

Evidentiality in Azerbaijani and Other Turkic Languages: A Comparative Typological Study

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Abstract. This article examines the comparative and typological characteristics of the category of evidentiality in Azerbaijani and other Turkic languages. The primary objective of the study is to identify the similarities and differences in the grammatical and semantic means used to express the source of information in Turkic languages, as well as to clarify the place of the evidentiality category within the functional-semantic system of these languages. Evidentiality is analyzed as an important semantic and grammatical category that indicates how a speaker has acquired the information being conveyed, whether through direct observation of an event, hearsay, inference, or assumption. The article discusses the theoretical foundations of evidentiality, its relationship with modality, and the various means by which it is expressed across languages. The research employs comparative-typological, descriptive, and analytical methods. In addition to Azerbaijani, evidential markers in Turkish, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, and Uzbek were examined, and their morphological structures and functional-semantic characteristics were compared. The findings reveal that although evidentiality in Turkic languages shares common historical and linguistic foundations, its means of expression have developed distinct structural and semantic features in different languages. In particular, indirect evidentiality occupies an important place in the vast majority of Turkic languages and is realized through various morphological devices. The study further demonstrates that evidentiality functions not only as a marker of grammatical temporal relations but also as a functional system reflecting the speaker's attitude toward information, the source of knowledge, and their communicative stance.

Keywords: evidentiality, evidential category, Turkic languages, Azerbaijani language, indirect evidentiality, typological comparison, morphological markers, semantic features

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Azərbaycan və digər türk dillərində evidentiallıq (şahidlik): müqayisəli tipoloji tədqiqat

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Xülasə. Məqalədə Azərbaycan dili və digər türk dillərində evidentiallıq (şahidlik) kateqoriyasının müqayisəli-tipoloji xüsusiyyətləri araşdırılmışdır. Tədqiqatın əsas məqsədi türk dillərində informasiyanın əldə olunma mənbəyini ifadə edən qrammatik və semantik vasitələrin oxşar və fərqli xüsusiyyətlərini müəyyənləşdirmək, həmçinin şahidlik kateqoriyasının türk dillərinin funksional-semantik sistemində tutduğu yeri aydınlaşdırmaqdan ibarət olmuşdur. Evidentiallıq danışanın təqdim

etdiyi məlumatı hansı üsulla əldə etdiyini – hadisənin birbaşa müşahidəsi, eşitmə yolu ilə qəbul olunması, nəticə çıxarma və ya ehtimala əsaslanmasını ifadə edən mühüm semantik-qrammatik kateqoriya kimi təhlil edilmişdir. Məqalədə evidentiallığın nəzəri əsasları, onun modallıqla qarşılıqlı əlaqəsi və müxtəlif dillərdə ifadə vasitələri nəzərdən keçirilmişdir. Tədqiqat zamanı müqayisəli-tipoloji, təsviri və təhlil metodlarından istifadə olunmuşdur. Azərbaycan dili ilə yanaşı Türkiyə türkcəsi, qazax, qırğız və özbək dillərində şahidlik göstəriciləri araşdırılmış, onların morfoloji quruluşu və funksional-semantik xüsusiyyətləri müqayisə edilmişdir. Araşdırma nəticəsində müəyyən olunmuşdur ki, türk dillərində evidentiallıq ümumi tarixi-lingvistik əsaslara malik olsa da, onun ifadə vasitələri müxtəlif dillərdə fərqli struktur və semantik xüsusiyyətlər qazanmışdır. Xüsusilə dolayı şahidliyin ifadəsi türk dillərinin böyük əksəriyyətində mühüm yer tutur və müxtəlif morfoloji vasitələrlə reallaşır. Müəyyən edilmişdir ki, evidentiallıq yalnız qrammatik zaman münasibətlərini deyil, həm də danışanın informasiyaya münasibətini, bilik mənbəyini və kommunikativ mövqeyini əks etdirən funksional sistem kimi çıxış edir.

Açar sözlər: *evidentiallıq, şahidlik kateqoriyası, türk dilləri, Azərbaycan dili, dolayı şahidlik, tipoloji müqayisə, morfoloji göstəricilər, semantik xüsusiyyətlər*

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Introduction

In modern linguistics, one of the essential components of the communication process is the speaker's attitude toward the information being conveyed and the expression of the source from which that information has been obtained. Information transmitted through language reflects not only the content of an event but also the manner in which the speaker has acquired that information. This feature is referred to in linguistics as evidentiality. Evidentiality is a semantic-grammatical system that indicates whether the speaker has obtained information through direct observation, hearsay, inference, or indirect perception (Aikhenvald, 2004, pp. 3–8).

The expression of information source within a language system is of particular importance for understanding the relationship between human cognition and linguistic activity. In recent decades, the development of functional linguistics, cognitive linguistics, and typological studies has contributed to increasing scholarly interest in evidentiality. This category displays diverse structural characteristics across languages. While in some languages evidentiality has developed into an independent grammatical category, in others it is expressed through modal words, verbal affixes, and syntactic devices (Dixon, 2005, pp. 188–191). The category of evidentiality is defined in linguistics as an important semantic and grammatical phenomenon that expresses both the source of the information presented by the speaker and the means through which that information has been acquired. This category reflects whether the speaker has directly witnessed an event, obtained the information through hearsay, or arrived at it through logical inference. In contemporary linguistic studies, evidentiality is regarded not merely as a semantic nuance but also as a functional component of the grammatical system (Lyons, 1977, pp. 793–797).

Turkic languages constitute one of the language families in which evidentiality is widely observed. In these languages, the source of information is primarily expressed through tense and mood markers of the verb. In particular, the distinction between direct and indirect evidentiality occupies an important place in the morphological system of Turkic languages. In many Turkic languages, certain past tense forms indicate that the speaker directly witnessed the event, whereas other forms signal

that the information was acquired indirectly. These features can be observed both in ancient Turkic written monuments and in contemporary Turkic languages (Korkmaz, 2003, pp. 567–572).

As a member of the Turkic language family, Azerbaijani also reflects evidentiality features. Although this category has not developed into a fully independent grammatical system in Azerbaijani, verbal suffixes, modal units, and various syntactic devices serve to express the source of information. In particular, the suffix *-miş/-miş* is widely used to convey meanings of indirect evidentiality, hearsay, and inference. Compared with other Turkic languages, the frequency of use and the semantic characteristics of evidential markers in Azerbaijani exhibit certain distinctive features. Researchers note that indirect past tense forms in Azerbaijani not only indicate the occurrence of an event but can also express the speaker's attitude toward the information and the degree of its reliability (Hacıyev, 2012, pp. 183–187). As Kazımov (2010, p. 247) points out, “the suffix *-miş* in Azerbaijani not only forms the meaning of past tense but also conveys nuances of indirect information and inference.”

Scientific novelty of the research and its place in the existing

Although the category of evidentiality has been extensively studied in world linguistics, particularly within the fields of linguistic typology and functional grammar, studies devoted to a systematic comparative-typological analysis of the evidential systems of Azerbaijani and other Turkic languages remain relatively limited. Most existing research has either examined evidentiality on the basis of data from a single language or provided only a brief characterization of the phenomenon within the framework of the general Turkic language system.

The scientific novelty of the present study lies in its investigation of evidential markers in Azerbaijani, Turkish, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, and Uzbek within a unified comparative-typological framework and in the comparison of their morphological and functional-semantic characteristics. The study demonstrates that evidential markers function not only as grammatical tense forms but also as functional-semantic devices expressing the speaker's attitude toward information, the source of knowledge, and their communicative stance.

Another contribution of the study is the comparative classification of the means used to express indirect evidentiality in Turkic languages and the identification of their semantic functions. The findings reveal that evidential forms sharing common historical roots have undergone different paths of semantic development across Turkic languages. In some languages, these forms have additionally come to express nuances of inferentiality, probability, surprise, and evaluation (Abbasova, 2025).

The article contributes to the existing body of research on the comparative study of evidentiality in Turkic languages and facilitates a more precise understanding of the place of this category within the functional-semantic structure of the Turkic language family.

Materials and Methods

Evidentiality is regarded as one of the most significant categories in contemporary linguistics, particularly within approaches that investigate the communicative and cognitive functions of language. This category is closely associated with the processes through which individuals perceive the external world, process acquired knowledge, and convey it through language. When providing information about an event, a speaker does not merely communicate the fact itself but also indicates the source from which that information has been obtained. This feature plays a crucial role in determining the degree of reliability attributed to information in the course of communication. Therefore, evidentiality is considered not only a grammatical phenomenon but also a complex system closely related to the pragmatic and cognitive dimensions of language.

Contemporary typological studies demonstrate that evidentiality manifests itself in different forms across the world's language families. In some languages, evidentiality has developed into an

independent grammatical category expressed through specific morphological markers. For example, in certain indigenous languages of South and North America, there are distinct grammatical forms indicating whether the speaker acquired information through direct observation, hearing, inference, or hearsay. In other languages, evidentiality is not realized as a separate category but is expressed through its interaction with tense, aspect, modality, and lexical means. Turkic languages belong to the latter group, where evidentiality is primarily manifested within the verbal system (Aikhenvald, 2004, pp. 28–34).

Linguistic literature offers various classifications of evidentiality. According to the most widely accepted classification, evidentiality is divided into two principal categories: direct and indirect evidentiality. Direct evidentiality is based on the speaker's personal observation of an event. In such cases, the speaker acts as a direct witness, and the primary source of information is visual or sensory perception. Indirect evidentiality, by contrast, encompasses situations in which the event has not been directly observed. In these cases, information is obtained through hearsay, derived from inference, or based on assumption. Indirect evidentiality is further subdivided into reportative evidentiality (information acquired through hearsay), inferential evidentiality (information derived through reasoning and inference), and assumptive evidentiality (information based on probability or assumption) (Palmer, 2001, pp. 35–42).

The study of evidentiality is also of considerable importance for investigating the relationship between language and thought. Within cognitive linguistics, it is generally assumed that a close connection exists between the process of acquiring knowledge and its linguistic encoding. Evidential markers reflect how speakers perceive information and how that information is represented and structured in their consciousness. For this reason, evidentiality is regarded as one of the key means for examining the relationship between cognitive processes and linguistic structures (Langacker, 2008, pp. 56–61).

From the perspective of functional linguistics, evidentiality also serves as a communicative strategy. By employing different evidential devices, speakers determine the degree of responsibility they assume for the information they convey. For instance, forms indicating direct observation tend to increase the perceived reliability of information, whereas forms based on hearsay or assumption may reduce the degree of certainty associated with the reported information (Zeynalova, 2025). In this respect, evidentiality functions as an important communicative mechanism that regulates the perceived reliability of information among participants in discourse.

The historical development of evidentiality in Turkic languages demonstrates that this category emerged primarily through the semantic extension of past tense forms. A number of scholars have noted that certain verbal forms originally used to express temporal relations gradually acquired additional functions related to the source of information and the speaker's attitude toward the reported event. This development is particularly evident in the evolution of forms containing the suffix *-miş/-miş*. In contemporary Turkic languages, these forms function not only as markers of past tense but also as devices for expressing indirect information, inference, and reportative meanings (Johanson, 2003, pp. 276–280).

The relationship between evidentiality and epistemic modality is another important topic of discussion in contemporary linguistics. Since these categories are often expressed through the same linguistic means, it is sometimes difficult to establish clear boundaries between them. Nevertheless, evidentiality primarily concerns the source of information, whereas epistemic modality is concerned with the degree of certainty, validity, or reliability attributed to that information. For example, the sentence *“Deyəsən yağış yağıb”* (“It seems that it has rained”) conveys both an inferential meaning and a sense of probability. Consequently, evidential and modal meanings may interact in certain contexts, forming a unified functional-semantic complex (Aikhenvald, 2004, pp. 6–9).

Thus, in contemporary linguistics, evidentiality is regarded not merely as a grammatical phenomenon indicating the source of information but also as a multifaceted functional-semantic category that reflects the speaker's cognitive activity, communicative intentions, and attitude toward the information conveyed. These characteristics make evidentiality an important object of comparative and typological investigation across different languages, including the Turkic languages.

Conclusion

The comparative-typological analysis conducted in this study demonstrates that the evidentiality systems of Azerbaijani and other Turkic languages are grounded in common historical and linguistic foundations. The fact that Turkic languages belong to the same language family in terms of origin and development has led to the emergence of a number of shared grammatical features. One of these features is the category of evidentiality, which expresses the speaker's attitude toward the source of information. Although evidentiality is realized through different morphological means across Turkic languages, a number of common functional and semantic characteristics can be observed (Serebrennikov & Hacıyeva, 2002, pp. 221–225).

The findings of the study indicate that the expression of indirect evidentiality occupies a particularly important place in the vast majority of Turkic languages. Azerbaijani, Turkish, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, and Uzbek all possess specific verbal forms used to express indirectly acquired information. These forms indicate that the speaker did not directly witness the event but instead obtained the information through hearsay, logical inference, or other indirect sources. In particular, the Azerbaijani suffix *-miş/-miş*, the Turkish suffix *-miş*, the Kazakh forms *-ыпты/-іпті*, the Kyrgyz form *-ыптыр*, and the Uzbek construction *-gan ekan* are especially noteworthy in this regard (Öner, 1998, pp. 142–145; Reshetov & Shoabdurahmonov, 1978, pp. 203–209).

The study also demonstrates that evidentiality is not merely a grammatical phenomenon but also a functional-semantic system that expresses the speaker's attitude toward information and communicative intentions. A comparative investigation of this category in Turkic languages provides valuable insights into their historical development, typological characteristics, and grammatical structure (Comrie, 1976, pp. 54–58).

However, the comparative analysis reveals that, despite their common historical foundations, Turkic languages exhibit certain structural and semantic differences in the use of evidential markers. These differences are manifested, in some cases, in the structure of the morphological markers employed and, in others, in their semantic functions. For example, while in some Turkic languages indirect evidential forms merely indicate the source of information, in others the same forms may additionally convey nuances of surprise, probability, or the speaker's subjective attitude toward the event. The functional development of grammatical forms in Turkic languages demonstrates that the same morphological marker can perform different semantic functions in different communicative contexts (Ergin, 2009, pp. 298–302).

In Azerbaijani linguistics, the functional-semantic nature of indirect past tense forms in Turkic languages is explained within the framework of the multifunctional characteristics of verbal categories. From this perspective, forms expressing indirectly acquired information function not only as markers of tense but also as devices that convey the speaker's attitude toward the information and their communicative intention (*Müasir Azərbaycan dili: Sintaksis*, 2014, pp. 352–356).

Comparative analyses of Turkic languages demonstrate that past tense forms express not only temporal relations but also the means by which information has been acquired.

As noted in *Modern Azerbaijani Language*, verbal forms constitute important grammatical devices that express both the speaker's attitude toward an event and whether the information has been obtained directly or indirectly (*Müasir Azərbaycan dili: Morfologiya*, 2007, p. 219).

From this perspective, evidentiality functions not merely as a morphological category but also as a system carrying significant communicative functions. *The Grammar of the Azerbaijani Language* emphasizes that grammatical forms are not solely structural markers but also functional units endowed with semantic content (*Azərbaycan dilinin qrammatikası*, 2010, p. 415).

Thus, the evidentiality system in Turkic languages may be regarded as a complex category that has developed through both historical and functional processes.

Furthermore, the study of evidentiality is of considerable scientific significance for investigating the historical development of Turkic languages, their patterns of interaction, and their typological characteristics. Similarities observed in evidential systems may be regarded as one of the indicators reflecting the common origin and shared grammatical features of Turkic languages. At the same time, the existing differences demonstrate that each language has evolved under the influence of its own internal developmental mechanisms as well as various socio-historical factors (Zeynalov, 2008, pp. 315–320).

The category of evidentiality constitutes an important component of the functional structure of language and also reflects the ways in which knowledge and information are conceptualized and expressed across different cultures. In Azerbaijani linguistics, this phenomenon is primarily interpreted within the framework of the semantic extension of grammatical categories and their communicative functions. As the communicative potential of language develops, grammatical forms may acquire additional functional-semantic properties (Hacıyev, 2012, pp. 191–194).

As noted in *The Grammar of the Azerbaijani Language*, grammatical categories are not merely formal structural units but also functional devices that reflect the speaker's cognitive activity and attitude toward information (*Azərbaycan dilinin qrammatikası*, 2010, p. 415).

Recent studies on Modern Azerbaijani emphasize that modal and auxiliary expressions serve as important communicative tools for conveying the speaker's assumptions, conjectures, and inferential reasoning within the linguistic system (Nuri et al., 2026, p. 382).

From this perspective, evidentiality constitutes an important object of research not only within the grammatical system but also in the study of the relationship between language and cognition. In contemporary linguistics, the investigation of linguistic devices associated with information source is of particular significance for identifying the interconnections between human cognitive processes and linguistic structures (Crystal, 2008, pp. 168–172).

Thus, the present study demonstrates that evidentiality is a semantic-grammatical category occupying an important place in the typological structure of Turkic languages. Future research may yield new insights through broader comparative analyses of Turkic languages, investigations of evidential markers in ancient Turkic written monuments, and studies of the functional characteristics of evidential devices in contemporary communicative environments. Comparative research on Turkic languages is of considerable scientific significance, as it contributes to the identification of both their shared features and their individual developmental trajectories (Tekin, 2003, pp. 163–167).

2. Indirect Evidentiality

Indirect evidentiality is characterized by the speaker's lack of direct observation of the event being reported. In such cases, information is obtained from other sources or derived through various

inferential processes. In linguistic studies, indirect evidentiality is associated with both the origin of the information presented by the speaker and the degree of its reliability (Comrie, 1976, pp. 66–70).

Main Types of Indirect Evidentiality

Information Acquired Through Hearsay: In this case, the information is obtained from other individuals:

They say that the weather will change tomorrow.
I have heard that the event has been postponed.

In such expressions, the speaker is not a direct witness to the event and receives the information from an external source (Boas, 1938, pp. 133–136).

Inference-Based Evidentiality: In this case, the speaker forms a conclusion based on observable facts:

It seems that it has rained.
Apparently, the guests have arrived.

Here, the information is derived from observed evidence and has an inferential character (Johanson, 2003, pp. 281–285).

Assumptive and Probabilistic Evidentiality: In this case, the speaker relies on logical assumptions and probability:

He is probably at home.
They must have already set off.

Such structures express the speaker's subjective stance regarding the degree of certainty of the information (Palmer, 2001, pp. 36–40).

In linguistic literature, evidentiality is interpreted not only as a marker of the source of information but also as a communicative device that determines the degree of reliability of information and the formation of the speaker's knowledge. From this perspective, the category of evidentiality encompasses not only how the speaker acquires information but also the epistemic evaluation assigned to that information (Dixon, 2005, pp. 208–211).

As noted in *Modern Azerbaijani Language: Syntax*, modal words and auxiliary expressions constitute the primary means of conveying the speaker's stance of probability, conjecture, and inference (2014, p. 176). This indicates that information is presented not merely as factual content but also together with the speaker's subjective evaluation. A similar approach is reflected in *The Grammar of the Azerbaijani Language*, where it is emphasized that verbal categories express both the speaker's attitude toward events and the relationship between information and its source (2010, p. 415). This feature demonstrates that evidentiality exists in Azerbaijani as a functional-semantic system within the grammatical structure of the language.

In Azerbaijani, one of the most frequently used means of expressing indirect evidentiality is the suffix **-miş/-miş/-muş/-müŝ**.

Examples:

He has reportedly come / It turns out that he has come.
The child has fallen asleep.
The guests have already left.

In these sentences, the speaker does not directly observe the event; instead, the information is obtained through hearsay, inference, or other indirect sources. Researchers note that in Azerbaijani, past forms marked by this suffix do not function solely as temporal indicators but also carry additional semantic and communicative nuances (Hacıyev, 2012, pp. 196–199). According to Kazımov (2010, p. 253), indirect past tense forms serve as functional means that express both the source of information and the speaker's attitude toward the event.

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In the Azerbaijani language, the main means of expressing evidentiality can be classified as follows:

Means of expressing evidentiality in Azerbaijani and their functions

Means	Function
-miş/-miş	Expression of indirect information
Görünür	Inferential meaning (result-based conclusion)
deyirlər	Hearsay (information obtained through others)
yəqin	Probability
güman ki	Assumption
deyərsən	Indeterminate inference

These linguistic devices perform different evidential functions in Azerbaijani, ranging from marking indirect information to expressing inference, hearsay, and varying degrees of epistemic uncertainty.

Thus, evidentiality in Azerbaijani functions as a complex communicative category that expresses both the source of information and its degree of reliability and probability. The processes of perception and presentation of information transmitted through language are closely linked to the speaker's communicative intentions. The semantic development of evidential forms across Turkic languages demonstrates that the mode of information presentation is not only grammatical but also functional in nature (Öner, 1998, pp. 148–152).

In Azerbaijani, evidentiality does not exist as a fully independent grammatical category; instead, it is expressed through various morphological and lexical means. Verbal suffixes, modal words, and syntactic constructions play a central role in this process. The development of verbal forms in Turkic languages shows that temporal and modal meanings are often interconnected, and in many cases, they also encode the source of information (Aksu-Koç, 1988, pp. 28–34).

In Azerbaijani, one of the most frequently used means of expressing indirect evidentiality is the suffix -miş/-miş/-muş/-müş.

Examples:

He has reportedly come / He apparently came.

The child has fallen asleep.

The guests have already left.

In these sentences, the speaker does not directly observe the event; instead, the information is obtained through hearsay, inference, or other indirect sources. Comparative studies of Turkic languages indicate that verbal forms expressing indirect information do not merely serve to transmit reported events but also reflect the speaker's attitude toward the information conveyed (Reshetov & Shoabdurahmonov, 1978, pp. 205–210).

Comparative Analysis of Evidentiality in Turkic Languages

In Turkic languages, the evidentiality system is regarded as one of the key grammatical-semantic means for expressing the source of information. In these languages, evidentiality is primarily associated with the verbal system and is especially prominent in past tense forms. Most Turkic languages exhibit a formal distinction between direct observation of an event and indirect acquisition of information. This feature is considered one of the shared typological characteristics of Turkic languages (Zeynalov, 2008, pp. 308–312).

Within the grammatical structure of Turkic languages, forms expressing indirect information do not solely carry temporal meaning; they also reflect the speaker's attitude toward the information and the manner in which it was acquired. Researchers emphasize that identical morphological markers in Turkic languages may acquire additional semantic nuances depending on different communicative contexts (Ergin, 2009, pp. 302–306).

“As Zeynalov (2008, p. 310) notes, *past tense forms in Turkic languages may express not only temporal relations but also the source of information.*”

Similarly, Ergin (2009, p. 304) states that *the functional development of grammatical forms expands their semantic potential.*

In Azerbaijani typological and comparative linguistic studies, particular attention is given to evidentiality in Turkic languages. According to this approach, indirect past tense forms in Turkic languages express not only temporal relations but also the source of information. Thus, certain verbal forms simultaneously encode both grammatical tense and evidential meaning (Satybaldiev, 1980, pp. 188–192).

Material from Kyrgyz shows that constructions such as -ыптыр and -ган экен do not merely indicate that an event occurred in the past; they also express that the information was obtained indirectly and that the speaker was not a direct witness of the event. This is regarded as one of the general typological features of evidentiality in Turkic languages (Satybaldiev, 1980, pp. 190–192).

As Satybaldiev (1980, p. 191) notes, *indirect past forms carry information about both tense and the source of information.*

In Turkic languages, some past tense forms are based on direct observation, while others express meanings derived from indirect information and inference. This feature demonstrates that evidentiality is formed as a functional-semantic system within Turkic languages (Əsgərova & Ələkbərova, 2026).

The same idea is also emphasized in *Modern Azerbaijani Language*, where it is shown that verbal affixes function not only as temporal markers but also as means of expressing the speaker's attitude toward events and the mode of information acquisition (2007, pp. 219–221). A similar approach is reflected in comparative Turkic grammars, which state that, as a result of the semantic expansion of verbal forms, they may perform not only temporal functions but also encode the source of information (Serebrennikov & Hacıyeva, 2002, pp. 226–229).

These approaches demonstrate that the category of evidentiality in Turkic languages is not limited to the morphological tense system but also plays an important functional-semantic role, reflecting the speaker's relationship to the source of information.

In Turkish, the evidentiality system is one of the grammatical categories where this distinction is particularly clearly observable. The main opposition is based on the principle of direct versus indirect evidentiality. Direct evidentiality is typically expressed by the past tense suffix **-di**, as in *Ali geldi* ("Ali came") and *Ahmet okula gitti* ("Ahmet went to school"). In such constructions, the speaker presents themselves as a direct witness of the event, and the source of information is based on visual perception (Ergin, 2009, pp. 295–298).

Indirect evidentiality in Turkish is mainly expressed through the suffix **-miş**, as in *Ali gelmiş* ("Ali has apparently come") and *Ahmet okula gitmiş* ("Ahmet has apparently gone to school"). In such cases, the speaker either obtains the information from an external source or reaches a conclusion based on certain facts. In Turkish, this form can convey both reportative (hearsay-based) and inferential meanings (Comrie, 1985, pp. 67–70).

Researchers note that the Turkish **-miş** form is not only an indicator of indirect information but also carries additional semantic nuances such as surprise, unexpectedness, information acquired after the fact, and inference (Johanson, 2000, pp. 66–69).

In Kazakh, evidentiality is primarily realized through the verbal system and is based on grammatical means expressing whether information is obtained directly or indirectly. Direct evidentiality is typically expressed by simple past tense forms, as in *Ол келді* ("He came") and *Бала мектенке барды* ("The child went to school"). Indirect evidentiality, on the other hand, is mainly expressed by the suffixes **-ыпты** / **-іпті**, as in *Ол келінті* ("It is said that he has come") and *Бала мектенке барынты* ("It turns out that the child went to school"). In these forms, it is evident that the speaker is not a direct witness of the event and that the information is obtained from indirect sources. Researchers emphasize that in Kazakh these forms are particularly productive in spoken discourse and may convey additional semantic nuances such as information reliability, speaker stance, and inference (Johanson, 2003, pp. 278–281).

In Kyrgyz, the evidentiality system is relatively complex and is expressed through a variety of morphological means. Several different structures are used to convey indirect information in this language. For example: *Ал келген экен* ("It turns out that he has come") and *Ал келиптур* ("It is said that he has come"). The forms **-ган экен** and **-ыптыр** used in these constructions indicate that the speaker is not a direct witness of the event. Studies show that in Kyrgyz these forms are mainly used to transmit hearsay information, report events learned after the fact, and express conclusions based on indirect evidence (Aikhenvald, 2004, pp. 211–214).

In Uzbek, the category of evidentiality is primarily expressed through verbal forms. A grammatical distinction is made between directly and indirectly acquired information. Direct evidentiality is typically expressed by the simple past tense, as in *U keldi* ("He came"). Indirect evidentiality, on the other hand, is mainly conveyed through the construction **-gan ekan**, as in *U kelgan ekan* ("It turns out that he has come"). In this example, the form **-gan ekan** indicates that the event was not directly witnessed by the speaker and that the information was obtained indirectly. Researchers note that in

Uzbek, evidentiality functions not only as a grammatical category but also as an important device for expressing the speaker's attitude toward information, its degree of reliability, and communicative stance (Johanson, 2003, pp. 282–284).

Comparative Typological Analysis

The comparison of Turkic languages demonstrates that in most of them there are structural similarities in the expression of direct and indirect evidentiality. At the same time, certain differences can be observed in the phonetic and morphological structure of the affixes used.

Table 1

Evidential markers in selected Turkic languages

Language	Direct evidentiality	Indirect evidentiality
Azerbaijani	-dı	-miş
Turkish	-di	-miş
Kazakh	-dı/-di	-ıptı/-ipti
Kyrgyz	-gan	-ıptır
Uzbek	-di	-gan ekan

As can be seen from the table, there is a high degree of structural similarity between Azerbaijani and Turkish in the suffixes used to express indirect evidentiality. In contrast, in the Turkic languages of Central Asia, more complex constructions are more widely used to express indirect information.

Table 2

Examples of direct and indirect evidential forms in Turkic languages

Language	Direct evidentiality example	Translation	Indirect evidentiality example	Translation
Azerbaijani	<i>O gəldi.</i>	The speaker is a witness of the event.	<i>O gəlmişdir.</i>	The speaker has heard about the event or inferred it.
Turkish	<i>Ali geldi.</i>	Ali came.	<i>Ali gelmiş.</i>	It has been reported that Ali has come.
Kazakh	<i>Ол келді.</i>	He came.	<i>Ол келінті.</i>	It is said that he has come.
Kyrgyz	<i>Ал келди.</i>	He came.	<i>Ал келиптир.</i>	It turns out that he has come.
Uzbek	<i>U keldi.</i>	He came.	<i>U kelgan ekan.</i>	It has later become known that he has come.

The examples presented in the table demonstrate that in all the Turkic languages under comparison, direct evidentiality is typically expressed through simple past tense forms. In Azerbaijani, Turkish, and Kazakh, these forms are primarily realized by the suffixes -dı/-di.

In the expression of indirect evidentiality, however, a greater degree of variation is observed. In Azerbaijani and Turkish, the proto-Turkic form -miş/-miş has been preserved. In Kazakh, the forms -ыпты/-ıptı are used, in Kyrgyz -ыптыр, and in Uzbek the construction -gan ekan is employed. These facts indicate that although the category of evidentiality in Turkic languages shares a common functional-semantic core, its morphological realization has undergone different developmental pathways.

In particular, the use of auxiliary-based complex constructions in Uzbek and Kyrgyz reflects varying degrees of grammaticalization in the expression of evidentiality across Turkic languages.

Table 3
Semantic functions of indirect evidential forms

Language	Hearsay (reportative)	Inference (inferential)	Surprise / unexpectedness
Azerbaijani (-miş)	+	+	±
Turkish (-miş)	+	+	+
Kazakh (-ипті)	+	+	±
Kyrgyz (-ыптыр)	+	+	+
Uzbek (-gan ekan)	+	+	±

Table 4
Morphological structure of evidential markers in Turkic languages

Language	Evidential form	Morphological structure	Type
Azerbaijani	<i>gəlmış</i>	gəl- + -miş	Simple suffix
Turkish	<i>gelmiş</i>	gel- + -miş	Simple suffix
Kazakh	<i>kelipti</i>	kel- + -ip + -ti	Compound suffix
Kyrgyz	<i>keliptir</i>	kel- + -ip + -tir	Compound suffix
Uzbek	<i>kelgan ekan</i>	kel- + -gan + ekan	Analytic construction

The table shows that evidentiality in Azerbaijani and Turkish is predominantly expressed in a synthetic manner (through suffixation). In Kyrgyz and Kazakh, more complex suffixal structures are used, while in Uzbek an analytic construction is preferred.

Comparative-typological studies of Turkic languages in Azerbaijani linguistics indicate that the formation of grammatical categories is closely linked to the historical development of languages and their communicative needs. From this perspective, although the evidentiality system in Turkic languages shares a common origin, it has acquired different structural and functional properties over time (Zeynalov, 2008, pp. 310–313). The development of grammatical categories shows that linguistic forms may gradually acquire semantic expansion and functional versatility within the language system (Bybee et al., 1994, pp. 186–189).

It is also noted in *Comparative Grammar of Turkic Languages* that the evolution of grammatical forms in Turkic languages is based both on common Turkic roots and on the internal developmental tendencies of individual languages. This approach helps explain the historical foundations of the structural differences observed in evidentiality systems across Turkic languages.

At the same time, *The Grammar of the Azerbaijani Language* emphasizes that the semantic expansion and functional change of grammatical categories are directly related to the communicative needs of the language (2010, p. 415). This view helps explain the variation in the realization of the evidentiality category across Turkic languages.

As noted in *Ismayil et al. (2026)*, “grammatical forms in Turkic languages may acquire different functional properties in the course of historical development.”

Thus, the comparative analysis demonstrates that although evidentiality in Turkic languages is based on a common historical origin, its grammatical means of expression have developed in different

directions over time and are realized at different structural levels in each language (Zeynalov, 2008, pp. 313–316).

The results of the study indicate that evidentiality in Azerbaijani and Turkish is primarily expressed through synthetic forms (-mış/-miş), whereas Uzbek predominantly employs analytic constructions (-gan ekan). In Kazakh and Kyrgyz, evidential markers more prominently express both reportative and inferential functions. These findings suggest that, although evidentiality in Turkic languages has a unified origin, it has undergone diverse processes of grammaticalization and semantic differentiation across different languages.

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