A grammar of Kumzari : a mixed Perso-Arabian language of Oman
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7   Evidential

7.1   Evidentiality

7.1.1   Evidentials

Grammatical coding of information source is expressed in Kumzari through a three-term system of clause-intial evidentials.[81]   The three evidentials correspond to the first three divisions of Willett's semantic types of evidentiality (1988): attested (*tamna*), reported (*awa*), inferring (*ēka*). The evidential *tamna* is more specifically a marker of firsthand information gathered from sensory sources, thus it is hereafter referred to as a sensory evidential. Table 46 shows the three evidentials and their common equivalents in translation.

Table 46. Evidentials

Evidential type	Kumzari	English translation
Sensory	*tamna*	[a person] saw/ heard/ felt that
Reportive	*awa*	[a person] said that
Inferred	*ēka*	[a person] knows that / obviously / it must be

7.1.2   Evidentiality in related languages

In some Iranian languages, the perfect verb form has developed evidential-like extended meanings of non-firsthand information as a secondary strategy to its verbal meaning (Aikhenvald 2004:11,38-9,77; Bulut 2000:176-8; Lazard 1985; Perry 2005:230-233, Soper 1996, Windfuhr 1982). However, unlike those evidentiality strategies which typically have a single non-firsthand term or extension, Kumzari distinguishes between reported information and inferred information, and information source is the evidentials' primary meaning.

Evidentiality in Arabic is also not grammaticalised (Aikhenvald 2004:10). Yet because of the time-depth of Kumzari's history on the edge of the Arabian peninsula and adjacent to Iran, it is not surprising that Kumzari exemplifies Isaksson's assertion that it is only "in border areas … where contact phenomena are prominent," "…in locations at the periphery of a language region, is an Arabic dialect likely to develop grammaticalised evidential categories" (Isaksson 2000:383,397).

7.1.3   Grammaticalisation of evidentiality

Evidentials in Kumzari are a grammaticalised word class "in that they are invariant and occur only in clause-initial position" (Palmer 2001:49). They have grammatical meaning, and are devoid of lexical meaning, despite their potentially lexical origins.

Non-firsthand sources of information, either reportive (*awa*) or inferred (*ēka*), are obligatorily marked. Unmarked information is assumed to be first-hand, but the sensory evidential *tamna* emphasises the fact that the information has been obtained by means of the immediate senses. An anecdote will illustrate the implications of this imbalance. A Kumzari man was in his house when a guest came to see him. The man did not want to see anyone so he told his little brother to answer the door and to tell the guest: *brār mē ēwō na* 'my brother is not here'.

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[81] Kumzari represents B1 evidentiality system according to the terminology of Aikhenvald 2004:70.

Instead, the little brother used the reportive evidential: *awa ā brār mē ēwō na* 'he said that my brother is not here'. The guest realised that the man was avoiding him, because the little brother's answer was not firsthand information. The fact that *tamna* emphasises otherwise unmarked firsthand information is in accordance with DeLancey's (2001:379) observation that "the unmarked form in an evidential system typically represents information which the speaker knows from first-hand, visual perception."

Evidentials are distinct from other grammatical categories[82], such as adverbs. Unlike adverbs, evidentials are are obligatorily marked in contexts where their semantic parameters apply (i.e. where the information source is sensory, reportive, or inferred). They are also morphologically, syntactically, and semantically distinct from adverbs.

Evidentials take the subordinator alone; adverbs take a subordinator only as part of a subordinated clause. Adverbs vary in clause position but usually follow the verb; evidentials are always clause-initial. An adverb has lexical meaning and modifies a verb while an evidential has only grammatical meaning, denoting information source at clause level, even in verbless clauses.

Semantically, evidentials are distinct from other parts of speech. Replacing an evidential with an adverb or a different evidential results in a meaning change. For example, one could see Ḥamēdō's sandals at the door and use the inferred evidential to say *ēka ā Ḥamēdō ēwō* 'it must be that Ḥamēdō is here'. However, the same sentence would be incorrect if one saw Ḥamēdō in person; in the latter case one would rather say *tamna ā Ḥamēdō ēwō* 'I see that Ḥamēdō is here'. Further, using both an evidential and a periphrastic can function to specify both information source and exactly which sense was used, e.g. *tamna* she heard or *tamna* she saw, or exactly who is was that reported it, e.g. *awa* the horse said or *awa* the boy said. This is an attested typological characteristic of evidentials: "one can add a lexical explanation to an evidentially marked clause, to disambiguate an evidential which has several meanings" (Aikhenvald 2004:10).

Evidentiality is also unrelated to epistemic concerns. Cross-linguistic typological research clearly delineates its separateness from modality: evidentiality "covers the way in which the information was acquired, without necessarily relating to the degree of speaker's certainty concerning the statement or whether it is true or not" (Aikhenvald 2004:3). In Kumzari, epistemic modality is denoted in verb form: the Realis-Irrealis distinction. Unexpectedness of information, reflecting lack of prior knowledge, is revealed in the verb form as well: the Mirative. Thus Kumzari is one of those languages demonstrating that "there is a clear logical distinction between mirativity and evidentiality" and in which expressions of mirativity "have no grammatical connection to any evidential system" (DeLancey 2001:370, cf. Lazard 1999:101).

7.2   Morphosyntax of evidentials

7.2.1   *Subordinator*

All three evidentials are followed by the subordinator.

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[82] The criteria laid out in this section follow Dendale & Tasmowski (2001:344), who list determinants of evidentiality's status in a language.

(363) B351

tamna	**ā**	asp-ē	insī	inda	yē	wa	ḥawṭ-ē	ṣirx.
SENS	SUB	horse-a	humanlike	in	3s	and	pool-a	gold

'**He saw that** a talking horse was in it and a pool of gold.'

The subordinator may appear as a lengthening of the final vowel of the evidential.

7.2.2   *Clause-initial position*

Evidentials occur at the beginning of a clause:

(364) P624

tamna	ā	kōr-ē	tay	ẓēran.
SENS	SUB	boy-a	come:3sIMPF	down

'**She saw that** a boy was coming down.'

7.2.3   *Complement*

An evidential is followed by its complement in the form of a clause or noun phrase:

(365) G213

ēka	ā	**yā**	**ǧrāb-ō**.
INF	SUB	DEM	crow-the

'Obviously it was **this crow**.'

7.3   **Semantics of evidentials**

Evidentials categorise information source as sensed (*tamna*), reported (*awa*), or inferred (*ēka*).

7.3.1   *The sensory evidential tamna*

The Kumzari sensory evidential *tamna* marks immediate perception of sensory information, including visual, auditory, and even emotion and premonition. It is not marked in all cases where information is gleaned directly from a firsthand source. Rather, it emphasises the information source as being sensorily acquired. It is common diachronically for evidentials to become grammaticalised this way, from being optional to obligatory. In Kumzari, unmarked propositions are assumed to have a firsthand information source; this parallels DeLancey's statement that firsthand knowledge is cross-linguistically "typically the unmarked member of the system" (DeLancey 1997:35).

7.3.1.1   The sensory evidential in nearby languages

The sensory evidential *tamna* has several potential origins, as morphemes with similar form and function occur in several languages of the wider region. Perhaps it was a lexical borrowing from the Arabic *ṭumma* 'then' and later developed into an evidential (on *ṭumma* and Arabic evidentiality see Isaksson 2000:396 and Aikhenvald 2004: §9.2.3). In the Arabic variety nearest to Kumzari, Shihhi, there is a clause-initial presentative particle *trōh* meaning

something like 'to see' (Bernabela 2011:62), and it uses the third person, masculine, singular form for all referents.

A few of the Baluchi languages that have been analysed show signs of evidentiality. In Turkmenistani Baluchi, a conjunction *ta* or *tā* is used as a complementiser (Axenov 2006:246), and is glossed as 'that' and translated as 'saw that', followed by a complement clause (Axenov 2006:243,168). Just as *tamna* in Kumzari is used in discourse to convey vividness at the peak, the examples of *ta* cited from Baluchi could be considered to be a pragmatic extension of the visual evidential used for discourse peak: a boy and girl see *ta* that many demons are chasing them, and a woman comes and sees *ta* that her husband's head has been cut off.

The sensory evidential *tamna* is likewise similar to what is called a 'mirative evidential' *ta* in Sistani Baluchi (Barjasteh 2010:113). It is noteworthy that, like *tamna* in Kumzari, when the word *ta* is present, perception verbs may be omitted, since *ta* implies visual perception (Barjasteh 2010:92).

In the Indo-Aryan language Palula, a particle *ta* (Liljegren 2008:341) is similarly translated as 'they saw' and followed by a complement clause. Examples in Liljegren's grammar show that *ta* is used to cite auditory information (hearing drumming, singing, and a message)(Liljegren 2008:211, 219, 284, 347), recall a memory of killing an evil spirit (Liljegren 2008:122), experience itching (Liljegren 2008:315) or stomach pain (Liljegren 2008:119)[83], as well as visual information (Liljegren 2008:112, 149, 150, 152, 217, 273, 296). This accords with the varied sensory experiences attached to *tamna* in Kumzari. In several cases in the Palula data, *ta* is translated or glossed as 'when' but takes a complement clause which may coincide with discourse peak-like events: 'we came, *ta* an avalanche struck and swept us away', and 'the monster came inside, *ta* the man was eating' (Liljegren 2008:110, 124, 164). In these same contexts, Kumzari would have *tamna* both for its primary meaning of a sensory evidential and its extended meaning as peak discourse marker. Incidents featuring the appearance of a bear, leopard, lion, dragon, or other dangerous or surprising thing seems to increase the probability that *ta* will be used in a Palula sentence. Also like *tamna*, the Palula particle *ta* is used for switch-reference to mark different subject clauses in chaining (Liljegren 2008:312).

A similar morpheme occurs in the South Arabian languages. In Mehri a particle written *tē / tɛ / ta* and in Soqotri a particle *tōlī* or *twolī*, and in Hobyot *ṭwáli* (Simeone-Senelle 1997:411; Rubin 2010:125,201) are comparable to Kumzari *tamna*. The morphemes are glossed variously as adverbs or prepositions (e.g. 'then when'), but precede clauses with dramatic events or counterexpectation semantics. Further research is needed to determine their exact grammatical function.

3.1.2 The sensory evidential in context

Usually *tamna* expresses information that is visually acquired:

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[83] sensory evidentials are employed to register pain in other languages, see Littell & Mackie 2012.

(366) B1138

sā	wa	barẓa	wābur	ba	bāğ	almowẓ	ā,
now	if/when	appearing	become:3sREAL	to	garden	Ar:the- banana	SUB

tamna	ā	brār-an	yē	ḥaps=in.
SENS	SUB	brother -PL	3s	bound =EX:3p

'Now when he showed up at the banana garden, **he saw** his brothers were bound.'

but it can also refer to an auditory information source:

(367) R1070

tamna	ā	daqdaqa	kin	ba	dar-ō.
SENS	SUB	knocking	do:MIR	on	door –the

'**They heard** he was knocking on the door.'

(368) R978 (a sorcerer is descending from the sky in the form of an albatross screeching)

tamna	ā	tay	ẓēran.	yē	ēdir-ē	gis-ē.
SENS	SUB	come:3sIMPF	down	3s	screech –a	do:PERF-3s

'**She heard** he was coming down. He had screeched.'

or information obtained by other senses, like feeling:

(369) U170

tamna	ā	gišnağ.
SENS	SUB	hungry

'**He felt** hungry.'

or even a sixth sense, like a premonition:

(370) K686 (an oracle is seeing into the future)

sā	wa	ān	ditk-ō	ktēb-ō	wākd-iš	ā,
now	if/when	3s.ANA	girl-the	book-the	open:REAL-3s	SUB

tamna	ā,	tēra-ē	tay	ba	šan.
SENS	SUB	path-a	come:3sIMPF	to	3p

'Now when the other girl looked into the future, **she saw** a path was coming to them.'

The sensory evidential has an extension in discourse to convey immediacy, adding a here-and-now effect to the statement.   In narratives, *tamna* marks pivot and can have presentative semantics:

(371) K104

tamna	ā	jō'ar-ē	škum	yē.
SENS	SUB	pearl-a	stomach	3s

'**He saw** a pearl in its stomach!' (battle over the pearl ensues throughout the story)

Additionally, it may coincide with the introduction of a new character in the text:

(372) P766

tamna	ā	yak-ē	dgur	āmad	ba	yē.	kō'ī-ē.
SENS	SUB	one –a	other	come:3sREAL	to	3s	mountain.bedouin-a

'**She saw** another person was coming toward her: a mountain bedouin.'

or denote a magical appearance:

(373) B351

wa	wākd-iš	y'=ā,	**tamna**	ā	asp-ē	insī	inda	yē.
if/when	open:3sREAL	3s= SUB	SENS	SUB	horse –a	humanlike	in	3s

'When he opened it, **he saw** there was a talking horse inside.'

7.3.2   *The reportive evidential awa*

The non-firsthand evidential *awa* labels reported information source, and includes both quotative (verbatim speech):

(374) K699

awa	ā	dō'-um	yē	na	ba	yē	na.
REP	SUB	give:IMPF-1s	3s	NEG	to	3s	NEG

'**He said** "I will not give her to him.".'

(375) R166

awa	ā	dg-in	ba	yē	tō	kē =ī	ā?
REP	SUB	say:IMPF-3p	to	3s	2s	who =EX:2s	INTERR

'They actually said to him, "Who are you?"'

and hearsay (indirect speech):

(376) P914

šēx	wālēyt-ō,	**awa**	ā	ar	čōt	pi	tō,	tār-a.
sheikh	country -the	REP	SUB	that/which/who	go:3sIMPF	from	2s	bring:IMPF-3s

'O sheikh of the country, **it is said** whatever leaves you, comes back!'

(377) R550

awa	ā	ẓīn-ō	kišt-in.
REP	SUB	thief -the	kill:REAL-3p

'**It is said** they killed the thief!'

When combined with a verb in the imperative, *awa* has a precative nuance:

(378) P650

tō	**awa**	ā	byō,	āw	ād	ba	mē!
2s	REP	SUB	come:2sIMPER	water	give:2sIMPER	to	1s

'**Please! I'm asking** you, come on, give me water!'

7.3.3   *The inferred evidential ēka*

The evidential *ēka* labels information that is not firsthand but that has been inferred from the situation. Often inferred evidentials take on a disclaimer role; in Uzbek and Kazakh, there is a "copular perfect" morpheme *ekan* called a "non-confirmative" (Straughn 2011:9).

The Kumzari evidential *ēka* incorporates information inferred from sensory evidence:

(379) G213

ar	ğēla-an	mā	gis-ē	ā,	**ēka**	ā	yā	ğrāb-ō.
that/which/who	wheat -PL	1p	take:PERF-3s	SUB	INF	SUB	this	crow -the

'The one who has taken our wheat, **it must have been** this crow.'

and information inferred from general knowledge:

(380) S244

ēka	ā	yā	kas	tāt-a	yē	na.
INF	SUB	this	PERS	want:IMPF-3s	3s	NEG

'**Obviously** no one wanted this.' (an abandoned boat covered in barnacles)

The inferred evidential also includes explanations appealing to the hearer's deduction:

(381) G22

sā	wa	dimistān-an	ā,	kō'ī =in
now	if/when	winter -PL	SUB	of.mountain =EX:3p

ēka	ā	bāram	tō'-a	na,
INF	SUB	rain	become:IMPF-3s	NEG

'Now when it was wintertime, they were in the mountains **as you know** it doesn't rain,'

(382) U176

ēka	ā	yā-an	ā,	pi	drāẓ=in	ā,…	ḍaby-an.	ğāẓalē-ē.
INF	SUB	DEM-PL	SUB	from	long=EX:3p	SUB	oryx-PL	gazelle-a

'**You know** these ones which, that are long [antlers]... oryxes. A gazelle.'

The inferred evidential has pragmatic functions conveying irony:

(383) A581

afaḷḷa	**ēka**	ā	ḥubbō	tō,	nakt-ē	pī	jāmal	dār-iš	ba	mē.
Ar:God's bounty	INF	SUB	grandmother	2s	little –a	fat	camel	give:REAL-3s	to	1s

'**It must be** from God's bounty, your grandmother gave me a little camel fat.' (the speaker knows that in fact it was stolen.)

or to deceive:

(384) G746

ēka	ā	rōk-ō	bap	mē	kišt-ē.
INF	SUB	boy -the	father	1s	kill:PERF-3s

'This boy has **obviously** killed my father.' (in fact he did not, but it looks as though he did)

or to convey disbelief:

(385) R1496

ēka	ā	brā	šmā	āmas-ē	ā?
INF	SUB	brother	2p	come:PERF-3s	INTERR

'**Can it be** your brother has come?!' (they thought he was dead)

(386) R540

ēka	ā	šmā	kš-ī	yē	na.
INF	SUB	2p	kill:IRR-2s	3s	NEG

'**Obviously** you could not have killed him!' (subject was considered a weakling)

7.4   Evidentials in discourse

Further to their place in syntax, evidentials have a compelling role as narrative devices. In the tale about the crow *Ğrābō*, the bedouins see *tamna* that their wheat has been eaten, they infer *ēka* that it must have been the crow who ate it, and later the crow caws to report *awa* that someone is lying.

Although all three evidentials are used in narrative discourse, none of them is a token of a genre. Rather, certain evidentials characterise different aspects of the plot.

7.4.1   Sensory evidential in foregrounding

In discourse grounding at the sentence level, commonly a backgrounding *sā* clause precedes a foregrounding *tamna* clause, for the effect of contrast and to highlight what is seen, heard, or felt:

(387) A316

sā	wa	raft	awwa	bār	ā,	**tamna**	ā	ḥāraṣ-an	ba	yē!
now	if/when	go:3sREAL	first	time	SUB	SENS	SUB	guard-PL	to	3s

'**Now**, when he went the first time, **he saw that** the guards were with it [at the grave]!'

As in many languages, the sensory evidential is also used as a strategy to convey vividness (Aikhenvald 2004:313). In the tale *Kanēdō*, a boy climbs to the top of a wild fig tree in the evening to await the arrival of a magic horse, whom he hopes to catch:

(388) K170

tamna	ā,	asp-ē	rēsid,	di-ta	rōr	wā	yē.
SENS	SUB	horse-a	arrive:3sREAL	two-COUNT	child	with	3s

'**He saw that** a horse came, with two foals.'

In the tale of *Ahmad Tka*, the thief evades capture only to return home to a criminal-sniffing police camel:

(389) A442

sā	wa	qaḥama	y'=ā	āma	barra	ā,
now	if/when	jumping up	3s=SUB	come:3s	outside	SUB

tamna	ā	jāmal-ē	raxama	inda	ḥawy	yē.
SENS	SUB	camel –a	reclining	in	courtyard	3s

'Now when he jumped up and came outside, **he saw** a camel reclining in his courtyard.'

As an extension of its primary meaning citing a sensory information source, the evidential *tamna* marks the pivot in Kumzari discourse; as such, it directly precedes plot-significant information. In the tale *Rōran Šĕxō*, the appearance of a snake is the catalyst for the gay youngest brother to prove his courage by killing it while the six macho brothers are too frightened:

(390) R209

tamna	ā	mār-ē!	mār-ō	āntē	rāstī	jāga	xō,	ḥūšu	tka.
SENS	SUB	snake-a	snake-the	there	correct	place	REFL	slithering	do:3sIMPF

'**They saw** a snake! The snake was really there in its own place, it was slithering.'

The role of *tamna* in discourse is treated in more detail in chapter 11.

7.4.2   Sensory evidential in switch reference

With the verb *gō* 'say', the sensory evidential is used to denote switch reference within a conversation:

(391) B94

dg-in	ba	yē,	…	iš	wā	mā	rōr	na.
say:IMPF-3p	to	3s	…	any	with	1p	child	NEG

'**They said** to him,… "we have no children."

tamna	ā	**dgō**,	mē	rōr-an	dō'-um	ba	šmā.
SENS	SUB	say:3sIMPF	1s	child-PL	give:IMPF-1s	to	2p

[**it was heard**] **he said**, "I myself will give children to you."'

and for change of syntactic subject:

(392) B787

inča	ba'ada	**būr-in**	farra	ā,
like this	distancing	become:IMPF-3p	far.away	SUB

tamna	ā	**dgō**	ba	xwē	xō,
SENS	SUB	say:3sIMPF	to	sister	REFL

ēja!	īn	mē	mād,	ba	šang-ō.
oh!	what's-it-called	1s	stay:3sREAL	for	comb-the

'Like this **they became** far away, **[Then] she said** to her sister, "Oh! I left this comb of mine."'

7.4.3   Reportive evidential in non-speech discourse

The conclusion of a tale prohibits direct speech (see chapter 11). In the tale *Sōntyō*'s coda, the homecoming of the sheikh's daughter technically complies with this rule by using the reportive evidential instead of direct speech. In this context, the reportive evidential is used to indicate that no particular character is saying it, but the words are just "noise in a crowd":

(393) S880

adala   bur   ğār-ō.
going on become:MIR   racket-the
'"The racket [of celebration] went on!'

ḥawly-an!   wa
male goat-PL   and
Male goats! and

tāfaq-an!   wa
gun-PL   and
guns! and

matfa-ē   bẓand-in!   wa
cannon-a hit:REAL-3p   and
they fired a cannon! and

awa ā   dit   mā   āmad!   wa
REP   SUB   daughter   1p   come:3sREAL   and
it was said that 'our daughter came [home]!' and

awa ā   rōr-ē   wā   yē!   wa
REP   SUB   child-a   with 3s   and
it was said that 'she has a child!' and

awa ā   ditk-ō   šēx   fālan   gis-ē.
REP   SUB   daughter-the   sheikh   so-and-so   take:PERF-3s
it was said that 'the daughter has taken Sheikh so-and-so [in marriage]!'""