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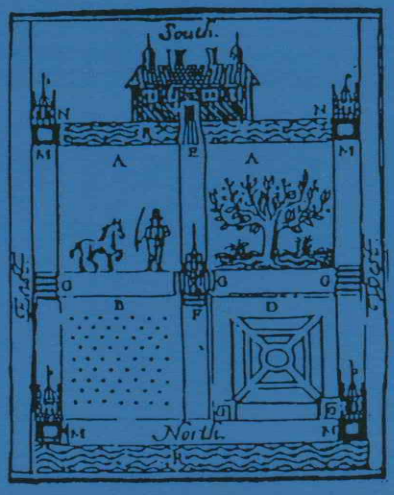

Linguaggi in scena

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How different types of knowledge facilitate the construal of political–news: towards a typology of epistemological stances

by *Geoffrey Gray*

1
Introduction and theoretical framework

British broadsheet national newspapers have undergone an erosion of the once neat separation between partisan opinion, previously confined to editorials and op–eds, and factual reportage that was «driven by norms of objectivity and public service» (Stanyer, 2007, pp. 118). Growth of the online, reader–interactive forums of these newspapers is now coupled with political news–writers' perceptions of their role as commentators who provide "value–added" information[1]. Although frameworks of "evaluation" (Bednarek, 2006a, 2010) and "appraisal" (White, 2011) have been rigorously applied to newspapers, more theoretical and empirical work remains to be done on how the construal of a political event (i.e., its evaluation and the setting up of a viewpoint towards it) is facilitated by encoding or implicating the type of knowledge on which it is based (e.g., observation, presupposition, hearsay, inference, etc.). How exactly do such bases of knowledge contribute to the construal of a piece of political-news information?

The cross–linguistic concept of "evidentiality" is the grammatical category that comes closest to considering this question. Narrower definitions of evidentiality, which have been adopted mainly by studies focusing on languages other than English, treat the encoding of sources of knowledge as part of the core semantics of morpho-syntactic systems. (For critical discussions of the canonical literature see Bednarek, 2006b, pp.636-7; Ifantidou, 2001, pp.1-13; Mushin, 2001, pp. 17-23.) Broader definitions of evidentiality involve various attitudes to knowledge (Chafe, Nichols, 1986; Dendale, Tasmowski, 2001) that include certainty of knowledge (epistemic modality) and deviations from expected knowledge (mirativity). Whilst Crystal (1991, p. 127) and Palmer (1986, pp. 51-76) restrict the scope of evidentiality in English to types of epistemic modality, other linguistic forms can have an evidential function even though they are not primarily evidential (Ifantidou, 2001, p. 5). For example, certain uses of the discourse connectives

"so" and "therefore" could be seen as an instances of evidentiality. They encode a type of knowledge (inference) and a degree of certainty towards it. They also demonstrate that evidentiality does not have to be the main point of the proposition expressed (Anderson, 1986, pp. 274–5): it can be "added" to propositions about something else in order, in this particular case, to link them.

This paper adopts this broader framework. It explores the ways in which a range of linguistic forms that encode bases of knowledge can also contribute to the construal of a piece of political–news information. These forms include factive verbs, verbs of perception and verbs of cognition, various conditional constructions, modalities of speech representation, and evidential and hearsay adverbials. It will be shown that these forms communicate different "epistemological stances" — a term used by Mushin (2001, p. 29) to imply «that cognitive and pragmatic processes mediate between the way that information is actually acquired and the way we talk about the status of our knowledge». Foremost among these pragmatic values are firstly, the various rhetorical, persuasive potentials of a particular type of knowledge (e.g., "It's true. I saw it happen"); and secondly, the wider functions that it can realise in discourse (e.g., knowledge based on hearsay can absolve the journalist from responsibility for its factual truth; knowledge based on inference allows information to be construed as the product of reasoning processes that would lead the reader to the same conclusion as the one arrived at by the writer).

A typology of five epistemological stances will be developed with reference to a corpus assembled from online, broadsheet newspaper coverage of the British general election of 2010. These stances are: a factual stance that represents information as objective (i.e., value–free) and unchallengeable; a personal–experience stance that treats information as the product of a conceptualiser's own specific knowledge; an imaginative stance that requires readers to engage with counterfactuals, unlikely events and hypotheses; a reportive stance which conceptualises information as the product of other people's speech events; and lastly, various inferential stances of deducing, inducing, or elaborating new, implicit information from given, explicit information.

The organisation of the paper is as follows. After outlining, in the next section, the data and methods used, separate sections will be dedicated to an investigation of each of the above stances. The conclusion lists the questions for further research that have emerged.

2
Data and methods

The 2,100,000–word corpus for this investigation was assembled from news reports, personal columns, editorials, reader–interactive blogs and other texts that focused on the British general election in 2010. They appeared in online versions of *The Times, Independent, Guardian, Daily Telegraph*, as well as their Sunday counterparts, during the period 15 March — 31 May 2010. Despite the different political affiliations professed by these newspapers, they each communicated a fair measure of scepticism towards

certain politicians and political–election campaigns in general. There was a fusion of reportage and commentary in which writers adopted an overall cynical, literary tone rather than an impartial, analytical one. Recent disillusionment with government — both the outgoing one and the ones that were promised — had precipitated what one astute commentator called:

> a weirdly aggressive kind of apathy. The voters seem to want to hunt down politicians, grab and shake them by the lapels, and tell them how uninterested they are. It's very different from the "Oh I suppose I ought to care about politics but I'm too busy" apathy I've been used to encountering all my life. (*Times*, 17.4.2010)

Another salient feature of this election campaign was that it was the first to feature televised debates between the leaders of the three main parties (Labour, Conservative and Liberal–Democrat). Broadsheet newspapers were not immune to the ensuing overtones of a USA presidential contest and a cult of personalities.

The corpus has been analysed using Wordsmith Tools (version 5.0), and the principles underlying corpus–assisted discourse analysis. Single concordance lines are «regarded as potential "sites", pointing to larger–scale discursive processes, of which instances of a [writer's] opinions and ideological value positions are usually part» (Bevitori, 2007, p. 141). Furthermore, interaction has taken place between hypotheses based on intuitions and initial inspection of the data on the one hand, and validity checking of these hypotheses against further data on the other hand. Presentation of the data here is mainly limited to representative examples that illustrate the theoretical points being made.

3
Factual epistemological stance

Whilst for much of the twentieth–century, «the broadsheet press saw their audience as citizens, as members of a political community that needed to be provided with accurate and factual information» (Stanyer, 2007, p. 97), this high modern phase of journalism has gradually been replaced by consumer–based models of audiences who are perceived as likely to abandon political–news coverage that is «worthy but dull» (ivi, p. 114). Both the fragmentation of the standard "inverted pyramid style" of reporting (Bell, 1991, pp. 168–9), and the need (in the wake of online versions of newspapers) for information to be modularised and divided into small chunks, have had a significant impact on broadsheet coverage of political–election campaigns. There is now more background, evaluative and visual information that is not restricted to traditional linear texts, and more emphasis on newsworthy events such as rows, gossip and gaffes.

This situation does not, however, detract from the assumption on the part of many media professionals that objective reporting — i.e., the maintenance of a discursive distance between firstly, the writer's viewpoint and, secondly, facts «that are open to independent validation» (Schudson, 1978, p.5) or other people's evaluations – is a

virtue and a realistic goal (Schudson, 2003, p.4; Cohen-Almagor, 2008). The norms of accuracy, truthfulness, neutrality and balance which this assumption of objectivity sustains still exert a powerful hold over the working practices and professional ethos of journalism (Cotter, 2010, pp. 105, 137; Richardson 2007, pp. 86–7). On this there has been much critique (see Bednarek, 2006a, p. 5) which shows that news reporting is subject to production processes of selection, framing and emphasis that are in turn shaped by pressures such as meeting deadlines, filling space and market logics of increasing audience share and advertising revenue. The point that will be explored in this section is that objective reporting does not stand outside epistemological stance. It is one particular way in which journalists represent the status of their knowledge.

Although values can and do enter into the reporting of facts[2], news–writers have a range of linguistic devices at their disposal for maintaining the semblance of an objective stance. Notions of factivity (e.g., Kiparsky, Kiparsky, 1971) show how factive verbs or their nominalised equivalents can provide a powerful means for construing value positions as unchallengeable, or as challengeable only by a reader armed with additional, alternative information:

Instead, the Conservative leader has chosen to promote a moral panic about social breakdown which merely serves *to demonstrate* how little the Tories have really changed. (*Independent*, 28.4.10, emphasis added)

If Labour were quick to see the silver lining in the Clegg phenomenon, then the Tories were overwhelmed by the cloud. *Proof* came on Monday with Cameron's scrapping of a lavishly produced election broadcast. (*Guardian*, 21.4.10, emphasis added)

Factive verbs followed by embedded "that–clauses" provide another powerful device. These clauses can accommodate semantic presuppositions (about states of affairs in the world) which survive negation, and thus appear to belong to the realm of facts (Bertuccelli Papi, 2009, pp. 143-4). Furthermore, something else is asserted about these presupposed facts:

But I am not at all surprised that his new Labour project is ending in failure. (*Times*, 5.5.10) (Presupposition: his new Labour project is ending in failure.)

He says he's not aware that Nick Clegg has done anything wrong. (*Guardian*, 21.4.10) (Presupposition: Nick Clegg has done something wrong.)

Less cognitive effort is required from readers who simply assume that these embedded "that–clauses" express a true proposition. Facts can also be framed by evaluations that form an implicit, presupposed and culturally shared background:

David Cameron yesterday embarked on an all–nighter to flaunt his stamina, to show voters that he is a sort of human version of New York City — the politician who never sleeps. (*Times*, 5.5.10)

saying they're ruddy well going to vote for that Clegg fellow is a kind of dirty protest. In other countries they spoil their ballot papers. (*Times*, 1.5.10)

The evaluative meanings «human version of New York City», and «dirty protest» (with its "deep" allusion to the history of paramilitary prisoners in Northern Ireland), trigger shared cultural knowledge of readers without requiring their active, conscious interpretation. In addition to indicating attenuation of commitment, «a sort of» and «a kind of» enlarge the scope of the categories «New York City» and «dirty protest» so that non-prototypical members – Cameron and voting for Clegg respectively – can be included. Finally, it is instructive to note that in the following representative concordance lines, tokens of "the fact" are coloured (to their left) by antecedent expressions of attitudes, judgements or feelings about the propositional content of the embedded "that–clauses" (on the right):

Table 1. Representative concordance lines of "the fact" with construal of information

1	to take some comfort in	the fact	that it withstood the Conservative
2	campaigning away, apparently unabashed by	the fact	that they're doomed to failure
3	see her because he hated	the fact	he had hurt someone. His
4	this claim is undermined by	the fact	that he wants to strip
5	there's no getting away from	the fact	he is fresh as paint
6	David Cameron were relaxed about	the fact	that they would probably be
7	schoolboys we were proud of	the fact	that many of the world's
8	electorates, a feature compounded by	the fact	that turnout tends to be
9	constituencies. Leader Alexander Salmond blamed	the fact	that the Nationalists and other
10	there is something significant about	the fact	that Clegg did not specifically

4
Personal–experience epistemological stance

A personal–experience stance consists of explicitly indexing information to the particular knowledge (based on sensory perception, beliefs or emotions) of at least one conceptualiser, who may or may not be the actual writer. In contrast to a factual stance which expresses the conceptualiser's personal detachment from the information, a personal-experience stance places the conceptualiser entirely «within the scope of the construal» (Mushin, 2001, p. 67). The most obvious linguistic correlates of this stance are personal pronouns to encode a default deictic orientation, direct perception verbs (e.g., "see", "hear"), indirect perception verbs (e.g., "feels/looks/sounds as if/ like"), and verbs of cognition ("think", "suppose") to report beliefs and degrees of commitment.

On the one hand, a conceptualiser can claim to have knowledge of something by construing it as an externally perceivable phenomenon that he or she has directly experienced (e.g., seen or heard), and that others would have experienced in a similar way had they been present. Consider the following example of what happened when, shortly after the election and the formation of the new coalition government, its two leaders held a press conference in the garden of 10 Downing Street to demonstrate, amongst other things, their mutual rapport:

Perhaps if Cleggeron were less like David and Jonathan or Gilbert and George and more like Didi and Gogo from Waiting for Godot, we might feel less uneasy. But to see them in the garden or on the steps of No. 10 is to see the triumph of the Posh Boys. (*Independent*, 15.5.10)

In the English lexicon, direct "visual" perception (encoded here by the first token of «to see») can be construed as analogous to cognitive perception (encoded by the second token of this verb). It is implicitly assumed that the reader would have drawn the same analogy had he or she witnessed the same event. In other words, the writer leaves an impression of confidence that the evaluative meaning he or she has deployed — the view that these two leaders come from the same «posh» social–cultural milieu — is immediately understood and shared by readers.

In the next citation, direct "auditory" perception verbs are used to construe information from the point of view of a conceptualiser who, in contrast to the above example, is not the writer:

He held his head when he was made to listen to the tape because he could hear the sound of Labour voters turning theirs away in shame. Had Mrs Duffy been a Tory, or worse, he might have spun his way out of it. But to be rude and dismissive about one of your own. . . . (*Telegraph*, 28.4.10)

Once again an externally perceivable event, the playback of a recording of Prime Minister Brown's voice during the election campaign, is construed as analogous to a cognitive experience. It is asserted that while he "listened" to his dismissal of a potential Labour voter (Mrs Duffy) as «just this sort of bigoted woman», Gordon Brown "heard" (i.e., apprehended) the full extent of the damaging effects of his having spoken while, unknown to him, his voice was still being recorded in the public domain. Note the semantic and discoursal parallelisms drawn between the cringing Prime Minister holding his head and «Labour voters turning theirs away in shame». Information is construed in terms of the ability of writer and reader to empathise with Brown's direct emotional experience. This ability allows the writer to represent readers as being psychologically closer to the event than they were in the previous citation.

On the other hand, information can be construed on the basis of knowledge that derives from less observable and more private mental states. In this case, the conceptualiser may be represented as «the only person who has access to the "truth" of the information» (Mushin, 2001, p. 59). Consider the following use of a simile to communicate the affective experience of the conceptualiser: «The Tories, by contrast,

have largely just concentrated on Big Dave and his Big Society. [...] I feel like I'm watching a Goldman Sachs spokesman telling me that "money isn't everything". Or my dentist offering me a stick of rock» (*Guardian*, 30.4.10). Such private, personal experiences can nevertheless be extended to include others within the scope of the construal. Concordances of «feel like a» — the most frequent three–word cluster in the corpus for «feel» — suggest that this simile is frequently used to encode shared personal experiences of regret, boredom, indifference or exhaustion. Each of which is a facet of the «weirdly aggressive kind of apathy» mentioned in section 2:

For Labour voters, and a good number of Lib Dems, this will feel like a morning of sorrow. (*Guardian*, 11.5.10)

[...] ninety minutes is a long time in politics. And as everyone at home found out this week, it can feel like a very long time on television, too. (*Independent*, 23.4.10)

Cambridge does not feel like a town that is consumed by the general election that will be called two days hence. (*Independent*, 5.5.10)

«We will fight for every vote in every seat», Ed Balls, the Schools Secretary, concurred. [...] A junior official was more candid — «I feel like a dog that can't be kicked any more». (*Times*, 30.4.10)

In short, a personal–experience stance represents information from the point of view of someone who is in a "position" to know something specific about it. Communication of the contextual coordinates of this position — its grounding in a default deictic orientation of a time, a location and an origo — lends credibility to the construal of the information.

5
Imaginative epistemological stance

Whereas the above two stances deploy evaluations on the basis of knowledge acquired in the real world, an imaginative stance construes information as deictically distanced from the conceptualiser's actual situation. Important here are constructions of counterfactuals (e.g., "if" + grammatical subject + past–perfect VP), and formulations which encode unlikelihood (e.g., "if" + grammatical subject + past–tense VP). The emphasis, however, is on hypotheses about what would have happened / would happen if these imaginary, distanced worlds became real. Examination of the corpus suggests there are at least three main types of pragmatic relationships that enter between the forms for expressing an imaginative stance and their deployment by political journalists to construe information. The first is that a truth claim can be rendered as unfalsifiable:

If Britain had been in the euro, interest rates would have been at the wrong level. (*Guardian*, 7.4.10)

if he [Brown] had stayed in London he could have done more to rally the parliamentary party. (*Guardian*, 18.5.10)

Since Britain did not use the euro monetary system and Brown did not stay in London, speculations about what would have happened in these imaginary worlds cannot be checked against facts in the real world. These speculations can be contested only through further speculation that is more convincing. The second type of pragmatic relationship occurs when it is the defeasibility of an implicit comment, rather than (as above) the unfalsifiability of an explicit claim, which "protects" the journalist:

If this had been a duel, Gordon's [Brown's] corpse would be laid out for the vultures to feed on. (*Telegraph*, 7.4.10)

If he [Cameron] had any political sense, he would advise Nick Clegg to get lost (and I am putting that politely). (*Telegraph*, 9.5.10)

In the first citation, a background entailment of the past–perfect "if–clause" is that since there had not actually been a duel, the writer is talking about a fictional "make–believe" world rather than a real world. The foregrounding of this entailment would help to cancel, in the event of a libel suit, the claim here that Gordon Brown had performed abominably during Prime Minister's Question Time in Parliament. In the second example, the free–range quantifier "any" in «If he had any political sense» carries a conventional implicature that Cameron has no political sense whatsoever. This implicature could be cancelled by foregrounding a background entailment of this past–tense (rather than the more deictically distant past–perfect) construction; namely, the unlikelihood of Cameron having political sense does not completely preclude the possibility that he does have such sense.

The third type of pragmatic relationship concerns the deployment of a contrast between real and imaginary mental worlds. In the following citation, the contrast between these worlds is developed in terms of a series of further conceptual distinctions between appearance and reality, absurdity and straightforwardness, and past and present time: «What appeared a reckless bet a couple of weeks ago now looks interesting; what would have been an absurd question is now just a straightforward one» (*Times*, 28.4.10). In the next example, the contrast between real and imaginary worlds is exploited in a different way. Clegg's use of deontic language to formulate his laudable moral duty is measured against the reality of facts supplied by an opinion poll. The overall effect is a somewhat cruel, bathetic descent: «he did not rule out working with the Conservatives, saying that he would have a moral obligation to provide "good, stable government". But his hopes of striking a hard bargain with Mr Cameron are dampened by today's Populus poll» (*Times*, 28.4.10).

A more complex area that merits further investigation concerns the ways in which conditional constructions can assert a unidirectional causality; namely, a protasis (condition) and an apodosis (consequent) that follows from it. This causal relationship

has conceptual variants. One of these consists of drawing a semantic relationship in which the apodosis content is predictable from the protasis content (Sweetser, 1996, p. 327). For example: «If we try and jump off the treatment table as if nothing had happened we'll do more damage to the economy» (*Independent*, 5.4.10). Refusal to face up to unpleasant necessities now — the construction «jump off the [...] table» makes culturally specific reference to a famous footballer's refusal of treatment for his damaged ankle — is presented as a potential cause of harming the economy in the future. The causal relationship between the protasis and the apodosis can also be drawn in terms of the purported reasoning processes of actors (ivi, p. 329): «Or perhaps he [Brown] thinks that if he kicks one leader he must kick both — so having called David Cameron "anti–Europe" he had to call Mr Clegg anti–something too [...]» (*Times*, 24.4.10). Instead of expressing, as in the previous citation, a relationship between a future event and a further future one, this utterance uses reasoning or belief («he thinks») to link the protasis (i.e., kicking and naming one person) with the apodosis (i.e., kicking and naming a second person).

Finally, it should be noted that "as if" constructions are a powerful device for setting up negative evaluations about past, present or future imaginary worlds. The following concordance lines are representative of how these constructions have a tendency to prefer negative grammatical formulations and / or negative propositional content:

Table 2. Representative concordance lines of "as if" with construal of information

1	Party. It's so difficult. Feels	as if	you're intruding. She was glad
2	for Labour, and doesn't sound	as if	he thinks he can. But
3	stubborn hunch, but it's looking	as if	I might be wrong. With
4	Jack Straw, the justice secretary.	As if	things weren't bad enough. They've
5	old Gordon who always looks	as if	MacBrown hath murdered sleep. (Macbeth,
6	it doesn't feel, does it,	as if	it will set the country
7	at Manchester Piccadilly station yesterday	as if	"bigotgate" never happened. Sarah Brown,
8	expects to win says no.	As if	to prove the point, Mr
9	nothing to do with it,	as if	you've got no say. We
10	boys didn't want to look	as if	they were ganging up on

6
Reportive epistemological stance

A reportive stance, which represents information as having been acquired from other people's spoken or written words, is an intrinsic feature of news discourse. Other people's speech events — which can include the thoughts that allegedly produced them — are quoted, paraphrased or alluded to within the journalist's text. On the one hand,

this "embedding" may make it difficult to distinguish between the present authorial voice and other people's antecedent voices. There can be slippage from one to the other, and in either direction. On the other hand, attribution of information to other people allows journalists to present themselves as detached from construals of information for which they, possibly, are responsible. Typical linguistic correlates of a reportive stance in English are the modalities of direct and indirect speech representation (Leech and Short, 1981), backshifting of verbs tenses, personal, temporal and spatial deixis that is more distal than that used in the original speech event, and an optional framing clause containing a verb of saying and also, possibly, adverbial information.

Pragmatic factors that motivate the use of a reported stance include a need to show fidelity to somebody's anterior discourse (by using direct reported speech), or a requirement for authoritative and reliable knowledge (through, for example, attributing a source of information to a high–ranking government spokesperson), or the attempt, on the part of a journalist or newspaper, to embed a point of view through processes of entextualistaion (Silverstein, Urban, 1996). Here, a speech event can be lifted out of its original context (a type of decontextualisation), and inserted into a slightly different perspective of the journalist (a recontextualisation) that provides a preferred reading and evaluation of the discourse. A subtle way of doing this is to use verbs of saying or their nominalised equivalents to transform the illocutionary force of an original utterance. Consider the replacement of the epistemic modal «it appeared» by the more factual «The accusation» in:

Clegg's election coordinator, Danny Alexander, said it appeared that the Tory high command had orchestrated a campaign of negative stories in the run–up to last night's debate in an attempt to neutralise his surge in the polls. The accusation came as polls revealed that neither Clegg nor Cameron could claim a clear win from last night's debate. (*Guardian* 24.4.10)

Even when writers explicitly evoke their attitudes to the information being reported, they can use seemingly innocuous words that covertly trigger, route or strengthen the uptake expected from the reader. Consider the use of «but» in:

Mr Cameron speaks the lingo: as he once told a Tory conference, he «grew up in the countryside». But Mr Cameron's countryside is not the one that most people experience north or west of the Cotswolds. (*Times*, 21.5.10)

Obviously the pleasant cadence was rather at odds with what he was actually saying, but, still, I couldn't help being slightly endeared. (*Telegraph*, 30.4.10)

In the first citation, sentence–initial «But» prepares the reader for an assertion that runs counter to the expectations set up by the immediately antecedent proposition, and thus restricts the scope of this proposition's validity. In the second citation, «but, still» sets up a concessive relation between clauses: it prepares the reader for an assertion that counteracts the claim that has been conceded. Note, then, that these construals occurring after "but" seem to be more valid than the antecedent proposition. Note

also that the conjunction "but" is used not only to construe the reported information, but also to structure the text by coordinating its different voices. Analysis of how, and to what extent, anterior original discourse is entextualised and construed by the writer needs to be pursued with reference to these kinds of considerations.

It also needs to take account of the taxonomies of evaluative speech verbs in Caldas–Coulthard (1994, pp. 305–07) and Bednarek (2010, pp. 31–3). These include illocutionary verbs that define the speaker's intention (e.g., «One Labour MP with a marginal seat *complained* to me that» [*Guardian* 16.3.10]), declarative verbs that are felicitous only in a (mock) institutional context (e.g., «The truth is that the Prime Minister *acquitted* himself rather well» [*Independent*, 1.5.10]), discourse signalling verbs that mark the connections and development of a discourse («Though the leaders *repeated* their promises last night» [*Independent*, 30.4.10]), and paralinguistic verbs («They have simply *shouted louder* about it» [*Guardian*, 8.5.10]).

A reported stance, then, is a linguistic stance that can use the apparent replication of other people's words to give the semblance of truth to the journalist's construal of information.

7
Inferential epistemological stance

An inferential stance expresses the «extraction of new, implicit information from given, explicit information» (Cummings, 2005, p. 75). On the one hand, inferred information can include the conceptualiser within the scope of the inference (through reference to his or her reasoning processes). On the other hand, inferred information can be represented as "objective" and detached from the writer: it is assumed that this information would be arrived at by other people using the same reasoning processes. The linguistic forms that are typically associated with an inferential stance in English have often fallen under the rubric of epistemic modality (e.g., «His coat's not here, he must have left»). However, this stance «does not itself imply a particular strength of belief [. . .], just that the knowledge has been assessed in terms of both the external available evidence and the speaker / conceptualiser's own capacity for reasoning» (Mushin, 2001, p. 66). The following discussion will divide inferential stances into three types: deductive, inductive and elaborative.

Deductive inferences, which consist of showing that one or more ineluctable consequences follow from at least one logical premise, have a validity which is both formal and powerful (i.e., extremely difficult to challenge). A certain conclusion has to follow from a given premise because the former is explicitly or implicitly contained within the latter. This is seen when semantic content is removed to leave three fundamental components of a deduction: the premise ("if P, (then) Q"); the bridging fact or assumption ("P exists"); and the conclusion: ("Q exists"). Close examination of apparent deductive inferences in the corpus reveals that several are fallacious. Although the first clause in the following citation seems to be the premise for conclusions that follow from it, this is not the case:

Having had Boris Johnson at the helm in London for a couple of years, it would appear that not all the capital's Tube staff are relishing the prospect of the Tories governing the rest of the country. At one London Underground station, the service update board read: "Good service on all lines. Service update: David Cameron new PM. We are doomed.". (*Telegraph*, 12.5.10)

The message on this service update board offers visible, written evidence that London's Underground staff were not content to have David Cameron as the new Prime Minister. However, the truth of this assertion is not guaranteed by, i.e., is not contained within and cannot be teased out of, the fact that Boris Johnson had been the Lord Mayor of London for two years. The semantic relation of this Boris–Johnson adverbial clause to the immediately following co–text is that of an addition rather than a premise for a deductive inference.

This citation could, however, be seen as an example of an "inductive" inference from external empirical evidence rather than a deductive inference from a logical premise. The despondency of London's Underground staff could have been inferred from personal–experience evidence of living in London while Boris Johnson was Lord Mayor. A classical problem for inductive inferences, which arguably applies to this particular case, is that the conceptualiser can introduce a "confirmation bias": he or she searches «only for that evidence which confirms a rule, rather than [for] evidence which disconfirms the rule» (Wilson, no date given). Consider:

But sometimes it's the trivial things that are interesting. I was fascinated to discover that Cameron's previously uninterviewed wife, Samantha, speaks posh estuary English, at least for the telly and — unlike Dave — probably does so all the time. She must have had elocution lessons. (*Guardian* 15.03.10)

Whilst the proposition included in the scope of «probably» has the explicit status of a conjecture, the placing of epistemic «must» in the subsequent proposition is problematic. It is not clear how this certainty of the assertion that Mrs Cameron took elocution lessons can be inductively inferred from the experience of having heard her voice on television. This assertion is rather an instance of two subsets of "elaborative inferences" that traditional logical processes of deductive and inductive inference cannot explain: «jumping to conclusions [. . .] and even reasoning in the absence of knowledge» (de Beaugrande, Dressler, 1981, pp. 93–4). Gumperz' (1982, p. 131) notion of a "contextualisation cue" helps to explain how this might happen. The lexical, surface form «posh» triggers shared, antecedent, taken–for granted knowledge of British readers that Mrs Cameron's successful display of *bon ton* depends partly on the sound of her public voice.

Elaborative inferences can also occur when readers are required to "fill in" elliptic propositional content of newspaper headlines (e.g., «Watford Minds the Polling Gap» *Sunday Times* [25.4.10]), or when they are required to attach additional, non–contextually derived meanings to specific words. For example, despite its meaning of tentativeness and its hedging function, the verb phrase «may feel» in the following citation could lead readers to infer a higher level of certainty that is synonymous with the one that

could have been encoded by "are": «Secretly, the opposition benches for a couple of years may feel the more comfortable place for Labour to sit out the coming storm». Grice's (1961) name for this type of an extra layer of meaning was "conventional implicature". Although conventionally implicated meaning is semantically encoded, it is, Grice argued, non–truth conditional (i.e., external to the utterance's propositional content and description of a state of affairs). As such, it has been pointed out (Ifantidou, 2001, p. 50) that Grice's account of non–truth conditional meaning and his distinction between indicating and saying, is similar to a standard speech–act account of these phenomena. That is, for Austin [1962], the successful performance of an illocutionary speech–act requires a standard, conventional device that "indicates" the force of the utterance rather than "describes" a state of affairs.

This speech–act theoretic framework would seem, intuitively, to be the appropriate one for exploring elaborative inferences that are triggered by many evidential adverbials (e.g., "evidently", "obviously", "probably") and hearsay adverbials (e.g., "allegedly" "reportedly") in the corpus. Their frequent "parenthetical" rather than integrated status, i.e., their syntactic and apparent semantic detachment from their host clauses, makes them appear to function as non–truth conditional *indicators* of propositional attitude. And this is how they have been traditionally been analysed (e.g., Recanati, 1987, p. 50; Bach, Harnish, 1979, p. 220). That they do not necessarily function in this way is suggested by Infantidou's (2001, pp. 102–12) application of a standard test for truth conditionality to these adverbials. This test consists of embedding the adverbial in question under the scope of the logical operator "if. . then", and seeing whether it contributes to the truth conditions of the overall utterance, or whether it remains outside the scope of the conditional.

Thus the evidential "parenthetical" adverbial in: «He [Cameron], evidently, knew he was an adult» (*Independent*,12.5.10) can be embedded into: «If he evidently knew he was an adult, then he felt no need to prove himself to others when he was at university.» The question is: under what circumstances did he feel no need to prove himself to others? The answer is: the circumstances of his precociousness being evident to himself and/or to others. Here, «evidently» would seem to be truth–conditional rather than an external non–truth conditional indicator. Similarly, the meaning of the hearsay adverbial in: «Alastair Campbell [. . .] was, allegedly, overheard saying "we've had it now" (*Telegraph*, 30.4.10) can be embedded into «If he was allegedly overheard to say "we've had it now", he should have spoken less». The question is: under what circumstances should he have spoken less? The answer is: the circumstances in which others alleged that he said «we've had it now». «Allegedly», it seems, is also truth conditional rather than an external non–truth conditional indicator here.

This brief excursus suggests, then, that evidential and hearsay adverbials can encode conceptual information that is true or false in its own right. If this is correct, an account of the functions of these adverbials in this corpus will have to be different from speech–act theoretic accounts of "indicated meaning" and Gricean accounts of "unsaid meaning". Both accounts see pragmatic meanings as entering only when semantic encoding fails or is not sufficient. Yet what is needed is a theory of how

the following tokens, taken from the corpus, of "evidently" and "allegedly" have linguistically encoded, truth–conditional meanings that provide an input to pragmatic, elaborative inferential processes (Blakemore, 2002, pp. 184–5):

Table 3. Representative concordance lines of "evidently" and "allegedly" with construal of information

1	inside the house, which he	evidently	has not the slightest intention
2	Nick Clegg, quite	evidently,	feels perfectly comfortable on the
3	last 10 years by an	(evidently)	underwhelming 10 million Scots, Welsh
4	that simple remedies, proposed by	evidently	good people, are not always
5	an early attempt at soul–searching,	evidently	the Tory duo has no
1	were quite lucky". He then	allegedly	cast doubts on Mr Brown's
2	responsibility is coming our way	(allegedly).	The coalition will have to
3	its desire to appease the	allegedly	ravenous beast it called the
4	very, very angry about Gordon's	allegedly	lying leaflets and promised not
5	and yellow Ukip banner which	allegedly	got caught up in the

Conclusions

Unlike narrower frameworks for describing evidential systems, this typology of epistemological stances is a pragmatically determined construct that focuses on contextual and discoursal factors. It also recognises that whilst the construal of information on the basis of a type of knowledge uses certain linguistic forms, the construal is not tied in advance to the use of a particular form. It was shown that a factual stance communicates the absence of a personal viewpoint in the construal, and can facilitate the construal of information as unchallengeable. The question requiring further research here is: how does this stance allow writers to construe information while maintaining apparent objectivity? In contrast, a personal–experience stance explicitly represents information in terms of a conceptualiser's version of events. Here, more work remains to be done on how, and with what rhetorical effects, language functions deictically to anchor political–news information to default coordinates of a 'here', a 'now', and an 'I'. An imaginative stance blends aspects of the above two stances: knowledge is both unchallengeable (since it cannot be verified against facts in the real world), and personal (since the conceptualiser has a licence to advance his or her *own* hypotheses). Further research needs to be focused on how this stance can be used to create contrasts between real and imaginary worlds, and to conceptualise different causal links between a protasis and an apodosis. A reportive stance, it was noted, can make the conceptualiser seem less responsible for the construal of information than he or she actually is. More research needs to be done on how entextualisation takes place through journalism that expresses the conceptualiser's (apparent) detachment from the information, while nevertheless aligning the reader with a particular value position.

Finally, investigation of inferential stances has left several loose ends — in particular, the ways in which truth–conditional meanings of evidential and hearsay adverbials provide an input to elaborative inferential processes.

Note

1. Nouns such as "political–news writer(s)" and "journalist(s)" are being used here as terms of convenience only. Assemblage of broadsheet news can require several layers of authoring and editing by different agents (Bell, 1991, pp. 33–83; Cotter, 2010).

2. Consider: «The Tory share of the popular vote ended up only 4 percentage points greater than that won by Michael Howard in 2005» (*Independent* 8.5.10). Whilst the use of a statistic here evokes a fact that is open to independent validation, «popular», «only» and «greater» have opinion–related meanings that involve connotation, emphasis, and comparison and contrast respectively.

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