

Department of English

Evidential marking in spoken English

Linguistic functions and gender variation

ERIKA SÖDERQVIST



UPPSALA
UNIVERSITET

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Abstract

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This thesis investigates the marking of evidentiality in spoken British English. Evidentiality is the linguistic expression of whether and how a speaker/writer has access to evidence for or against the truth of a proposition, and it is usually manifested in the form of sensory evidentiality (e.g. *I saw Sam leave*), hearsay evidentiality (e.g. *They say Sam left*), or inferential evidentiality (e.g. *Sam obviously left*). In the examples, the bold words exemplify *evidentiality markers*. The aims of this thesis are to investigate whether there are quantitative differences between women and men in how often they mark evidentiality, and to analyze the functions of evidentiality in interaction in order to formulate an explanation of any gender differences.

The material comes mainly from the spoken portion of the British National Corpus (BNC), but also from the Diachronic Corpus of Present-day Spoken English (DCPSE). In Article 1, women and men were compared with respect to how frequently they marked inferential evidentiality; gender preferences for specific markers were also analyzed. In Article 2, the effects of speaker gender and speaker age on how frequently evidentiality markers are used were investigated. In Article 3, the marking of evidentiality in conversation was analyzed to explore the potential of evidentiality to be instrumental in relational practice. In Article 4, speakers were ranked according to the extent to which their speech displayed stereotypically feminine or masculine features. The language of a subset of speakers was then analyzed to investigate whether evidential markers are used for different functions depending on gendered styles.

In the studies of this thesis, women were found to mark evidentiality more frequently than men. Further, the language of women as well as language characterized by a feminine style were found more likely to feature evidential markers referencing evidence that is only accessible to the speaker, whereas the language of men and language characterized by a masculine style are more likely to feature evidential markers referencing evidence that is accessible to other interlocutors in addition to the speaker. Evidential marking was found to often perform relational functions; in particular, evidentiality enables the speaker to negotiate authority in a less face-threatening manner. Evidential marking seems likely to occur when the addressee's interpretation of an utterance is important to the speaker. Since previous studies have found women's language to display more often a concern for the experiences of others, this characteristic might partly explain the quantitative gender variation.

Keywords: Evidentiality, spoken language, English, corpus linguistics, gender, style, pragmatics, sociolinguistics

Erika Berglind Söderqvist, Department of English, Box 527, Uppsala University, SE-75120 Uppsala, Sweden.

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List of Papers

This thesis is based on the following papers, which are referred to in the text by their Arabic numerals.

1. Berglind Söderqvist, Erika (2017). Gender differences and similarities in the use of inferential evidentiality markers in spoken British English: A corpus-based study. In J. I. Marín-Arrese; J. Lavid-López; M. Carretero; E. D. Romero; M^a V. M. de la Rosa, and M. P. Blanco (eds.) *Evidentiality and modality in European languages: Discourse-pragmatic perspectives* (Linguistic Insights: Studies in Language and Communication Vol. 223). Bern: Peter Lang, 371–399.
2. Berglind Söderqvist, Erika (2017). Evidentiality across age and gender: A corpus-based study of variation in spoken British English. *Research in Corpus Linguistics* 5: 17–33.
3. Berglind Söderqvist, Erika (forthcoming). Informational and relational functions of evidentiality in interaction. *Studia Neophilologica*.
4. Berglind Söderqvist, Erika (forthcoming). Evidentiality in gendered styles in spoken English. *ICAME Journal*.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Topic and aims

The focus of the present thesis is evidential marking – the linguistic expression of whether and how a speaker/writer has access to evidence for or against the truth of a proposition. In English, evidentiality is positioned at an intersection of various linguistic categories and phenomena. In such languages as Quechua and Aymara, evidentiality is obligatorily expressed by means of closed grammatical categories (Aikhenvald 2004:12). In English, however, evidentiality is manifested by semantically (or, in some conceptualizations, pragmatically) conveying the nature of the source of the information communicated. Consequentially, evidentiality in English is an elusive concept to define and study. It has been conceived of as a stance category (Biber and Finegan 1989), a modal category (Willett 1988), and as a category parallel to epistemic modality under a superordinate category relating to epistemicity (Bednarek 2006; Boye 2010). While the positioning of the present thesis in relation to such conceptualizations will be clarified in Section 2, it should be immediately established that evidentiality is here viewed as manifested overtly in the form of evidential markers rather than something that is pragmatically inferred (cf. Carretero and Zamorano-Mansilla 2013a). Examples (1) through (6), from the spoken portion of the British National Corpus (BNC), illustrate some commonly occurring evidential markers.

1. Er I think they have changed contractors. (D97:2)
2. But I hate to say it because obviously he wants to find, to go somewhere. (KB0:3785)
3. I mean I saw her at eleven o'clock at night going jogging with a plastic bag wrapped around her arms. (KPG:2026)
4. She said it's the twenty eighth and the month is December. (JA8:132)
5. It was the culmination of what seems to be an elaborately crafted police operation. (FXT:1094)
6. He must do it on purpose, no one could be that thick. (KPN:241)

In the material examined in the studies presented in this thesis as well as in studies of evidential marking in English across the research literature, the linguistic forms most frequently seen among evidential markers include cognitive verbs, often in the context of first-person complement-taking predicate

constructions (Pöldvere et al. 2016) such as *I think* or *I know*, as in Example (1), and adverbs alluding to the existence of the evidence forming the basis for an inference (Carretero and Zamorano-Mansilla 2013a), as in Example (2). They also include verbs referring to the experience or act of perceiving something with the senses (Whitt 2011), as in Example (3) or to the experience or act of producing or receiving a report (Grund 2012), as in Example (4). Finally, findings and discussions on evidentiality often include copula verbs, as in Example (5), and modals, as in Example (6), that allude to the fact that something is not considered an absolute truth but rather an inference based on some (often) unspecified evidential basis (Aijmer 2009; Cornillie 2009).

The porosity of the concept of evidentiality in English also contributes to its functional complexity. It is not only related to linguistic strategies pertaining to speaker attitude and certainty (such as stance and modality), but due to the many forms evidentiality can take in English, it also overlaps with concepts of well-documented pragmatic versatility such as cognitive/mental verbs (Biber et al. 1999:362) and quotatives. Prior to the present thesis, few studies had investigated sociolinguistic variation in the use of evidentiality. A notable exception is, however, Precht (2008), who investigated evidentiality as one of many stance categories (rather than focusing specifically on evidentiality) and as conflated with the categories of mirativity¹ and epistemic modality. Her findings include significant differences between male and female speakers for some markers. Alonso-Almeida and González-Cruz (2012) also find differences between women's and men's use of evidentiality in their corpus of travel texts from the 19th and early 20th centuries. The findings of Precht (2008) and Alonso-Almeida and González-Cruz (2012) prompted the questions that were the origin of the present thesis: would differences still be possible to locate in a larger set of more recent material, and with a more specific focus on evidentiality? And given the nature of the category of evidentiality – its variability in terms of form as well as function – how might the reason for differences between women's and men's use of evidentiality be interpreted?

The aim of the present thesis is thus two-fold. The first aim is to provide evidence for or against the existence of a difference between male and female speakers of English with respect to their use of evidentiality. The second aim is to attempt to explain the possible gender-related patterns in evidentiality use.

1.2 Outline

The organization of this introductory presentation is structured as follows: in Section 2, the concept of evidentiality is discussed; in addition, the scope and

¹ “The term ‘mirativity’ refers to the linguistic marking of an utterance as conveying information which is new or unexpected to the speaker” (DeLancey 2001:369–370).

definition adopted for the present thesis are described in relation to the conceptualizations of other scholars. In Section 3, gender is in focus. I problematize and discuss the decision to investigate gender-related variation, and dissect the concept of gender in order to locate the aspects that make it a relevant element of the present thesis. In Section 4, the corpora used in the studies included in this thesis are presented, and the procedures used for selecting and sampling data are described and discussed. In Section 5, I elaborate on the methods applied, including the coding procedures and criteria and the statistical methods and analytical approaches. Further, results from an intercoder test carried out on the material used for Article 4 are reported on and discussed. The four articles are summarized in Section 6; Section 7, finally, is dedicated to outlining the main findings and contributions of this thesis, as well as its limitations and some suggestions for future research.

2. Evidentiality: Definitions and delimitations

Evidentiality is one of the most important concepts of the present thesis, and this section is devoted to explaining my position with respect to some of its dimensions. In subsections 2.1, 2.2, and 2.3, the relationship of evidentiality to epistemic modality, epistemic positioning, and (inter)subjectivity will be described and discussed. In subsection 2.4 the significance of evidential markers in this thesis is described, and in subsection 2.5, finally, the scope of evidentiality adopted for the present thesis is summarized.

2.1 Inferential evidentiality and epistemic modality

One of the most frequently discussed aspects of the definition of evidentiality is that of its scope in relation to epistemic modality. This first subsection is therefore dedicated to explaining my position in that regard, and especially concerning inferential evidentiality.

Palmer defines *modality* as a linguistic category in relation to the categories of tense and aspect, stating that while *tense* describes the time of an event and *aspect* describes the nature of an event, “[m]odality is concerned with the status of the proposition that describes the event” (2001:1). In Palmer’s conceptualization, modality is divided into *propositional modality*, concerning “the speaker’s attitude to the truth-value or factual status of the proposition” (2001:8), and *event modality*, concerning events that may potentially occur. The two main types of propositional modality, according to Palmer, are *evidential* and *epistemic* modality; and the two main types of event modality are *deontic* and *dynamic modality*. As regards the distinction between evidential and epistemic modality, Palmer (ibid.) suggests that evidentiality concerns the evidence for the factual status of a proposition, whereas epistemic modality concerns the assessment of the speaker regarding the factual status of the proposition. Palmer’s discussion is cross-linguistic; and as an example of evidential modality in English, he gives the word *must*, as it “usually suggests that the judgment was based on evidence” (Palmer 2001:8). According to Nuyts (2001:29), epistemic modality is generally manifested in the form of adverbs (*maybe/probably/certainly*), adjectives (*possible/likely/certain*), mental state predicates (*I think/I believe*), or modal auxiliaries (*may/might/must*).

In brief, it might be said that the debate on the scope of evidentiality in relation to epistemic modality concerns the extent and nature of their overlap.

More specifically, scholars tend to view this overlap as located in the dimension of evidentiality that concerns the degree of reliability of a proposition, as opposed to the dimension concerning type of evidence. Whereas Palmer appears to make a strict distinction between objective evidence and speaker's assessment, I would argue that to some extent, the speaker's assessment of reliability degree is built into the semantic sense of evidentiality as it is manifested in English. A specification of whether a language user acquired knowledge by means of first-hand experience, hearsay, or inference is likely to influence the addressee's perception of how reliable the proposition is. In some expressions of evidentiality, the articulation of evidence type is so implicit that it could even be argued to be secondary to the expression of degree of reliability. The question of how explicit the reference to evidence needs to be in order for an expression to qualify as evidentiality tends to be actualized in the category that is termed inferential evidentiality in the present thesis. As Article 1 of the present thesis focuses on the category of inferential evidentiality, the question of the validity of this evidentiality category will be acknowledged and examined here.

Palmer (2001:8–9) finds that evidential as well as epistemic modality has a category corresponding to inferential evidentiality, concerned with deduction. He concludes that while expressions of inferential evidentiality in English tend to allude to evidence, deductive expressions are better discussed as part of epistemic modality. Cornillie (2009) delves deeper into this particular relationship. Using case studies of authentic language use, he argues that evidentiality and epistemic modality are conceptually different. He points to the research of van der Auwera and Plungian (1998), who claim a complete overlap of evidentiality and epistemic modality in the area of inferential evidentiality. Such an overlap, Cornillie (2009:51) argues, is not the case. Rather, evidentiality and epistemic modality have sub-dimensions that are not the same, but so similar to each other that they can be confused: the *reliability of knowledge* of evidentiality and the *speaker commitment* of epistemic modality.

For the purpose of the present thesis, it was decided to count as evidentiality expressions that make (explicit or implicit) reference to the acquisition or existence of evidence for a proposition. Cornillie (2009) discusses the importance of whether evidentiality or epistemic modality constitutes the main qualification in an expression; I make no such distinction. If an evidential qualification is present, the expression is counted as evidentiality, even if epistemic modality is also present. For instance, consider Examples (7) and (8), which both feature evidentiality marking according to my definition.

7. And he got hi—I think their children go to the Catholic School. (KB8 3875)
8. He told me he didn't get in the football team. (KCT 889)

In Example (7), evidential as well as epistemic qualifications are present; the cognitive verb *think* suggests that the proposition regarding where the children go to school is based on some cognitive processing of evidence, but it also implies that the speaker is not strongly committed to the truth of the proposition. In Example (8), the underlined verb adds a qualification that is arguably more evidential than epistemic; it tells us what kind of evidence the speaker has for the proposition that “he” is not on the football team. Additional context would, however, be needed in order to make an interpretation as to whether *tell* is meant to convey information about the speaker’s commitment to the truth of the proposition.

As mentioned above, inferential evidentiality is a particularly challenging area with regard to making the distinction between evidentiality and epistemic modality; the evidential status of several of the markers associated with this category is more or less controversial. I regard markers of inferential evidentiality as typically belonging to one of four different groups: *cognitive verbs*, *adverbs*, *non-speaker subject verbs*, and *modals* (for further discussion on these, see Section 4.2 in Article 2). Cognitive verbs include verbs such as *think*, *suppose*, *believe*, and *know*. Cappelli (2007), who thoroughly analyzes the evidential and epistemic properties of such verbs, considers *think* to be epistemic rather than evidential. Her assessment of its function in contexts where an evidential/epistemic reading is possible is, however, that *think* alludes to a “computational process over available evidence” (Cappelli 2007:185), which places it within my scope of what counts as evidentiality. Cappelli’s analysis of *think* touches on the common denominator of cognitive verbs used as evidential markers: their sense is concerned with the cognitive process used to deduce or make inferences based on some evidence.

The sense of inferential evidentiality markers belonging to the other three groups is concerned, rather, with alluding to the existence of the evidence that is used to make an inference. Following Cornillie (2009), the non-speaker subject verb *seem* (as well as *appear* and *look* when used in a similar sense) is considered evidential rather than epistemic. Of the modal verbs, *must* is considered evidential when used in a non-deontic sense; non-deontic *should* also has the potential to mark evidentiality. See Examples (5) and (6) in Subsection 1.1 for illustrations of *seem* and *must* as evidential markers; *should* as an evidential marker is shown in Example (9).

9. Bright intervals are possible and apart from the chance of a light shower it should stay dry milder than of late with a top temperature of eleven celsius fifty two fahrenheit in a moderate south easterly wind. (HMA 1)

With regard to the modals, I decided to exclude categorically some of them from my analyses rather than spending unreasonable amounts of time trying to decide whether every individual token is epistemic and evidential. Whereas

must is frequently included in discussions of evidentiality in English, Alonso-Almeida and Cruz-García (2011) find *may* and *might* (especially the latter) to have a primarily epistemic rather than evidential reading in a majority of cases. Therefore, in accordance with their analysis, as well as with the perspective of Cornillie (2009), *may* and *might* are counted as epistemic rather than evidential in the present thesis.

2.2 Evidentiality and epistemic positioning

As part of investigations of evidentiality in its interactional context, Articles 3 and 4 (the former in particular) of this thesis present explorations of the concepts of epistemic status and stance as relevant to evidentiality. While these terms include the word “epistemic”, they are not to be confused with epistemic modality.

In Mondada’s definition, epistemic status has to do with the relative “knowledge distribution and knowledge access towards a given epistemic domain” (2013:599) of the participants of an interactional situation. That is, epistemic status refers to the participants’ status with regard to how much they actually know about a topic of conversation. When speakers produce linguistic expressions of their epistemic status, they are said to mark epistemic stance or perform epistemic positioning. Drew (2018) comments that expressing and adjusting one’s epistemic stance does not alter one’s epistemic status; that is, a speaker’s epistemic status on any given topic is static, but the epistemic stance expressed by the speaker might highlight or downplay aspects of that status as appropriate to the situation and the speaker’s intention. Expressing epistemic stance, Drew finds, is a way of negotiating and establishing the exact nature of epistemic asymmetry among the participants of a given interactional situation. In other words, epistemic status and stance go beyond communicating the speaker’s assessment regarding the reliability of a proposition. As Sidnell (2012:315) argues, the functions of evidentials for epistemic positioning cannot be investigated by analyzing isolated evidential markers; manifestations of the relative epistemic statuses of all participants have to be considered as well as the kinds of utterances in which the evidential markers are used. While investigating interactional functions of evidentiality in Article 3 of the present thesis, I deemed it important to take into account the concept of epistemic positioning, as it has been found central to the way evidentiality is used in conversation.

2.3 Evidentiality and (inter)subjectivity

In Article 1 of the present thesis, the notion of (inter)subjectivity is explored as one of the aspects of evidentiality that may be relevant to quantitative variation related to gender. This subsection will outline in what way (inter)subjectivity is viewed as relevant to evidentiality in this thesis, and what previous research influenced my position on this matter.

Article 1 is informed by the basic definition of (inter)subjectivity formulated by Nuyts: “[t]he assessment is subjective if the speaker assumes sole responsibility for it, it is intersubjective if the speaker indicates that s/he shares the assessment with others (i.e., if it is presented as common ground between a wider group of ‘subjects/assessors’)” (2015:107). The way the concept of (inter)subjectivity is understood and employed in this thesis diverges, however, from Nuyts’ definition in some ways. For instance, his definition is primarily concerned with which speaker assumes “responsibility” for an assessment, and he mainly discusses (inter)subjectivity as relevant to modality (Nuyts 2012). Rather than being concerned with who is responsible for an assessment, I use the conceptualization that (inter)subjectivity as applied to evidentiality concerns whether the evidence referred to by the evidential marker is accessible for or known to the speaker only (subjective), or to the addressees as well (intersubjective). For example, as noted in Article 1, adverbs *obviously* and *clearly* are often (but not always) used as evidentials in cases when the evidence that the speaker bases the proposition on is accessible to other interlocutors as well, or when the speaker thinks that is the case. In other words, my understanding of (inter)subjectivity has to do with the shared or non-shared status of evidence.

2.4 Evidential markers

As stated in Section 1.1, the scope of evidentiality in my investigation involves evidentiality that is overtly marked rather than pragmatically inferred. This formulation is somewhat of a simplification; and the present subsection is committed to explaining my stance in that regard.

Since English does not encode evidentiality by means of a closed grammatical system, in order to investigate evidentiality in English the delimitations of the concept need to be defined. Discussing the relationship between evidentiality and epistemic modality, De Haan (2001:8) provides three contrasting examples, two of which are shown below as Examples (10) and (11) in order to illuminate the relevant distinction.

10. John must be at home. The light is on.
11. John is at home. The light is on.

In Example (10), the evidential marker *must* is used to signal that the proposition is based on inference, and the second sentence of the utterance provides the evidence that the inference is based on. In Example (11), the same evidence is articulated, but there is no evidential marker to link the inference to the evidence. Even though the link could, of course, still be pragmatically inferred, such utterances are not counted as evidentiality in the present thesis.

For an expression to be counted as evidential in the studies of this thesis, it needs to contain a marker. While it is probably impossible to compile a completely exhaustive list of evidentiality markers in English, as this “category” is a productive one (even though there are certainly some markers that are decidedly the most frequently used), Table A1 in the appendix of Article 2 provides a list of 25 markers compiled by means of literature review and manual data analysis. The literature that informed my lists of search terms is cited and discussed in Articles 1 and 2, but some notable examples of this literature include Cappelli (2007), Aijmer (2009), Grund (2012), and Carretero and Zamorano-Mansilla (2013a). The markers belong to various linguistic categories, but a dimension they have in common is that they explicate, as in Example (10), the link between the proposition and the evidence. They refer to the existence of a report (*according to, reportedly*), to the existence of (often) unspecified evidence (*apparently, appear, clearly, evidently, look* (when used in the phrase *it looks like*), *must, obviously, seem, sound* (primarily used in the phrase *it sounds like*), to the cognitive process used to arrive at a conclusion based on evidence (*believe, know, remember, suppose, think*), to the act or experience of producing or receiving a report (*find out, go on about, hear, say, tell*), or to the act or experience of perceiving something sensorially (*hear, look, make out, see, watch*). While some conjunctions, such as *because*, could tentatively be said to constitute a link between evidence and proposition in certain contexts, they do not, semantically, refer to the existence or acquisition of evidence, and are thus not counted as evidential markers. That is, whereas *must* or *seem* semantically suggest an assessment of the reliability of a proposition, with the connotation that this assessment is based on some kind of access to evidence (cf. eg. De Haan 2001), *because* simply indicates a causative relationship.

Finally, it is important to note that if evidential markers are to be thought of as a category, they should be seen as a functional one. None of the lexical items investigated in the studies in this thesis has been consistently found to carry evidential meaning, as each one has the potential to modify propositions that violate one of the criteria formulated in Section 4.2 of Article 2. Examples (12) through (14) illustrate non-evidential uses of three lexical items that are often used as examples of sensory, hearsay, and inferential evidentiality markers, respectively.

12. But I think I'll stay here [pause] but I see myself as a internationalist as well. (FLK 378)
13. Mrs Thatcher told M P's that the Government was looking at possible adjustments in the community charge. (KRT 1022)
14. If you can clearly state what your objective is what you're trying to persuade the audience to then everything you say supports that and you stand a better chance of being persuasive. (JSA 609)

In Example (12), *see* is used in a metaphorical sense; rather than describing a sensory experience, the speaker means to say that s/he regards her/himself in a certain way. In Example (13), *tell* is used with someone else (“MP’s”) than the speaker as the recipient of the hearsay. In Example (14), *clearly* only modifies the verb *state*; in co-texts where it carries evidential meaning, it modifies entire propositions. For instance, moving *clearly* to sentence-initial position in Example (14) would have changed the level at which it modifies and enabled it to carry evidential meaning. *Obviously*, *reportedly*, and *evidently* are potential exceptions to the rule of no lexical item in English being innately and consistently evidential; the latter two are, however, so infrequent in the spoken portion of the BNC (0.19 and 2.5 instances per million words, respectively) that they were not thoroughly investigated in the present thesis, simply because they rarely appear in my material.

2.5 Evidentiality in the present thesis

To summarize, in the present thesis an expression is viewed as containing evidentiality if it features an evidential qualification, carried by a marker that makes reference to the existence or acquisition of evidence. Some evidential expressions may contain an element of epistemic modality (modifying degree of certainty); this is not thought of as disqualifying the expression from being evidential, as long as there is also an evidential reading. In Article 1, (inter)subjectivity is explored as an element of evidentiality; its definition is informed by Nuyts (2012, 2015) and views allusions to evidence accessible for the addressee(s) in addition to the speaker as intersubjective, and allusions to evidence accessible for only the speaker as subjective. In Articles 3 and 4, epistemic positioning is examined in the qualitative analyses; while that concept has occasionally referred to a very wide range of expressions of knowledge, it is applied here to evidential expressions identified by means of the definition summarized in this subsection.

3. Investigating gender variation

Gender² is, in some respects, a very attractive independent variable to use in corpus studies. If any meta-information is given in a spoken-language corpus, speaker gender is often included, and it almost always has two variants: female and male. Gender, therefore, tends to be an easily accessible way of categorizing and comparing populations. On the other hand, the apparent simplicity of the gender variable is, of course, thoroughly deceptive. As has often been pointed out (e.g. Holmes and Stubbe 2003), gendered language is invariably influenced by an additional multitude of factors, such as socioeconomic class, ethnicity, or the local norms of a community of practice. As Eckert and McConnell-Ginet put it, “gender is built on a lifetime of differentiated experience, and as a result is inextricably mixed with toughness, occupation, entitlement, formality, class, hobbies, family status, race, and just about any other life experience you can name” (2013:61). In other words, my choice to investigate variation in a variable seemingly so resistant to generalization needs to be problematized and explained. Hence, this section is dedicated to discussing and clarifying my theoretical points of departure in the studies, analyses, and decisions of the articles comprising this thesis. I will also explain some decisions made during my investigation of gender variation in evidential marking and provide some background on gender variation research in linguistic categories related to evidentiality.

3.1 Theoretical stance on the study of language and gender

Throughout the present thesis, I use the term *gender* when mentioning whether a speaker is female or male as well as when discussing the existence and significance of linguistic variation between women and men. The often-repeated distinction between *sex* and *gender* states that sex refers to a biological classification based on chromosomes and reproductive potentials, and “gender is the social elaboration of biological sex” (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 2013:2) – the use of various (verbal, visual etc.) attributes that make others interpret

² A conceptualization of gender based on research made in Western, anglophone contexts serves as the departure point for my investigations, primarily because that is also the context of my data.

us as female or male. There are three reasons why gender was nonetheless the term I used even when referring to the binary categorization of speakers in my corpus data.

The first reason is that of simplicity. Opting to use *sex* in some cases would require me to define when to switch to *gender* – and since the latter is often based on the former, the distinction is not always entirely clear. Further, to a great extent, the information about speaker gender in the BNC appears to be based on what informants reported regarding themselves and other interlocutors of the recorded interactions in which they took part. To the best of my knowledge, my research in Articles 1 and 2 may be based on speaker genders, not sexes. Using *gender* as an umbrella term was therefore a practical decision. Second, as Meyerhoff (2018:226) notes in her textbook on sociolinguistics, *gender* has come to largely replace *sex* in language and gender research; I am falling in line with the current state of the field.

Third, and most importantly, I use the term *gender* because it is the most relevant to what is investigated in the articles of this thesis. While such a statement would be difficult to prove empirically, it remains my educated guess that biological factors are unlikely to be the primary explanation for why women and men appear to use evidentiality differently. As has repeatedly been shown (e.g. Eckert 1989, 2000; Milroy et al. 1994), linguistic variation between female and male speakers tends to co-vary with socio-cultural variables such as class and local norms, which strongly suggests *gender* (which is socially conditioned) rather than *sex* (which is biologically determined) is the independent variable one should focus on when investigating language variation. The findings suggesting the importance of social conditioning to gender variation also relate to the fact that I follow many scholars investigating language and gender (such as Kiesling 2005; McDowell 2015) in subscribing to the view that gender, as one of many facets of a person's identity, is performative (cf. Butler 1990). Gender performativity refers to the notion that rather than certain linguistic (and extra-linguistic) practices being reflective of a person's gender, speakers use these sets of linguistic practices to perform femininity, masculinity, or a mixture of the two, in ways that will be meaningful to the speakers themselves, as well as to the people who are the intended recipients of this performance.

Following the idea of gender performativity, when my results in Articles 1 and 2 show that women mark evidentiality significantly more frequently than men, and that there are also differences in which evidentiality types female and male speakers prefer, it is logical to draw the conclusion that evidentiality marking is somehow a meaningful constituent in gendered performances. It was this conclusion that prompted the idea to investigate the role of relational functions in evidential marking (Article 3) and the use of evidentials across gendered styles (Article 4) in order to explore to what effect evidential marking might be used in gendered performances. While, of course, the target of my investigation was to find out what speakers' intentions and motivations

are for marking evidentiality, it is often difficult to find direct evidence of anyone's intentions and motivations. The next best thing is to collect indirect evidence by observing what the effects tend to be when a certain function is used in interaction, and then extrapolate the speaker's likely intention from that. The description of qualitative methods in Section 5.4 describes my focus on the apparent effects of evidential marking. So for example, when evidentiality is repeatedly found, in Article 3, to be used to the effect of saving and maintaining interlocutors' faces, it is logical to assume that speakers are (sub-consciously) aware that face-saving is a likely effect of such markers, and that awareness is what motivates speakers to use them.

Central in the idea of gender performativity is that gender is not performed as one of two clear-cut options: either femininity or masculinity, but rather, gendered identities are created and reproduced through performances. Further, as has been explored and confirmed by various scholars (e.g. Holmes and Schnurr 2006; Ladegaard 2011), linguistic features that are associated with gender are used by speakers of any gender, as part of performances that are carefully calibrated to be appropriate for the relevant situations; i.e., performances of femininity are not reserved for women, nor performances of masculinity for men. The potential dissonance between the notion of gender as fluid and performative, and the idea of finding evidence of gender variation through quantitative studies using binary gender categories needs to be acknowledged. In the present thesis, I attempt to reconcile the fluidity and the binary conceptions of gender by using primarily quantitative methods in two articles, and primarily qualitative methods in the other two. I would also argue that the fluidity and the binary conception are both relevant to the concept of gender and do not necessarily stand in direct opposition to one another. In the following subsection, I will describe some of the potential problems and pitfalls of approaching language and gender the way I did, and then explain why I nonetheless decided to do so.

3.2 Facing the challenges of studying language and gender

Already more than 25 years ago, Canary and Hause (1993) cautioned scholars attempting to study sex differences in communication not to presuppose the explanatory power of gender stereotypes or the generalizability of sex differences. As Coates (2016:3) remarks, even the question "Do men and women speak differently?" holds some presuppositions: that *men* and *women* are meaningful categories, for example, and that differences are more relevant to note than similarities. This fundamental issue is related to something I touched upon in the first paragraph of Section 3, namely that as the manifestation of gender is so heavily influenced by other social variables, findings are difficult

to generalize. As shown by Newman et al. (2008), the tendency for linguistic manifestations of gender to vary depending on the situational context is only part of the generalizability problem. Many of the features that, historically, have often been investigated with regard to gender variation, such as hedges, questions, and tag questions, can be defined in a variety of ways, and can also have many different functions depending on the context. Newman et al. (2008:212–214) demonstrate how these limitations have led to difficulties in replicating findings in language and gender research. Further, Newman et al. note that in their efforts to be meticulous in their coding, researchers tend to use data sets that are too small to enable the detection of minor but possibly meaningful variation. The fact that I decided to investigate gender variation by carrying out quantitative studies using binary gender categories appears to make my research susceptible to all of the problems mentioned in this subsection. However, since *women/men* and *femininity/masculinity* are still socio-culturally relevant dichotomies, as shown by studies demonstrating that speakers are aware of and influenced by these dichotomies (e.g. Holmes and Schnurr 2006; Pullen and Simpson 2009; McDowell 2015), I deemed it justified to adopt this approach.

While the biological basis for stereotypes connected to binary gender categories may be precarious, the ability to recognize femininity, masculinity, and their implications is something we are thoroughly socialized into from a young age (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 2013: chapter 1). People's awareness of stereotypes associated with women and men, and the expectations that follow, are evident in various studies of reactions to and evaluations of gendered behavior (e.g. Johnson et al. 2008; Pullen and Simpson 2009). In other words, the categories *woman* and *man*, or *femininity* and *masculinity*, are still apparently relevant when attempting to describe how language is used, and why it is used the way it is.

With gender being performative, people must base their gendered performances on their acquired knowledge of what is likely to be perceived as appropriately feminine or masculine, i.e. norms. Even when a feminine communication style is established as the norm of a workplace to the extent that a feminine style is the unmarked option even for male speakers, speakers occasionally signal their awareness of the fact that they are performing femininity (Holmes and Schnurr 2006). There is also empirical evidence that societal norms for feminine and masculine communication styles carry over into the communication preferences of women and men, respectively. As discussed in Article 3, in qualitative as well as quantitative studies, women have repeatedly been found to be more concerned with the relational aspects of communication. For example, Newman et al.'s (2008) large-scale corpus study finds women to use more pronouns and to more frequently refer to social and psychological concepts, whereas men are more likely to refer to locations and quantities. This pattern reflects the commonly cited perception (e.g. Holmes and Stubbe 2003:574) that a stereotypically feminine communication style is

supportive and affectively oriented whereas a stereotypically masculine communication style is autonomous and referentially oriented. Thus, while gendered performances will vary in response to norms that are specific to certain communities of practice, or certain types of situations, there may be some variation on a female/male group level that is likely to be connected to perceptions of femininity and masculinity shared by members of larger-scale societies (such as the Westernized, anglophone societies of North America, New Zealand, and the UK that provide the context of my own data as well as that of most studies I cite, as indicated in footnote 2).

Finally, even the most skeptical scholars (such as Canary and Hause 1993) agree that it is possible to study gender variation in language in a way that is relevant to reality, as long as gender and gendered performances are recognized and approached as being dynamic concepts in constant interaction with their context. The line of reasoning demonstrated in the present subsection shows my motivation for choosing to investigate an instance of linguistic variation between women and men; in subsection 3.3, I will provide further details regarding my choices in investigating gender variation in evidentiality.

3.3 The relevance of gender variation to evidentiality

Evidentiality in English has rarely been investigated with regard to gender variation. The reason for this dearth of research is possibly that the field of evidentiality in Germanic and Romance languages is still at a stage where much effort is being spent on establishing a unified definition. Perhaps because of this lack of a unified definition, studies that describe *who* uses evidentiality and *how* it is used (as opposed to describing *what* evidentiality is), tend to focus only on one or a few specified markers of evidentiality (e.g. Estellés Arguedas and Albelda Marco 2014; Cornillie and Gras 2015), or use a scope that goes beyond evidentiality “proper” to include epistemic positioning, mirativity, or various kinds of modality (e.g. Precht 2008; Sidnell 2012; Pöldvere 2014). The present thesis examines a portion of the question of who uses evidentiality and how, attempting to cover as many markers as possible of all evidentiality categories in English, and keeping the scope exclusive to evidentiality rather than including related linguistic categories.

Precht (2008) mentions evidentiality as a category of stance; evidentiality overlaps with a multitude of linguistic categories that hold great potential for studying the way interlocutors position themselves in various ways during interactions, many of which have previously been studied with regard to socio-linguistic variation, style, and stance. Pragmatically interesting categories that sometimes have evidential meaning include 1st person pronoun + cognitive verb clauses (*I think, I know*), referred to as parentheticals, comment clauses, or first-person complement-taking predicate constructions, quotatives (*s/he said*), and adverbs that are often termed epistemic (*obviously, supposedly*);

further, each of these categories holds expressions for hedging as well as boosting utterances. These linguistic features have all been found to be interesting in the context of gender variation in language, or overlap conceptually with such features (cf. e.g. Barbieri 2007; von Hippel et al. 2011; Nasri et al. 2018). Hence, the area of gender variation in evidentiality appeared to have unexplored potential.

Precht (2008) finds statistically significant gender variation for some types of evidentiality, but does not discuss that particular finding in detail since it is not the main focus of her study. Considering the apparently wide range of functions of evidential markers, the implications of gender variation in evidentiality appeared a promising topic to explore on a dissertation scale, because of what it might reveal about gendered speech, but even more because it would benefit from an in-depth discussion of the uses and functions of evidentiality in English.

In order to test empirically the suggested pattern of gender variation in evidentiality use (Precht 2008; Alonso-Almeida and González-Cruz 2012), I started by carrying out quantitative studies of this variation, focusing on developing a rigorous definition of evidentiality, and compiling an as-large-as-possible data set (given time constraints and the complexity of identifying instances of evidential marking). Having found a statistically significant difference between female and male speakers in how often they mark inferential evidentiality (Article 1), I conducted the study presented in Article 2, which tests the interaction of gender and age against the dependent variable of frequency of evidentiality markers (all categories). While the results of Article 2 show no effect of speaker age on evidentiality use, they confirm a statistically significant difference between female and male speakers in how frequently they use sensory and hearsay evidentiality markers in addition to the difference in inferential evidentiality marking shown in Article 1.

The questions that still needed to be answered in order to explain these patterns of sociolinguistic variation regarding evidentials were *What are the effects of and possible motivations for opting to mark evidentiality?* and *What are the effects of and possible motivations for opting not to mark evidentiality?*, and I could not find satisfactory answers in previous studies. As I discuss in Article 3, studies have been conducted in order to target the functions of evidentiality in interaction, but they tend to focus on authority and negotiation. Considering the wide range of linguistic forms that can take evidential meaning and some observations I made during work on Articles 1 and 2, it appeared likely that English evidentiality marking is more pragmatically versatile than indicated by the then-existing literature. One or even two studies cannot provide a conclusive and universally applicable answer to the question of what constitute the effects of and possible motivations for marking evidentiality in English; but they can provide evidence for part of the answer. Hence, the qualitative studies of Articles 3 and 4 were carried out to find out more about how evidential markers are used and reacted to in face-to-face interactions, in order

to enhance prospects of being able to discuss evidential markers as strategies in performing gender.

4. Material

The purpose of the present section is to introduce the corpora that are the sources of the data used for the four articles of this thesis and explain why they were selected (4.1), and to summarize the procedures for sampling and selecting data as well as explain the reasoning behind these procedures (4.2).

4.1 The corpora

As noted in Section 3.2, my initial interest in investigating evidentiality was to understand its potential to be used for various types of positioning. For this reason, I decided at an early stage to use spoken-language data; spoken dialogue makes it possible to analyze the targeted features in the direct context of what they are a response to as well as how they are responded to, in terms of both linguistic and extra-linguistic events. Since evidential markers occur relatively infrequently (0.43 times per 1,000 words in the data of Article 2), the material I was to use needed to be large enough to apply reliable statistical tests to findings; and I wanted as much meta-information as possible. Minimally, it had to be possible to control for gender, but it was also desirable to be able to control for variables such as speaker age, type of setting, and the native language of the speakers. Of course, there was the possibility of collecting my own material, which would have given me a high level of control of my data. Collecting and transcribing spoken material is, however, an enormously time-consuming task, and so it was decided to use existing corpora. After a thorough survey of various spoken-language corpora, I decided to use the British National Corpus (BNC) as my main data source³ because of its size and the often generously supplied speaker meta-information. The spoken component of the BNC⁴ comprises 10,409,851 words, and is divided into two parts: the context-governed portion of 6,175,896 words, and the demographically sampled portion of 4,233,955 words. For most texts of the spoken component, the corresponding audio file is publicly available.

For Articles 1 and 4, the context-governed portion (CGP) was used (see subsection 4.2 and the relevant articles for motivation for sampling choices).

³ This was early 2014; BNC2014 had not yet been released.

⁴ All information about the composition of the BNC comes from Burnard (2007).

This portion of the BNC was composed with the goal of having an even distribution of the spoken contexts *Educational/informative* (e.g. lectures, news commentaries, classroom interaction), *Business* (e.g. sales demonstrations, business meetings, consultations), *Public/institutional* (e.g. sermons, council meetings, legal proceedings), and *Leisure* (e.g. sports commentaries, broadcast chat shows, club meetings). Further, the texts of the CGP are tagged for interaction type (dialogue or monologue), region where the speech was recorded, and for the different genres comprising the context categories. Using the BNC Corpus Query Processor (CQP) online concordancing tool,⁵ subcorpora based on the CGP can be created targeting features of the individual speakers that are identified in the transcripts. For example, a researcher can create a subcorpus including all speakers of a specific age range, social class, or regional dialect, and then apply search terms only to those speakers. For most context-governed texts, the file information indicates simply that the text was collected sometime between 1985 and 1994. However, the detailed manner in which the material was analyzed for Article 4 of this thesis reveals that at least many of the texts that are genre-tagged as *meeting* were recorded in the later part of that time span. During formal meetings, participants tend to mention the date of the meeting, or of the last meeting, at some point; when that happened in the text files analyzed for Article 4, the date referred to was consistently some date during the early 1990s.

For Articles 2 and 3, the demographically sampled portion (DSP) was used. This part of the BNC was created by recruiting 124 respondents, comprising equal numbers of women and men, equal numbers of different age groups, and equal numbers of four different socioeconomically defined groups. Each respondent received recording equipment and instructions to record as many of their conversations as possible during a few days; they were also given a notebook to record information about the conversations. Consequently, the DSP of the BNC consists almost exclusively of spontaneously occurring conversations in private settings. In addition to information about gender, age, occupation, social class, native language, and regional dialect, this part of BNC provides information about the relationship most speakers have to the respondent (the person carrying the tape recorder), such as *friend*, *colleague*, *grandmother*, or *father-in-law*. With the CQP interface it is, however, not possible to create subcorpora based on the DSP targeting specific speaker features. Searches for speaker features in this section of the BNC will yield respondents (the volunteers carrying recorders), but none of the other speakers included in their conversations. In order to create a subcorpus consisting of, for example, all adult female speakers of the DSP, their speaker IDs have to be manually found and added to a subcorpus, one by one (which is what I did when collecting data for Articles 2 and 3). In the texts of the demographically sampled section, the time of the recording is noted in the title slot rather than the date

⁵ Referred to as “BNCweb interface” in Articles 1 and 2.

slot of the file information. In all of the texts from this portion that were manually scanned in preparation for Article 3 (which are most of them), the time of recording was sometime between 1990 and 1994.

For Article 2, the Diachronic Corpus of Present-day Spoken English (DCPSE)⁶ was used in addition to the BNC in order to check the diachronic stability of evidential marking. As noted in that article, the DCPSE consists of 800,000 words, half of which comes from the London-Lund Corpus (LLC; mainly recorded in the 1960s–1970s), the other half coming from the spoken portion of the International Corpus of English: Great Britain (ICE-GB; mainly recorded in the early 1990s). Only LLC data was used, since I already had enough 1990s data from the BNC; the advantage of accessing the LLC in the form of DCPSE was being able to use the ICECUP concordancing program, which was customized for ICE-GB and DCPSE. This program enabled the creation of subcorpora based on speaker and interaction characteristics that made them comparable to my customized BNC-based subcorpora.

4.2 Sampling procedures

In each of the articles in this thesis, the practicalities of the data sampling procedures are thoroughly described. The aim of this section is to complement those descriptions by discussing why the data were sampled the way they were for the four articles. The decisions made with regard to data sampling for each article also illustrate some aspects of the learning curve of working on the present thesis.

For Article 1, I used a data sample consisting of 100 female speakers and 100 male speakers. At this point, I thought speaker age might influence evidentiality use, and possibly also the degree or nature of gender variation in evidentiality use, so 20 speakers from each of the age groups 15–24, 25–34, 35–44, 45–59, and 60+ (pre-defined in the BNC) were included in both gender subcorpora. As I assumed that simply including all the genre domains of the CGP (cf. 4.1) would give the study a satisfactory spread of interaction settings, I did not specifically control for genres or settings.

While I was exploring different ways of sampling the BNC during preparations for Article 2, it became clear that my decision not to control the representation of different interaction settings or genres in the gender subcorpora may have skewed the results of Article 1 somewhat. As shown in Table 5 of Article 1, the cognitive verbs *think*, *suppose*, and *imagine* are all used more frequently as evidentials by female than male speakers, whereas the cognitive verb *believe* is used more often as an evidential by male speakers. Now, my analyses of the Article 1 data did not reveal any obvious differences between the ways the evidentials *think* and *believe* are used that would explain such a

⁶ All information about the composition of the DCPSE comes from Nelson et al. (2006).

pattern. It seems, however, that *believe* is more frequent in formal registers than less formal ones; in the *meeting* genre of the CGP (a major portion of which consists of council meetings and the like), *I believe* occurs 186.17 times per million words. In the entire DSP (which consists mainly of spontaneous conversation), *I believe* occurs 20.55 times per million words. Further, despite the fact that the BNC compilers made efforts to make the CGP contain equal numbers of women and men, male speakers are strongly overrepresented in the *meeting* category (cf. Section 2.1 of Article 4). Consequently, it is likely that men were found to use evidential *believe* more often in Article 1 because it is a verb that tends to be used in formal contexts, and at the time the BNC was compiled, male speakers were more likely than female speakers to be recorded in such settings. Thus, in order to avoid the skewing of results because of bias in the data composition, I decided to use the DSP for Article 2, since the DSP is more homogeneous in terms of setting.

As the investigation of Article 2 did not provide evidence that age has a significant impact on evidentiality marking, I did not make an effort to have equal numbers of speakers from various age spans in the data sample of Article 3. Just as in the case of Article 2, however, for Article 3 I tried to avoid data composition bias. I attempted to avoid such a bias not only by using the DSP, but also by taking precautions to keep my sample free from too blatant disparity in terms of power or social status. These precautions consisted of excluding conversations with interlocutors under the age of 18, as well as conversations where the meta-information said that speakers had some sort of professional or business-related relationship.

For Article 4, part of the study aimed to identify the conversation styles of individual speakers as being more or less feminine or masculine. In order to reliably make such a distinction, I wanted to glean as much production from each informant as possible. Thus, unlike the approach used in Article 3, I opted to use full text files for the analysis of Article 4. Using full text files was part of the motivation for using the *meeting* category from the CGP rather than the DSP for Article 4, as the text files of the DSP tend to consist of several separate interactions of varying lengths and varying numbers of interlocutors. Each text file of the *meeting* category, on the other hand, consists of a single interaction, which also means that the *meeting* interactions are more homogeneous in terms of length than the DSP interactions (where some only consist of a handful of turns, and others of thousands of words).

5. Methods

The purpose of the present section is similar to that of Section 4: to complement the accounts already provided in the articles by explaining, problematizing, and discussing the choices made in my research. I will summarize and elaborate on the criteria used while coding for evidentiality in the material of the articles (5.1), and account for the reasoning behind my choices of statistical methods (5.2). I will summarize the method for identifying gendered styles that was developed for Article 4, and discuss the results of an intercoder test that was performed (5.3); finally, I will discuss and explain some decisions regarding the qualitative studies and methodology (5.4).

5.1 Coding: Evidentiality versus opinion

No matter how much time is spent studying and formulating definitions (cf. Section 2), theoretical criteria are one thing, and applying them to reality is another. Whether or not an utterance contains evidential marking cannot be determined purely based on the form of the marker, but has to be assessed based on various factors relating to the pragmatics, semantics, syntax, and/or morphology (see Section 4.2 of Article 2 for some examples of such factors) of individual cases. As I wanted the scope of the present thesis to be as comprehensive as possible with respect to the category of evidentiality (as opposed to only investigating one evidentiality category or a few verb or adverb evidentials), a rigorous set of criteria was required to keep coding consistent. For Article 2, which features a quantitative study of 17 evidential markers in an 855,000-word data sample, I developed and formulated criteria which were used to guide decision-making during work on Articles 3 and 4 as well. The reader is thus referred to Article 2, Section 4, for a thorough description of coding criteria. In the present subsection, one aspect will be discussed that continuously presented me with challenges throughout work on the present thesis.

An aspect of evidentiality criteria that is discussed in Section 2.3 of Article 1 as well as in Article 2, since it is particularly relevant when dealing with inferential evidentiality, is contrasting evidential marking and opinion. Carretero and Zamorano-Mansilla (2013b:324), discussing this topic, define opinion as a non-verifiable statement, meaning that for a qualification to count as an evidential one, the state of affairs referred to in the relevant proposition has

to be one that can be verified as being either true or false. In Section 4.2.1 of Article 2, I note that expressions of opinion tend to contain evaluative or emotive adjectives (Biber 1999:509); Examples (15) and (16) illustrate *think* used as an evidential, and as part of expressing an opinion.

15. And [pause] I think it's longer coming back that way. (KCL 70)
16. You've heard my explanation of the fact that it was poorly worded and I think that is a great shame. (HDU 190)

Example (15) is part of an argument the speaker is making about regarding the fastest route between two towns. The proposition – that it is longer by one route than the other – is falsifiable, meaning that *think* can be interpreted as adding an evidential qualification. In Example (16), on the other hand, it is not possible to verify the proposition – that something is a great shame – as objectively true, meaning that *think* cannot be interpreted as adding an evidential qualification.

Again, theory is one thing and practice is another, however, and the case of opinion versus evidentiality is an example of why function rather than form must be in focus while coding for evidentiality. In Example (17), the proposition includes evaluative adjectives – but *think* still counts as an evidential.

17. But I think we're making life worse for ourselves, unnecessarily unpleasant for ourselves. This morning I had to connect up a video for Caroline to use and all the leads, every single lead we've got, to connect any machine to any machine, were all bundled in like a load missing, and it took me what, five minutes to find the right leads and connect the machines up. If we would just organise those leads once and for all, and essentially, erm the leads belong to the video recorders rather than the monitors, and if those somehow were attached, if we could at least tie them together or whatever (KRY 110–112)

In the first sentence of Example (17), the speaker uses *think* to modify the statement that s/he and one or several others are making their own lives “worse” and “unnecessarily unpleasant”, which looks subjective at first glance. However, in the lines directly following, the speaker goes on to describe how s/he had to go through a considerable amount of trouble to connect a video recorder, and how that procedure could be less difficult if the cables were organized differently. In effect, the proposition that “we” are making life unnecessarily unpleasant, meaning that it is within “our” power to improve the situation, is a verifiable fact rather than an opinion. The key here, I would argue, is the combination of the context of discussing a solution and the phrasing (*we're making* and *unnecessarily*), which emphasizes the reference to a

(verifiable) potential for action rather than simply an evaluation of a situation, as in Example (16).

At the root of this problem is that inferential evidential expressions often have an element of subjectivity; it is part of their nature, since many of them are based partly on the speaker's own sense of logic. As Carretero and Zamorano-Mansilla (2013b:325) discuss, there are cases where a proposition looks very much like an opinion, such as stating that someone is the best of all film actors. On the other hand, since best-actor awards exist, perhaps such a statement should be regarded as verifiable? Since the existence of evidence is arguably the most essential element (and a presumption) of evidentiality, the relevance of evidence in the context of the utterance was held as a guiding principle. Evidence was interpreted as being relevant if the speaker explicates the evidential basis for the inference in the immediate contexts of an ambiguous utterance such as the one in Example (17), and the token was then coded as evidential. Even with this criterion, the distinction between opinion and inferential evidentiality remains, arguably, the greatest challenge of coding for evidentiality.

5.2 Statistical analyses

Since the purpose of Articles 1 and 2 was to find evidence for or against quantitative gender variation in evidentiality use, it was deemed appropriate to test my results statistically. For Article 1, which only tests the difference between women and men in how often they use inferential evidentials, a Pearson's goodness-of-fit chi-square test was carried out using the programming language R. For Article 2, however, the effects that I wanted to test were more complex. Not only did I want to test gender variation, but also whether there was variation between different age groups, and whether age and gender interacted. I consulted a statistician to make sure I would select the most appropriate test. She recommended a two-way Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA), helped me carry out the calculations, and also assisted me in interpreting the results.⁷

5.3 Coding reliability: Evidentiality and style

Article 4 aims to investigate whether evidentiality use varies across gendered styles. To that end, two approaches were combined: a qualitative analysis of evidentiality functions (see 5.4), and a more strictly structured coding procedure to identify whether a speaker was using a predominantly feminine or masculine style. Studies that analyze feminine or masculine communication

⁷ I am very grateful to Dr. Inger Persson (Uppsala University) for her insightful assistance.

styles tend to use more intuitive, qualitative methods to identify which style characterizes someone's language (e.g. Holmes 2005; Ladegaard 2011). I wanted to create a more systematic method for identifying styles that would allow me to rank and categorize a large number of language extracts according to style. As Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (2013:250) note, "[s]tyles are structured combinations of resources", meaning that a style is not recognized based on individual attributes or strategies, but based on the composition of combinations of attributes and strategies. Thus, to be able to identify styles systematically, I would have to define indicators of several features. Table 1 of Article 4 shows the combination of features found to constitute gendered styles, as presented by Holmes and Stubbe (2003). Using the departure point that styles consist of combinations of features, I thus could not search only for conciliatory or confrontational language, for example, but would have to find ways of identifying several of the features named in either column of Table 1 (Article 4). For a thorough description of how this was done, I refer the reader to Section 2.2 of Article 4.

Much time and effort were spent on creating definitions and criteria that were rigorous enough to allow replicability, including scrutinizing the entire data set of Article 4 at least twice (parts of it, more than twice) to make sure that coding was consistent. Still, some of the indicators defined and discussed in Section 2.2 of Article 4 stand the risk of subjective interpretations. In order to test to what extent that risk is problematic, an intercoder test was carried out on parts of the data. Révész (2012:204) emphasizes the importance of a reliable coding protocol, which should generate identical results no matter which researcher follows it during coding. Révész further states that a coding protocol should be as clear and require as little judgment as possible. Hence, the coding protocol I had used myself was formalized and adapted for the purpose of this intercoder test. The coding protocol provides essentially the same information as the description of evidentiality criteria formulated in Article 2 and the stylistic indicator criteria formulated in Article 4, but with additional clarifications regarding delimitations as well as a number of examples from the material.

An intercoder was recruited using a Facebook group geared toward people advertising and looking for language-related jobs. The intercoder had previous work experience in linguistics research and an M.A. degree in linguistics. She was also multilingual, reporting English, Swedish, and Bulgarian as her native languages. A week after the intercoder had received the coding protocol along with a small data sample to do a test run, we had a meeting over Skype to discuss her experience of coding my material. I also instructed her to email me with any additional questions over the course of her work, which she did on a couple of occasions.

The intercoder analyzed a material sample of 10 speakers and 34,724 words – 17% of the total material of 201,764 words. The results, which show discrepancy between my findings and those of the intercoder, appear somewhat

discouraging; the remainder of the present subsection is devoted to analyzing these results and discussing the possible reasons for the discrepancy. Table 1 shows raw frequencies of all categories coded for in the intercoder subset of the material of Article 4: the intercoder's and mine.

Table 1. Frequencies found by intercoder versus author

Target item	Intercoder	Author
Hearsay evidentiality	7	22
Inferential evidentiality	91	128
Sensory evidentiality	0	2
Justifier	10	21
Question	228	188
Extended feedback	25	135
Positive feedback	12	32
2 nd person pronoun	685	539
People reference	14	100
Affect reference	20	30
Intensive adverb	56	74
Directive	7	11
Challenge	29	41
Interruption	214	78
Confrontation	0	3

The most obvious message gleaned from Table 1 is that there is a substantial difference between my findings and those of the intercoder. The intercoder reported higher frequencies for *question*, *2nd person*, and *interruption*, but otherwise my frequencies are higher. The question is: What appear to be the reasons for the differences? I will now briefly describe the nature of the discrepancies, discussing what might have caused them based on how my criteria were formulated and how they appear to have been implemented.

Overall, the intercoder reported lower frequencies for the evidentials. A comparison of the categories of *hearsay* and *inferential* (*sensory* is so rare I will not discuss it here) in the data analyzed by me as well as the intercoder suggests that I underestimated how complex and difficult to grasp (much less code for) evidentiality is. Examples (18) and (19) were provided in the instructions given to the intercoder.

18. But he's in hospital, I believe, at the moment. (J9D 709)
19. Now hopefully, Dick said they're palletizing while they're waiting for the containers they're also palletizing the rest of that stuff. (JTB 985)

In the coding protocol, I explained the concept of evidentiality markers, described the different categories of evidentiality, and analyzed the examples

given here as (18) and (19), stating that they are inferential and hearsay evidentiality, respectively. I gave several additional examples of what a marker may be. In the data, the intercoder and I both located several classic examples of *seem* and *think* used as evidentials, but I appear to have been less successful in explaining hearsay. The intercoder categorized Example (20) as containing hearsay evidentiality, which it does not, in my conceptualization. It is likely that the speaker of Example (20) knows what Joan is thinking because Joan told her/him so, but it is not stated, *marked*. The intercoder also opted not to code several examples of [^{3rd} *person*] *said* constructions as hearsay evidentiality, though they are very similar to Example (18). Further, Example (21) and others like it were coded as inferential evidentiality by me but not by the intercoder, though *think* was explicitly given as an example of an inferential evidentiality marker in the coding protocol.

20. Joan is thinking, that she might take over from me. (KLS 173)
21. I think that was probably just one er one car load where there was a reporter in, which is unclear at the moment. (JA9 31)
22. PS6SY: I was walking that way with Ernest [...] and he said he thought the bottom hedge belonged to <gap desc="name" reason="anonymization"> anyway.
 PS6SW: Well I don't think that's right
 [...]
 PS6SY: That's okay then. I just thought I'd mention it because I didn't <-|-> want anybody <-|-> (KM8 510–515)
23. PS2BB: Your home can be <-|-> your idol. Everything can <unclear> <-|->
 PS2B5: <-|-> Oh very much so. <-|-> Yeah. Yeah. (G5K 501–505)
24. PS4GR: All of them have come out of the time over the nineteen ninety three have all been employed by the company.
 PS4GM: Ah that's terrific.
 PS4GR: Erm so yes I think we're we can we can <unclear> say we've been leading from the front.
 PS4GM: Yeah good. (JP0 993–996)
25. PS3S6: That's a shame you know, because that's the ideal isn't it, remember those wee titchy <-|-> things at four <-|->
 PS3S4: <-|-> That's right <-|->
 PS3S6: all my staff were crying which didn't help <laugh> had to keep dragging them off to the toilet, they'd never seen blind

children you see they'd all seen adults it's fine to be blind to be an adult, but these wee titchy things and there's a little boy saying, you know I was really looking forward to this, this is really exciting, totally blind ooh (J8B 1428–1432)

26. PS2B5: Well it's only it's only a er er It's only the the the the journey from the mind to the heart.
PS2BB: Yeah but it's the growing isn't it?
PS2B5: Well no, it's an instantaneous journey <unclear> for many. (G5K 1746–1748)

For *justifier*, which is illustrated in the underlined utterance of Example (22), it appears that the intercoder mainly coded utterances positively for this when they contained an explicit apology. This coding decision was made despite the fact that the definition of justifier in the coding protocol reads “Providing an explanation, justification, or excuse for a previously made statement”, and the accompanying example did not contain an explicit apology. For *question*, I failed to specify in the coding protocol that this feature should only include questions intended to request more information, i.e. not rhetorical questions and the like. Consequently, the intercoder included everything that was followed by a question mark, except tag questions (because I wrote that they were not to be counted). For *feedback* (extended and positive, which are shown in Examples (23) and (24), respectively), the definition and explanation in the coding protocol were most likely not enough to give the intercoder a firm enough understanding to spot everything, and/or feel confident enough to code what she spotted. *People reference* (Example (25)), *directive*, and *challenge* (Example (26)) probably have a problem similar to that of feedback; for the latter categories, I cannot detect a clear pattern as to which examples were coded and which were overlooked. The problem of 2nd *person* appears to be mainly that I did not include false starts and repetitions (within the same utterance) when I coded, which the intercoder did. For *interruption*, it seems that the intercoder included cooperative overlaps, though the coding protocol mentioned that they should be excluded.

Overall, I choose to view this attempt at an intercoder test as a lesson in which mistakes to avoid. First, many of the features coded for in Article 4 require definitions and explanations beyond one line in a protocol. The coding protocol does detail delimitations and explanations, but based on the test results shown in Table 1, I must conclude that they were not sufficiently clear. Second, Mouter and Noordegraaf (2012), on intercoder reliability in qualitative research, note the importance of not only having a coding protocol, but also training the coders to use it. Considering the function-based nature of many of the features in Table 1, it is likely that it would have been more appropriate to approach this intercoder test as though the coding and categoriza-

tion were qualitative rather than quantitative. It is also possible that the intercoder's linguistic background (which differs from mine; I am a native speaker of Swedish and a second-language user of English) contributed to our differing interpretations; additional hands-on training might have shed light on this aspect as well. In other words, more time should have been spent meeting with the intercoder, coding together and discussing the results in order to ascertain that I had succeeded in explaining what I needed to communicate.

If one regards the contents of Table 1 alone, its implications for the validity of my results could easily be interpreted as a source of concern. However, considering that the intercoder misinterpreted fairly straight-forward definitions in some cases, and appears to have applied them rather inconsistently in other cases, it is likely that it is the execution of the experiment rather than my definitions that accounts for the discrepancies in the analyses. In retrospect, I am inclined to think that my misjudgment of the need for proper preparations required by an intercoder test is what caused the lack of agreement between my frequencies and those reported by the intercoder.

5.4 Qualitative analyses

As I note in subsection 3.1, I see no contradiction in recognizing the sociocultural relevance of binary gender categories as well as the fluid nature of gendered performances. Articles 1 and 2, with their primarily quantitative foci, are dedicated to investigating variations between the binary gender categories. Articles 3 and 4, then, are dedicated to exploring connections between the variation between gender categories and the performance of gender. When investigating something as complex and context dependent as linguistic performance and pragmatic functions, a quantitative investigation is likely to fail to observe some important details. For that reason, it was decided to investigate evidentiality qualitatively in the research presented in the last two articles. In the present subsection, I will elaborate on how the qualitative studies reported on in Articles 3 and 4 were carried out, and highlight some of the details that I did not have the space to discuss in the articles themselves.

For Article 3, my goal was to describe to what extent and through which mechanisms evidentials may be used to carry out functions oriented toward some kind of negotiation or maintenance of the relationship with other interlocutors, partly departing from themes and concepts found relevant in previous studies of evidentiality in interaction. In order to do that, I highlighted all instances of evidentiality in the material, found through close reading. I noted down in what ways epistemic status was made relevant in the immediate context of the evidential: was it clear who had epistemic primacy? How was that manifested or expressed? Was there negotiation or disagreement in any way, and by what means was it carried out? Were someone's face wants at issue in any way? Were they threatened, restored, defended, maintained, and if so,

how? What were the effects of these strategies relating to epistemic status, negotiation, and face wants on the conversation “atmosphere” – were the interlocutors relating to one another in a cooperative manner for example, or more competitively? What was the exact role of the evidential marker in these strategies and effects? Answers to these and related questions were noted down in the form of coherent analyses as well as in the form of key words. By studying my notes, I was able to detect patterns in how strategies relating to authority, negotiation, and cooperation seemed to interact, to which extent they appeared to be relationally or informationally motivated, and what roles evidentials appeared to take in these strategies.

For Article 4, the goal of the qualitative analysis was to find out what functions were carried out by the evidentials in the material, and if there appeared to be a pattern in which functions occur with which style. My approach here was somewhat more open-ended than for Article 3, since I did not focus on specific themes or types of functions. Article 4 was, however, written shortly after Article 3, and my expectations of which kind of functions I would find will have been influenced by Article 3. I carefully studied each instance of evidentiality produced by the nine speakers selected for this analysis, writing down descriptions of what was going on. Primarily, I focused on what effect the addition of an evidential had on the relevant exchange; in what way would it have been different if the evidential had not been there? Is it likely that the responses or reactions of the addressees would have been different if the evidential had not been there? Studying the context of the evidential, what the speaker was trying to do while using it (explain, convince, apologize, etc.), I wanted to pin-point the effect and possible purpose of the evidential in each individual case. This effort resulted in the list of functions presented in Table 4 of Article 4.

The present subsection concludes the portion of this text that discusses and explains the topics, concepts, and decisions relevant to my thesis. In the subsequent sections, the articles are summarized (6), and the findings, contributions, and limitations of the present thesis are outlined (7).

6. Summaries of the articles

In the following subsections, I summarize the four articles of this thesis. Their main common denominator is their focus on evidentiality, and through their different scopes and foci they contribute in their own ways to the goals of investigating whether there is gender variation in evidentiality marking, and approaching an explanation to any patterns found.

6.1 Article 1. Gender differences and similarities in the use of inferential evidentiality in spoken British English: A corpus-based study (Berglind Söderqvist 2017a)

Article 1 investigates variation between female and male speakers in how frequently they use markers of inferential evidentiality, looking both at inferential evidentiality markers as a group, and at variation in the use of individual markers. Inferential evidentiality is defined in the article as “linguistic expressions that convey that the speaker acquired the information in the proposition by using her or his mental capacities to make an interpretation of the state of things based on experience or visible traces or evidence” (Article 1, typescript p 13 / Berglind Söderqvist 2017a:382), primarily inspired by Plungian (2001). The material consists of 100 female speakers and 100 male speakers, producing 337,911 words in total, from the context-governed spoken portion of the British National Corpus (BNC).

Based on studies and discussions in previous literature, a list was compiled containing 16 lexical items (verbs and adverbs) that were searched for in order to target markers of inferential evidentiality. Subsequently, the hits of the corpus searches were coded to separate evidentials from non-evidentials. Based on a Pearson’s goodness-of-fit chi-square test, the null hypothesis (that there is no difference between the female and male speakers in how often they mark inferential evidentiality) could be rejected. Further, the standardized residuals were obtained in order to see which individual markers contributed the most to the detected variation. Out of the 16 markers, 10 had significant variation ($p < 0.05$) between the genders, and for 7 out of those 10 the variation was highly significant ($p < 0.01$).

A qualitative analysis was conducted on the 10 markers that were shown to vary significantly between the genders. It was found that women prefer markers that typically indicate a subjective assessment, or evidence that is accessible only to the speaker (such as *think, suppose, imagine*), whereas men appeared to prefer markers that typically indicate an intersubjective assessment, or evidence that is accessible to more interlocutors than just the speaker (such as *seem, appear, obviously, clearly*). Based on previous research on the markers and strategies that differ across speaker genders in my material, it is suggested that the differences might have to do with variation in how confidence and politeness are manifested.

6.2 Article 2. Evidentiality across age and gender: A corpus-based study of variation in spoken British English (Berglind Söderqvist 2017b)

Article 2 investigates the effects of speaker age and speaker gender, as well as interactional effects of both independent variables, on the marking of evidentiality categories sensory, hearsay, and inferential. It also includes a small diachronic sub-study to check if, and if so in what ways, the patterns found in the main 1990s material differ from those found in the sub-study 1960s–1970s material. The purpose of the diachronic sub-study is to check the diachronic stability of sociolinguistic variation in evidentiality use, in order to add substance to the interpretation of any findings suggesting that speaker age has an effect on evidential marking.

The material for the main study comes from the demographically sampled portion of the British National Corpus (BNC) and consists of 47 female speakers and 42 male speakers, roughly equally distributed across the three age groups 20–29, 40–49, and 70–89, and producing 855,162 words in total. The material for the diachronic sub-study comes from the London-Lund Corpus (LLC) portion of the Diachronic Corpus of Present-day Spoken English (DCPSE) and consists of 18 female speakers and 18 male speakers, equally distributed across the age groups 20–29 and 48–65,⁸ and producing 64,147 words in total. A combined top-down and bottom-up approach was used to compile a list of potential evidential markers to search for in the material. Lexical items commonly mentioned in the literature as being potential markers of evidentiality were included. As a complement, a randomly selected subset of the material was manually scanned for evidentiality markers not mentioned in the literature consulted. Excluding all types that were found to occur

⁸ Due to differences in the organization of the corpora, the DCPSE age groups could not be entirely harmonized with the BNC age groups.

less than 100 times per million words in the BNC data resulted in a list of 17 lexical items,⁹ out of which two were found during the manual scan.

Inspired by Cappelli (2007) in the case of cognitive verbs, and by means of a thorough analysis of the coding process, I developed a systematized set of categories and criteria for coding the results of the corpus searches for evidentiality. The resulting frequencies of evidentials from the BNC material were tested for speaker gender effect, speaker age effect, and interaction effect of the two independent variables using a two-way MANOVA. Unfortunately, the DCPSE/LLC material was too small to allow the application of a MANOVA.

The results show statistically significant variation between female and male speakers ($p = 0.0022$), but no significant effect for speaker age or the interaction between gender and age. Interestingly, it is also found that the gender variation is statistically significant for sensory and hearsay evidentials, but not for inferential evidentials. Since significant gender variation is found with inferential evidentials in Article 1, which uses spoken data from public/professional settings, but not in Article 2, which uses spoken data from private settings, there is an implication that the setting or register might influence which evidentials are preferred. While the age or interaction effects are not statistically significant, the normalized frequencies suggest that gender variation is less pronounced among the speakers aged 40–49 than among the speakers aged 20–29; this tentative pattern is echoed in the DCPSE/LLC data, suggesting relative diachronic stability in that respect. Based on the finding that inferential evidentiality is not only the largest category in terms of frequency, but also stands out with respect to distribution, it is suggested that further research make a fine-grained analysis of the functional potentials of evidentiality in general and inferential evidentiality in particular.

6.3 Article 3. Informational and relational functions of evidentiality in interaction (Berglind Söderqvist, forthcoming a)

In Article 3, a qualitative approach is taken to explore the functions of evidential markers in interaction. Specifically, the potential of evidentials to be used in relational strategies is explored, as well as in which ways any such relational functions relate to what evidentiality conveys regarding the speaker's relationship to the information of a proposition. In contrast to such informational functions, relational functions are defined as functions relating to the relationship between the speaker and the addressee(s). Further, based on previous findings regarding evidentiality in interaction, three themes are identified that tend to

⁹ In Article 2 it is stated that the list consists of 18 items, but this is an error, as can be seen in Table A1 in the appendix of Article 2.

be prevalent in such analyses: *authority*, *negotiation*, and *cooperation*. In addition to relational functions, the manifestation and intersection of these three themes in connection with evidential marking are investigated.

The material for Article 3 comes from the demographically sampled portion of the British National Corpus (BNC) and consists of extracts of an average length of 1,150 words from 29 different conversations, roughly balanced with respect to speaker gender and composition (female-only, male-only, and mixed-gender). All instances of evidential marking in the material were highlighted and analyzed in their contexts, focusing on manifestations of authority, negotiation, and cooperation and how the evidentials were utilized for informational and relational functions.

The findings show that evidential markers not only co-occur with relational strategies, but that the evidentials themselves are often instrumental in such strategies. Fox (2001) argues that overt evidential marking signals a weaker claim to authority compared to a corresponding utterance without evidential marking. Based on the findings of Article 3, I am able to elaborate on that argument by proposing that evidentials enable speakers to express and negotiate authority in a cooperative manner. The analysis of Article 3 shows that by adding elements of transparency and/or subjectivity to an utterance, evidential markers signal consideration for the addressee's needs and for how a proposition is received.

6.4 Article 4. Evidentiality in gendered styles in spoken English (Berglind Söderqvist, forthcoming b)

In Article 4, I aim to answer the question of whether evidentials are used differently depending on whether the language is characterized by a primarily feminine or masculine style. Since the findings of Article 3 add substance to the notion that evidentials are useful in strategies used for relational work, which tends to be associated with a stereotypically feminine communication style, it is theorized that the potential of evidentials to be instrumental in performing gendered styles might partly explain why quantitative variation has been found between women and men. Article 4 explores this notion by investigating the marking of evidentiality across differently gendered styles.

The material used in Article 4 comes from the *meeting* category of the context-governed portion of the British National Corpus (BNC) and is produced by 72 informants, distributed across 48 text files. These 48 text files comprise 578,198 words, but the speakers used as informants produce 201,764 words. The informants comprise equal numbers of women and men, but in order to avoid bias on my part they were all anonymized prior to analysis. Based on features defined by Holmes and Stubbe (2003:574), three stylistic dimensions were selected, and previous literature on stylistic and gender-based variation

was consulted to identify searchable features that would function as indicators of the stylistic dimensions.

The 48 text files were categorized into three different meeting types according to formality level in order to control for the potential influence of formality level on the expression of style. Indicators of the stylistic dimensions *conciliatory/confrontational*, *collaborative/autonomous*, and *affectively/referentially oriented*, where the former feature indexes femininity and the latter indexes masculinity in each of the pairs, were coded for in the material, along with instances of evidentiality. Based on normalized frequencies of the indicators of stylistic dimensions, the informants of each of the three meeting type categories were ranked from the most feminine to the most masculine. Three informants – the most feminine, the most masculine, and one from the approximate middle – were then selected from each of the three meeting type categories. In the speech produced by these nine informants, all instances of evidentiality were analyzed in their context and categorized as having one of seven functions.

Most of the functions are used by speakers representing all three style types (feminine, masculine, and intermediate), meaning that evidentiality usage appears to be somewhat stable across gendered styles. It is also, however, found that only the three informants representing a feminine style use evidential markers in a way that invites additional assessments regarding a state of affairs by adding a sense of subjectivity. Two functions are found to be used mainly by representatives of a masculine style: using evidential marking to distance the speaker from the responsibility for a potentially face-threatening proposition, and using evidential marking (particularly *obviously*) to make the speaker part of making the assessment rather than the recipient of an assessment as a way of maintaining the addressee's face. Interestingly, these findings echo the findings in Article 1 that suggest women are more likely to use inferential evidentials with non-shared information, whereas men are more likely to use inferential evidentials with shared information.

7. Findings and conclusions

The present section provides an overview of the most important findings of the present thesis (7.1) and some limitations and challenges (7.2), and, finally, proposes what implications the combined findings of all four articles have in a conclusive comment (7.3).

7.1 Main findings and contributions

One of the overarching aims of this thesis was to provide evidence for or against the existence of gender differences in evidentiality use in spoken English. This was achieved: the findings of Articles 1 and 2 show that there is statistically significant variation between women and men in terms of how frequently they mark evidentiality. The second aim – to approach an explanation of why this gender variation exists – will require some discussion.

In order to arrive at a potential explanation for gender variation in evidentiality marking, we will need to review the finer details of what has been found about evidentiality functions and variation in this thesis. First, some of my findings suggest that the gender variation in evidentiality marking varies across types of evidentiality. For example, in Article 1 it is found that women appear to prefer markers that are often used for subjective assessments or non-shared evidence, whereas men appear to prefer markers that are often used for intersubjective assessments or shared evidence. This pattern is echoed in the finding in Article 4 that speakers whose style is characterized by feminine features are the ones found to use a function that consists of making a subjective evidential assessment seemingly as a cooperative strategy to invite additional assessments from other interlocutors. In contrast, a function where an intersubjective evidential assessment is made to the effect of turning the addressee into a co-agent rather than recipient of a potentially face-threatening assessment appears to be typically found in production characterized by masculine features. Both findings are at least partly based on qualitative analyses, which means generalizations should be made with caution; however, the fact that similar patterns are found in two studies enhances the chance that it is generalizable. In a large-scale corpus study, Newman et al. (2008) found that female speakers of English use more pronouns than their male counterparts. Considering this result, my finding in Article 2 that women more frequently mark hearsay and sensory evidentiality, and the Article 1 finding that women

are more likely to use evidentiality for subjective assessments are to be expected, since these types of evidentiality marking appear to co-occur often with pronouns.

Second, it seems as if the gender variation might vary depending on the register or setting of a conversation, since there is clearly significant variation in the frequency of inferential evidentials in Article 1, but in Article 2 only sensory and hearsay evidentiality display significant gender variation. The difference between these two studies is that the Article 1 data were recorded in public/professional settings, and the Article 2 data were recorded in private settings; it is also conceivable that conversation topics co-vary with settings in a way that might have an influence on evidentiality marking. Again, previous research on linguistic gender differences that is relevant to these findings will be summarized below. Third, the results of Article 3 suggest that the motivation for a speaker to opt to mark evidentiality is not necessarily primarily concerned with authority or epistemic negotiation; instead, it was found that evidentiality is often instrumental in relational strategies.

There is, however, a sense of discord in the explanatory power of these findings, and the root of this discord is, I would argue, in the diverse nature of evidentiality. I have made the point repeatedly in the present text that evidentiality is a functional category that can take on almost any form. The explanation for the gender variation found in the marking of evidentiality most likely does not have to do specifically with the articulation of evidential basis, but rather with an overarching quality of evidentiality that overlaps with features and strategies previously associated with women's language and the performance of femininity. As I found in Articles 3 and 4, and as also indicated by some previous studies (e.g. Fox 2001; Cappelli 2007), evidential marking very often appears to signal that the speaker is making an effort not only with respect to the informational content conveyed, but also with respect to how the addressee is likely to interpret the information and how that interpretation might affect their relationship. In other words, evidentiality marking appears to be likely to occur when the way in which an utterance is going to be interpreted is especially important to the speaker, be it because of the nature and context of a specific utterance or because the addressee's interpretation is generally important to that particular speaker. Newman et al. (2008) found that women are more likely to talk about social and psychological concepts, whereas men are more likely to refer to the locations and quantities of items. Performing relational practice – using communication strategies geared toward maintaining a positive relationship with other interlocutors – is frequently associated with a feminine style of interacting (e.g. Holmes and Schnurr 2006; Ladegaard 2011). Since, for whatever reason, women appear more likely to use language that signals attention to and consideration for the needs and experiences of their co-interlocutors, in my view it is logical for such a pattern to co-occur with a different and more frequent use of evidentiality markers than displayed in the language of men.

7.2 Limitations

In the present thesis, only spoken British English data are used, and mainly data recorded in the early 1990s. This selection poses a limitation to the generalizability of the results from the perspective of the wide range of temporal and regional varieties of English.

More importantly, however, it needs to be acknowledged that (as has been repeatedly pointed out) evidentiality in English is a highly complex category. Before coding can even begin, a researcher needs to make a number of decisions regarding its definition, delimitations, and operationalization. Inevitably, because of its context-dependent and function-based nature, the coding of evidentiality entails some judgment on the part of the coder, and thus some measure of subjectivity. The challenge this presents to the analyst is one of finding a way to create a set of criteria that are able to capture the full scope of evidentiality, while also keeping the scope consistent. My approach to this challenge was one of pragmatism; as described in subsection 5.1, the reality of evidentiality in English was allowed to shape the coding criteria during the initial stage of analysis. Once it was found that a criterion was consistently applicable during coding, it was adhered to. While this approach resulted in a lengthy coding protocol, it increased the consistency of the analysis across the four articles. In summary, while a certain degree of subjectivity might have to be accepted when analyzing features like evidentiality, measures have been taken during work on the present thesis to achieve reliable and valid results.

7.3 Conclusion and implications for future research

The studies presented in this thesis have shed some light on the gender differences in evidentiality marking in spoken British English, but the studies are even more revealing with respect to the scope and functions of evidentiality in English. The findings of the present thesis clearly show what a large and versatile category evidentiality is; perhaps too large and versatile to be described as one single category whose presence in communication can be generalized as adding one kind of meaning. Based on the findings of this thesis, evidentiality in English is best described as a functional category by which speakers allude to the existence or acquisition of evidence for or against a proposition, and which is used to add some kind of nuance to how the speaker positions her- or himself in relation to the information in the proposition and/or the addressee(s). Specifically, it is often used to allow the speaker to express or negotiate authority in a way that is not face-threatening, but can also be used to distance (and thus protect) the speaker from a potentially risky assessment.

As discussed in Section 5.3, an intercoder reliability test was carried out during work on Article 4. With respect to methodological considerations for

future research, I would strongly recommend such a test to be carried out much earlier on in the process of a research project. That would most likely be useful for any research area, but particularly so for a linguistic category as complex as evidentiality.

Considering what has been found here, investigations of (inter)subjectivity or shared versus non-shared information in the marking of inferential evidentiality would be meaningful, in terms of how these uses are distributed in production. Further, a replication of the Article 2 study using data from BNC2014 in order to get a better idea of diachronic stability than the small sample from LLC/DCPSE would be interesting, as well as a closer look at variation in evidentiality use across registers, topics, or formality levels.

Summary in Swedish / Sammanfattning på svenska

Denna sammanläggningsavhandling fokuserar på evidentialitet, en språklig kategori som avser uttryck för vilken typ av belägg en talare har för det hen säger, och på vilket sätt hen har tillgång till dessa belägg. Evidentialitet kan delas in i de tre kategorierna *sensory* ("sensorisk"), *hearsay* ("hörsägenbaserad") och *inferential* ("slutledningsbaserad"). Sensorisk evidentialitet syftar på belägg som härrör från talarens egna fem sinnen, som i *I saw him leave; Jag såg honom gå härifrån*. Hörsägenbaserad evidentialitet är uttryck för belägg som härrör från (skriftlig eller verbal) hörsägen, som i *Anna told me he left; Anna sa att han har gått*. Slutledningsbaserad evidentialitet, slutligen, inkluderar uttryck för belägg som härstammar från talarens kognitiva slutledningsförmåga, baserat på logik och/eller någon typ av bevis, som i *He obviously left; Han har uppenbarligen gått*. De understrukna orden i dessa konstruerade meningar är exempel på vad som i denna avhandling betraktas som evidentialitetsmarkörer. Materialet är huvudsakligen hämtat från den talade delen av British National Corpus (BNC), inspelat i början av 1990-talet, och för Artikel 2 även från Diachronic Corpus of Present-day Spoken English (DCPSE).

Denna avhandling består av en inledande kapp och fyra artiklar, och dess övergripande syfte är tudelat: för det första är avsikten att undersöka huruvida kvinnor och män använder evidentialitetsmarkörer i olika stor utsträckning, och för det andra att försöka förklara de skillnader som hittas. Avhandlingens två första artiklar är huvudsakligen kvantitativa studier med fokus på att undersöka skillnader i hur frekvent kvinnor respektive män använder evidentialitetsmarkörer i sitt tal. I Artikel 1 undersöks slutledningsbaserad evidentialitet i BNC-data som spelades in i publika och/eller professionella miljöer, och i Artikel 2 undersöks alla tre evidentialitetskategorierna i BNC-data som spelades in i huvudsakligen informella, privata miljöer. I Artikel 2 inkluderas förutom kön även talarnas ålder, för att se om dessa två variabler samspelar; i ett mindre material hämtat från DCPSE och inspelat under 1960- och 70-talen undersöks också eventuella skillnader i evidentialitetsanvändande från BNC-materialet inspelat under tidigt 1990-tal.

De två sista artiklarna i avhandlingen fokuserar på att söka sätt att förklara skillnaderna mellan kvinnors och mäns användning av evidentialitetsmarkö-

rer, framför allt genom att analysera hur och när evidentialitet används. I Artikel 3 undersöks evidentialitetsmarkörers användbarhet för *relational practice*, det vill säga språkliga strategier som syftar till att möjliggöra och/eller underhålla en positiv relation till övriga interlokutörer i en konversation. Fokus ligger särskilt på att undersöka vilka roller vissa teman som återkommer i studier av evidentialitet i interaktion – auktoritet, förhandling och samarbete – har när evidentialitet används i *relational practice*, samt på att undersöka hur relationella funktioner av evidentialitet samspelar med det som är dess definitionsmässiga kärna: att signalera vilka belägg talaren har för det hen säger och på vilket sätt hen har tillgång till dessa. Materialet som används är inspelat i informella/privata sammanhang.

I Artikel 4, slutligen, används material inspelat vid möten av olika slag, exempelvis olika styrelser, kommittéer och föreningar. Till skillnad från de övriga artiklarna i denna avhandling är talarna anonymiserade genom att deras namn är utbytta mot koder. Artikelns syfte är att undersöka huruvida evidentialitet används på olika sätt beroende på om talarens interaktionsstil är övervägande feminin, övervägande maskulin, eller en blandning av de två. Med hjälp av tidigare forskning om interaktionsstilar associerade till könade stereotyper valdes ett antal språkliga indikatorer ut som användes för att avgöra var enskilda talare befann sig på en skala från övervägande maskulin till övervägande feminin. Situationsspecifika faktorer, som mötets syfte och formalitetsnivå, togs också i beaktande. Tre talare från den feminina änden av skalan, tre talare från den maskulina änden och tre som befann sig ungefär i mitten sett till interaktionsstil valdes ut. Dessa talares språk detaljstuderades med avseende på hur de använde evidentialitetsmarkörer, för att se om det finns tecken på variation i detta beroende på interaktionsstil.

Artiklar 1 och 2 visar att det finns kvantitativa skillnader i användning av evidentialitetsmarkörer mellan kvinnor och män. Generellt markerar kvinnor evidentialitet oftare än män, och det verkar även vara så att kvinnor föredrar markörer som anspelar på en mer subjektiv typ av belägg eller tillgång till belägg (exempelvis *think* ”tro”, som i ”jag tror” och *imagine* ”föreställa”, som i ”jag föreställer mig att”) medan män föredrar markörer som antyder en lägre grad av subjektivitet (exempelvis *seem* ”verka, tyckas” som i ”det verkar/tycks som om” och *obviously* ”uppenbarligen”). Skillnader mellan resultaten i Artikel 1 och 2 tyder på att könsskillnaderna (som befins i båda studierna) även kan variera beroende på formalitetsnivå och/eller typ av situation. Talarens ålder verkar dock inte påverka hur ofta evidentialitetsmarkörer används. De kvalitativa studierna i Artikel 3 och 4 visar att evidentialitet ofta används i samband med *relational practice* och verkar göra det möjligt för en talare att förhandla och uttrycka auktoritet utan att vara konfrontativ. Det element av transparens och subjektivitet som ofta är en effekt av evidentialitetsmarkörer tenderar att signalera att talaren bryr sig om hur det hen säger tas emot och förstås av de andra interlokutörerna. De visar även att fast det finns ett betydande överlapp där talare oavsett interaktionsstil använder evidentialitet för

likartade funktioner finns det även tecken på skillnader mellan ”feminina” och ”maskulina” talare (oaktat deras faktiska kön). Det är troligt att den uppenbart stora potentialen hos evidentialitet att användas i *relational practice* kan vara en del av förklaringen till att kvinnor är mer benägna att använda evidentialitetsmarkörer, då mycken tidigare forskning tyder på att kvinnor (i västerländska, anglofona sammanhang) både utför och förväntas utföra *relational practice* och närliggande strategier i högre grad än män. Dock är detta knappast hela förklaringen, då språkliga könsskillnader i hög grad är beroende på en mängd faktorer kopplade till specifika situationer, relationer och sociokulturella strukturer. Framför allt bidrar denna avhandling till ytterligare förståelse för hur evidentialitetsmarkörer används i talad engelska.

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