *=mi*

In this section, we first introduce and define the notion of speaker commitment (Gunlogson 2008; MacFarlane 2011; Geurts 2019; Krifka 2024, a.o.), and discuss how it can be applied to UNK and ConQ. We believe that the main advantage of the commitment framework is that it allows for a systematic incorporation of intersubjectivity into the analysis, which is key to understanding the motivations behind the use of =*mi* in both languages.

10.3.1 Speaker commitments

The notion of speaker commitment that we apply in this paper is rooted in the assumption that action coordination between interlocutors is of prime importance for communication (cf. Geurts 2019). In this context, commitments are inter-

subjective by definition, as they are understood as three-way relations between propositions, speakers and addressees. This clearly distinguishes commitments from beliefs, which are two-way relations between speakers and propositions. Furthermore, while a belief may be the basis for a commitment, neither belief nor knowledge are entailed by it. What is important in the commitment account is that when a speaker makes an assertion, they automatically make a commitment to the addressee to act in a way that is consistent with the proposition expressed by this assertion being true. As we will see in the next section, focusing on commitments rather than beliefs or knowledge for the analysis of =*mi* does not require (or imply) abandoning these notions altogether.

Speaker commitments allow the addressee to rely on the speaker's future behavior (linguistic or otherwise) to be consistent with those commitments, which in turn allows for efficient action coordination. Accordingly, if the proposition turns out to be false, the hearer has the right to hold the speaker responsible. This entails that speakers are motivated to make commitments they can keep (i.e. that are true) in order to avoid social sanctions such as the loss of face or trustworthiness (Gunlogson 2008; Geurts 2019; Krifka 2019, 2023).

Although in principle all speech acts express commitments, we limit ourselves here to assertions, as this is the most relevant speech act for the analysis of =*mi.* We follow Krifka's (2023, 2024) analysis of assertions and assume that they express the speaker's social commitment that their propositional content is true. In formal terms, this means that assertions contain a semantic operator ⊢ that is responsible for transforming a proposition into a public commitment, as in (11a), which roughly translates to "Speaker *s* publicly commits to the proposition *p* to the addressee *a* (in relation to the world-time *i* and the commitment event *e*)". Usually, this operator is not overtly realised, but it can be modified; that is, speakers can raise or lower the level of their commitments. In German, for example, adverbs like *wirklich* 'really' increase the level of the commitment, as in *Er hat das wirklich gegessen* 'He really ate it', as in (11b), which roughly translates to "Speaker *s* publicly *strongly* commits to the proposition *p* to the addressee *a*".[2]

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2 Note that it is possible for language-specific practices to influence how commitments are expressed. For example, in English, plain assertions already carry the implicature that the speaker has the intention of convincing the addressee (i.e., they come with a raised level of commitment), whereas in Hungarian plain assertions may be "weaker" than assertions modified by a belief predicate, which, in languages that work like English in this regard, would typically be treated as a hedging strategy and thus express a reduced level of commitment (Behrens 2012:220-222).

(11) a. $[\![p]\!]^{s,a}$ = • λi ∃e [s ⊢$_{i,e}$ p]

  b. $[\![$Er hat das **wirklich** gegessen$]\!]^{s,a}$ 'He really ate it' = • λi ∃e [s ⊢^{i,e} p ∧ strong commitment(i)(e)]

<div align="right">(adapted from Krifka 2024:53, 55)[3]</div>

In Krifka's (2023:139–141) analysis, commitment modifiers are devices that specify the level or nature of the speaker's commitment. A speaker would raise the level of commitment in a context where they fear that a regular commitment (like the one expressed by a plain assertion), may not be strong enough to convince the addressee to accept the propositional content of the assertion. As we will show in the next section, this analysis can be extrapolated to the use of =*mi* in UNK and ConQ.

10.3.2 A reanalysis of =*mi* as a device for strengthening speaker commitments in UNK and ConQ

In this section, we argue that, in both UNK and ConQ, =*mi* can be analysed as a commitment modifier, in particular, one that raises the level of the speaker's commitment to the asserted proposition. That is, =*mi* strengthens the commitment already expressed in the assertion and, by explicitly signalling a stronger commitment to the truth, gives rise to the (conventional) implicature that the speaker insists on making it a shared commitment (i.e., accepting it as part of the CG). As we pointed out in Section 10.2, Quechua speakers use =*mi* in contexts where they believe the addressee will have difficulty accepting the truth of the proposition contained in the speaker's claim. This is analogous to Krifka's (2023:140) motivations for using a commitment modifier to raise the level of the speaker's commitment.[4]

As we have shown, an analysis of =*mi* in terms of direct evidence or *bpg* fails to account for its use in examples (4) and (9), from UNK and ConQ, respectively. However, an analysis of =*mi* as a commitment modifier that increases the level of the speaker's commitment correctly predicts its use in these examples, as well as in cases that are accounted for by the evidential analysis. As we will see below, this change of approach does not exclude the other components of the meaning of =*mi*, such as the notions of belief or authority (or even source or information).

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3 This adaptation was proposed by A. Kocher, p.c. (see also Bendezú-Araujo and Kocher 2024).

4 Note also that Krifka (2023:140) adds that "commitment modifiers convey a sense of emphasis", which is consistent with the fact that speakers of UNK and ConQ often claim that assertions with =*mi* are more emphatic than plain assertions (this is also the case for Cuzco Quechua, Faller 2002:146).

Consider example (12). This interaction comes from an application of the map task (see Section 10.2.3) with two ConQ speakers, TP03 (m, 32) and KP04 (m, 29). At this point in the task, they have already noticed that their maps are different. KP04, who has the map with the road, asks TP03 to confirm the location of certain figures in his map. Note that the propositional contexts of (12b) and (12d) are essentially the same: in both cases, TP03 is describing the relative positions of the bat and the pot, just from different perspectives, but he uses =*mi* in the first case and =*chi* in the second.

(12)   **Conchucos Quechua**

    a.   KP04:

          Ishkan=ku   juntu   ka-yka-ya-n   manka-wan   tsiqtsi?

          two=Q   together be-PROG-PL-3 pot-INS   bat

          'Are the two of them together, the pot and the bat?'

    b.   TP03:

          *No, manka ichik hawa-n-chaw=**mi***

          no   pot   bit   below-3-LOC=**MI**

          'No, the pot is a little below (the bat).'

    [. . .]

    c.   KP04:

          Tsiqsi?

          bat

          'The bat?'

    d.   TP03:

          Tsiqti=qa hana-kaq-chaw=chi ka-yka-n

          bat=TOP   above-FOC-LOC=CHI be-PROG-3

          'The bat is above (the pot), I think.'

          na-chaw   atuq hana-n-chaw   casi

          PSSP-LOC fox   above-3-LOC almost

          'There, almost below the fox.'   (Bendezú-Araujo 2023a:88)

In Bendezú-Araujo's (2021, 2023a) analysis, in (12b) the speaker expresses his belief that the proposition 'the pot is below the bat' is true, and by adding =*mi*, he expresses his intention that the hearer also comes to believe it, which would have the effect of updating the CG with this proposition. However, in (12d) the speaker expresses his belief that it's *possible* that the proposition 'the bat is above the pot' is true. In an account of communication that takes assertions to the be the expression of beliefs (cf. MacFarlane 2011), we would have to assume that the speaker no longer believes

in the truth of the proposition in (12b), but this would not be consistent with the fact that the position of the figures in his map has not changed.

In the commitment account, the use of =*mi* and =*chi* would be explained as a change not in TP03's beliefs but in the commitments he makes: in (12b) he commits to the truth of *p* and tries to ensure that it is added to the CG by using =*mi*, but in his next move he expresses his commitment to a weaker proposition (◇p), effectively cancelling or retracting his previous commitment.[5] This change in commitments may be motivated by different factors. For example, he may be unsure that he has understood what his addressee meant by *juntu* 'together' in (12a) or he may assume that since the addressee has the "correct" map (i.e., the one with the road), the authority about where the figures *should* be lay with him. In any case, what is relevant here is that, although he may still believe that the proposition 'the pot is below the bat' is true (at least with respect to his map), in (12d) he commits to act in a way consistent with its truth being only a possibility. As we can see, the commitment account preserves Bendezú-Araujo's insights that =*mi* is a marker that increases the force of the assertion, but without having to resort to speaker beliefs or intentions.

As we mention above, this does not mean, however, that the notions of belief and authority are not relevant to the study of discourse markers such as =*mi*. Here we argue that belief and authority could be treated as motivations for making (and modifying) commitments. After all, a speaker is more likely to commit to the truth of a proposition if they (a) know it to be true (e.g. through direct evidence or *bpg*), (b) sincerely believe in it even without definitive evidence (e.g. in the case of religious dogma, received world knowledge or informed conjectures), or (c) want to establish their authority in the matter. Notice also that these are the cases where a speaker can commit to a proposition with the least risk of social sanctions, which explains why commitment-strengthening devices are often used in these circumstances. Recall example (9), where a mother claims that her daughter is asleep, even though she has no direct evidence for this. Here, the speaker uses =*mi* because, by explicitly expressing her commitment to the truth of the proposition (i.e. by making a strong commitment), she ensures that the issue is settled, and in doing so she is backed up either by her belief in it and/or by her authority as a mother (since primary caregivers are usually the ones better informed about matters concerning

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5 As MacFarlane (2011:135-137) points out, the belief-based account struggles to provide a straightforward explanation of retraction. On this account, assertions are the expression of beliefs. If retraction is the withdrawal of an assertion (i.e., taking it back or making it null), then it would count as the "unexpression" of a belief. But how can something be 'unexpressed'? Moreover, a retraction does not necessarily imply a lack of belief: speakers may choose to retract an assertion in which they still believe because they realise that they "cannot adequately defend the claim, or because [they do] not want others relying on it".

their children, and likely to treat these matters as being within their authority, cf. Sandman and Grzech 2022). However, the speaker could also make the same claim even if she doubts whether her daughter is actually sleeping or if she knows that it is not the case (i.e. if she is lying). This shows that, while belief and authority are usually involved in the making and strengthening of commitments, they are not a prerequisite for them.

While belief, authority and other epistemic notions can explain the motivation for making a commitment, another relevant aspect of the commitment account is its source. Gunlogson (2008:13) defines the source as the agent who is committed to the proposition *p*, and whose commitment to that proposition is 'not dependent on another agent's testimony' in that particular discourse. This definition rests on the assumption that the speaker and the adddressee can have private epistemic commitments that they do not necessarily have to make public, but that, if a commitment is made public, it needs to have a source. When individuals other than the source commit to *p*, their commitment is *dependent* (Gunlogson 2008:13) on the commitment of the source. This nuancing of how a public discourse commitment can arise is very useful for explaining the use of *=mi*, as well as other Quechuan epistemic markers. This is illustrated with the UNK interaction between N and Y in (13). The dialogue takes place in a canoe, on the way to Y's *chagra* (agricultural plot of land). Besides them, there are two other people in the canoe: Y's son, a young adult, who is steering the canoe, and the second author of this paper, who is recording the interaction. The first three lines of the interaction are directed towards Y's son, indicating how he should steer, and then the topic shifts to the discussion of the products from Y's *chagra*.[6]

(13) a. Y:

      (. . .) kasna-ni=llara   apa-ngui kasna   iyan-gui peñas
           like.this-?=ID.REF bring-2   like.this think-2   rocks
      siki-ma   apa-sha   ri-sha
      side-DAT bring-COR go-COR
      'Just bring [the canoe] here. Thinking like that you'll take [us] into the rocks!'

    b. N:

      *kay   pura-ma=lla=**mi**   ni-n   yallik-ta*
      DEM.PROX side-DAT=LIM=**MI**   say-3   well-ACC
      'Take [the canoe] just here, [she] says it's much. . . [the river is high].'

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6 The morpheme *-ni* in line 'a' is a verbal suffix indicating 1st person singular subject in the present tense. Its function in this context is not clear. Note also that in line 'g', the name of the speaker has been changed for privacy reasons.

c. Y:

kay=llara   *kay=llara*   *kasna=llara* *apa-y,*   *yapa*
DEM.PROX=ID.REF   DEM.PROX=ID.REF   like.this=ID.REF bring-2.IMP much
*urti=**mi***   *chi*   *pura-ma*
strong=**mi** DEM.DIST side-DAT
'Take it just here, just here, just like this, on that side [the current] is very strong.'

d. *kay=llara*   *shina=**n***   *chi*   *pura-ra*   *muyu-chi*
DEM.PROX=ID.REF like.this=**mi** DEM.DIST side-ACC turn.around-CAUS
'Just from here, like this, turn [the canoe] around.'

e. *inarasha…* *chinga-chi-ka-ni* *ni-sha*   *kuna=ga* *ansa*
so.then   waste-CAUS-PST-1 say-COR now=TOP little
*ansa-wa=lla=**mi*** *chari-ni* *ni-sha*   *rima-ka-ni,* *palanda-ra*
little-DIM=LIM=**MI** have-1   say-COR say-PST-1   plantain-ACC
rin-gama   *unay*   *apa-y-pasa-nun.*
go-LAT   long.ago   take-EPEN-pass-3PL
'So then…saying [to my *comadre*] "I let it go to waste.", saying "now a bit… I have a little bit" I said, the plantain, until [we] go, [the thieves] pass and take it at once.'

f. N:

pi-ta   *shuwa-n,* *kay-manda-guna=llara?*
who-ACC steal-3   DEM.PROX-ABL-PL=ID.REF
'Who steals, [are they] from around here?'

g. Y:

kay=ma,   *pay* *ni-sha*   *Valentina=**mi*** *ni-ká*
DEM.PROX=MA 3SG say-COR Valentina=**MI** say-PST
'Here, according to her saying 'It is Valentina', she said.'

i. N:

Mhm…
mhm
'Mhm'   (Grzech 2020c, in_01082013_02, annotations 50–62)

In (13b), N uses a combination of =*mi* and *nin* (say-3) to give directions about where the canoe should go. The combination of =*mi* and a verb of speech is a default strategy for expressing reported speech in UNK. In line with the account of the marker as indicating epistemic authority, such a construction encodes epistemic authority residing with the reported speaker (i.e., not with N himself). The commitment account adds further specification: the use of =*mi* strengthens the commitment of the source, that is, of the reported speaker, and also indicates that the epistemic

authority rests with them. The current speaker's commitment to the reported proposition *p* is thus dependent on that of the original speaker. We see that in (13b), where N is reporting the prior utterance of Y from (13a). Here, Y can be considered the expert on how the river behaves at this stretch, as she frequently takes the canoe to go to her *chagra*. This is confirmed in (13c), where Y uses *=mi* to inform her son about the state of the river. The utterance rests on her authority, and the explicit signalling of that, and the strengthening of her commitment, brought about by the use of *=mi*, could be explained by the fact that she needs to immediately elicit shared commitment to *p*, as the addressee needs to take it into account to steer appropriately. The same is true in (13d), where *=mi* is realised as an allophone *=n*.

From (13e) onwards, the conversation shifts to a different topic, or, rather, returns to a previous one. Y is talking about her experience with the produce of the *chagra*. She tells N about an interaction she had with her *comadre*[7] and quotes her own previous utterances. This is a standard way of reporting one's own previous discourse, where the origo of epistemic authority, and the source of commitment, is the speaker's 'former self'. N's subsequent question in (13f), asking about a thief, indicates that Y has previously mentioned theft. In (13g), Y goes on to identify the thief. However, as she does so, she presents the information about the thief's identity as a quotation, using the verb of speech twice, and marking the reported statement with *=mi*. Accusing someone of theft is a discursive act that, if the accusation turns out not to be true, could bring on serious social sanctions, so this presentation can be analysed as a face-saving strategy. Y makes a public discourse commitment, but also indicates that the epistemic authority on the matter is not hers, and she is thus not the source of commitment, in Gunlogson's terms. Nonetheless, the public commitment still holds, and is accepted by N in the next line, where 'mhm' indicates the acceptance of Y's previous utterance.

As mentioned above, the source of commitment is relevant for the discussion of *=mi* in Quechuan languages because it helps explain the use of this marker, as well as the use of the other enclitics that form the epistemic paradigms in these languages. The following exchange from UNK illustrates how *=mi* contrasts with two other markers, *=cha* and *=mari*, in this regard. In the example, L and S discuss the actions of J, S's husband. Note that L is one generation older than S and J, and that all three of them are members of the same family, and also united by the relation of *compadrazgo*, which creates social proximity that can be used as basis for taking epistemic licences which might not be felicitous in interaction with people to whom one has a more distal social relation.

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7 *Comadre* and *compadre* are the godparents of one's child. Being in this relationship is considered a source of close social affinity in the Kichwa society.

(14) a. L:

        J.   compadre   ima   wasi-ta   ra-w-n?

        J.   compadre   what house-ACC   make-PROG-3

        'What building is compadre J. going to build?'

    b. . . . *cosina?*

           kitchen

        '. . .the kitchen?'

    c. S:

        *mana,   mana   raw-n=**mari***

        NEG   NEG   make-PROG-3=**MARI**

        'No, he's not building.'

    d. L:

        *tsatsa-ra   wasi   ra-nga=**cha**   asta-nga   ra-w-n*

        sand-ACC   house   make-FUT=**CHA**   take-FUT   AUX-FUT-3

        'The sand, to make the house he will take (it).'

                       (Grzech 2020c, ev_24052013_01, lines 012-015)

In (14a), L asks S about J's plans to build a section of the house. The question entails that J is building something, and in (14b), L makes explicit her supposition that he will build a kitchen. In (14c), both the entailment and the supposition about the kitchen turn out to be problematic, as S replies that there is no building taking place. She marks that utterance with =*mari*, an epistemic enclitic used to signal that the addressee should know something but acts as if they have forgotten (Grzech 2021). Both interlocutors know that J came to the household where L lives a few days before to borrow a wheelbarrow, but, as (14a) and (14b) make explicit, L drew erroneous conclusions from this fact. Thus, what S is doing in (14c) is telling L that she made the wrong assumptions, but doing it in a way that mitigates the threat to L's face: both L and S are presented here as holders of epistemic authority, and thus as potential sources of the public commitment that arises as a consequence of the utterance of (14c), despite the fact that L's previous two turns potentially commit her to a contradictory proposition. In (14d), L takes this up, using =*cha*, which disclaims epistemic authority, to distance herself from the assumptions made explicit in (14a) and (14b). This discussion shows that while the account in terms of epistemic authority alone can explain the use of these markers in (14), enriching it with the commitment dimension gives a better account of the communicative motivations behind their use, and allows us a better understanding of the intersubjective motivations of speakers for using epistemic marking in general.

    Apart from adding more nuance to the explanation of why and how =*mi* and other epistemic markers are used in discourse, a commitment-based theory of communication provides a possibility to account for self-talk: a context in which

Quechuan evidentials also tend to be used. Geurts (2018) sees self-talk and social talk as a continuum, and, consequently, underlines the need to account for them in a unified manner. If communication is seen solely as information exchange, then self-talk is superfluous (Geurts 2018), as one does not need to exchange information with oneself. However, if speaking also means undertaking commitments, then self-talk makes more sense, as one can plausibly make a commitment to oneself, e.g. to undertake an action ('I will do this later'). In UNK, =*mi*, as well as the cognate of the inferential =*cha*, are often found in stretches of discourse that resemble self-talk, notably in the context of self-corrections. This was already shown in (6), and is also showcased in (15):

(15) *chi*   *churi-wa. . .*   *ñuka*   *iya-ka-ni*   *churi-wa=**mi***   *pay-pa*
      DEM.DIST   SON-DIM   1SG   think-PST-1   SON-DIM=**MI**   3SG-GEN
      *churi=**mi***   *a-nga*   *ni-sha. . .*
      SON=**Mi**   COP-FUT   say-COR
      'This little boy. . .I thought [he was the farmer's] son, I said/thought, it's going
      to be his son.'   (el_21092014_02 69, cf. Grzech 2016a:360)

Example (15) comes from a re-telling of a 'Pear Story'. It was uttered when the speaker saw a boy steal the pears, and thus realised he was not the son of the men picking the fruit. It is akin to example (6), also coming from a re-telling of the 'Pear Story' by a different speaker. Both examples involve self-corrections. On the epistemic authority analysis of =*mi,* they can be accounted for as involving two perspectives: that of the current speaker, and that of the reported speaker, who in this case is the same person, just moments before they realised something new about the story they are telling. In (15) the speaker is currently not asserting that the thief is the farmer's son, but reporting that she did assert that just a moment before. Reportative constructions in UNK tend to involve a verb of speech and =*mi,* and Grzech (2023) analyses them as indexing authority to the reported speaker, but a simpler analysis could be cast in terms of commitment. In self-reports, the speaker would use =*mi* when quoting their prior utterances to signal that, at the time of that utterance, they undertook a commitment, which might, but also might not (as in (15) and in (6), where this is made explicit with the use of =*cha*), hold at the time of the current utterance.

    This is also compatible with prior research. Krifka (2013;2014) analyses speech acts in terms of commitments they give rise to. Making a certain speech act brings on a certain commitment, e.g. making an assertion is characterised by 'assertive commitment' – being liable to the addressee for the truth of the proposition (cf. Faller 2014:52). However, in embedded speech complements it is not the speaker, but the subject of the matrix clause who is liable for the truth of the proposition,

which is merely 'presented' by the speaker as someone else's point of view. This is in line with Faller's proposal according to which there is a separate speech act of presenting, which differs from assertion (Faller 2002, 2012 for Cuzco Quechua). There are important differences between the properties of direct speech complements in UNK and in Cuzco (see Grzech 2016a:361–62 for discussion), but they bear no consequence for the commitment-based analysis that concerns us here.

A case that requires special attention concerns the embedding of =*mi* under an epistemic modal, as in examples (4) and (8), repeated here as (16) and (17).

(16)   Context: The speaker hears footsteps outside, and was expecting his father to come home.
   *ñuka   yaya   shamu-w=**mi**   yachi-n*
   1SG   father   come-PROG=**MI**   seem-3
   'It seems my father is coming.'

   (Grzech 2016b:89)

(17)   Context: speaker is trying to guess the contents of a box from the sounds it makes, without opening it.
   *Plumon=**mi**   ayllu-u   aw=ku   mana=ku?   Ma*
   marker=**MI**   believe-1   yes=Q   no=Q   let's.see
   'I think it's a marker pen. . . yes or no? Let's see.'

   (Bendezú-Araujo 2023a:85)

Given the context, it is clear that the speakers are not committing to the truth of the propositions 'my father is coming' and 'it is a marker', in (16) and (17) respectively, otherwise they would not have used epistemic modals. An alternative is to assume that they are committing to the proposition 'it's possible that *p*'. In this case, our analysis would predict that by using =*mi* the speakers are strongly committing to these propositions, which is consistent with Krifka's (2024) approach, where commitment modifiers scope above epistemics modifiers (*yachi-n* and *ayllu-u*, in this case). However, this analysis would need to explain why the linearisation of (16) and (17) seems to suggest that =*mi* is under the scope of the epistemic modal; that is, a detailed syntactic analysis would be needed (which is out of the scope of this paper).

In any case, it is clear that a better understanding of the function of *yachi-n/ayllu-u* in these languages (and of Quechua syntax in general) is needed to resolve this issue. Note that the commitment approach provides a more straightforward account of the use of =*mi* in this case than the notion of assertional force in the ConQ analysis in Section 10.2.3. However, this is not the case for the notion of epistemic authority in the UNK analysis in Section 10.2.2. Here, cases like (16) are explained on the assumption that although the speaker may not be certain about the truth of the

proposition, the events still fall within his information domain and he therefore retains epistemic authority over them.

Coming back to the core of our proposal, when we explicitly strengthen a commitment (when the commitment of the speaker was already expressed in the plain assertion), it triggers implicatures about the motivations for doing so. The most common case would be to assume that the speaker raises the level of commitment because they know that *p* is true (for instance, when they have evidence for it), but this could also be just to indicate that one has authority and should not be challenged (for instance, because a given piece of information is within the speaker's Territory of Information, cf. Kamio 1997) However, one can also lack knowledge and raise the commitment. As we see it, belief and knowledge can lend support for the commitment or make the hearer more likely to take the commitment at face value (that is, they can influence how the speaker's commitment is evaluated by the hearer), but they are not preconditions for the commitment itself. What is important here is that the speaker commits to the hearer to act in a way consistent with the proposition. When a speaker uses =*mi*, they are asking the hearer to turn that commitment into a shared commitment and to act accordingly. Why would the speaker require such change in the status of the commitment? To ensure a successful action coordination. The next logical step for the research initiated here – the (comparative) analysis of interactional motivations for using =*mi* – would be a more nuanced analysis of the relationship between commitment, authority, expectations, and knowledge ownership, as well as a thorough analysis of the interactional and interpersonal contexts in which =*mi* is used across Quechuan varieties.

While we see commitment as a potential underlying dimension of analysis for =*mi* across different Quechuan varieties, we do not exclude the possibility that other semantic and pragmatic factors may also need to be considered to fully account for the marker's use. In that sense, while analysing =*mi* through the lens of commitment provides a common framework, it does not erase other relevant features of the marker, such as its association with evidentiality, focus and intersubjectivity. At the same time, however, this account would benefit from a closer investigation of how commitment – as a possible umbrella category – relates to other aspects of semantics and pragmatics of Quechuan evidentials, such as epistemic authority, knowledge ownership, etc.

Incorporating commitment into the account of =*mi* in the two Quechuan languages discussed in this paper has several advantages. In empirical terms, it allows us to explain to what end the marker is used, and also to consistently account for why speakers choose to use it when they do. In theoretical terms, given that notion of commitment is inherently intersubjective, this allows for a systematic incorporation of the role of the addressee into the semantics of =*mi*.

10.4 Conclusions

The analysis presented in this chapter is a first approximation of a commitment-based account of evidential/epistemic marking in Quechuan. As such, it leaves many open questions for further research. These include a commitment-based account of other markers from the Quechuan epistemic paradigm, as well as exploring the interplay between commitment, authority, and ownership of knowledge. Furthermore, this chapter has stopped short of discussing *=mi* in non-assertive speech acts and accounting for these occurrences within the commitment-based framework (but see Bendezú-Araujo and Kocher 2024 for a first approach to this issue in ConQ).

That said, even if the analysis sketched above is preliminary, the approach we put forward has a clear advantage over other frameworks proposed to date: it is inherently intersubjective. In the commitment-based analysis of Quechuan *=mi*, the involvement of the addressee is a prerequisite, rather than an extension of primarily speaker-based notional categories such as *bpg*, epistemic authority, or assertion strengthening. In this sense, conceptualising commitment as an umbrella under which Quechuan evidential/epistemic markers can be understood facilitates the formulation of more straightforward comparative analyses. Furthermore, it explains well what we find in that data: that the use of these markers depends on the situational and interpersonal context of the utterance, and not on the speaker's source of information. Moreover, the commitment-based framework directly links the discussion of Quechuan evidentiality to new conceptualisations of communication as a dyadic exchange, in which the roles of the speaker and the addressee are equally important in the process of creating meaning (cf. e.g. Hansen and Terkourafi 2023).

Moreover, including commitment alongside other notions relevant to the analysis of *=mi* in different Quechuan varieties – *bpg*, focus, epistemic authority, assertional force, validation, personal perspective – contributes a plausible common core to the semantics of the cognates of *=mi*. In this paper, we only discuss three varieties belonging to the family, but the enclitic *=mi* is attested throughout Quechuan languages. It is plausible to assume that all the different realisations of *=mi* throughout the family are cognates. And if so, it is also valid to ask what common semantic core they have all evolved from. To the best of our knowledge, commitment as an analytical dimension is compatible with all the synchronically attested variants of the enclitic. As an inherently intersubjective device for ensuring the flow of communication, it is plausible to postulate that such a commitment-related marker could have evolved into the variety of pragmatically nuanced meanings and uses it has today across the family. This also raises the issue of the role of cultural and epistemic norms, which vary from culture to culture, and which influence the concepts that are relevant enough to warrant their dedicated morphological expressions. Epistemic norms — decisive for which beliefs are going to be

recognised as socially accepted knowledge — evolve over time and differ across communities (van Dijk 2015:68). Thus, it is also plausible that, across communities, similar epistemic markers acquire different shades of meaning, depending on the epistemic categories each community regards as most relevant. Although this discussion is, at this point, purely speculative, it flags important issues in the research not only on Quechuan evidential/epistemic markers, but also on epistemic systems more broadly. It points to the need of incorporating broader cultural norms into the possible conceptualisations of epistemic systems (see also Shreshta, this volume), and of exploring the ways in which these norms can affect the shape, functions and uses of epistemic paradigms.

Abbreviations

1	first person
2	second person
3	third person
ABL	ablative
ACC	accusative
ANT	anterior
AUX	auxiliary
CAUS	causative
COP	copula
COR	correference
DAT	dative
DEM	demonstrative
DEST	destinative
DIM	diminutive
DISC	discontinuative
DIST	distal
EPEN	epenthetic
FOC	focus
FUT	future
GEN	genitive
ID.REF	identity of reference
IMP	imperative
INS	instrumental
LAT	lative
LIM	limitative
LOC	locative
NEG	negation
PL	plural
PROG	progressive

PROX	proximal
PSSP	pas-par-tout
PST	past
Q	question
SG	singular
TOP	topic
VER	verum

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