

Evidentiality. Dutch *seem* and *appear* verbs *blijken, lijken, schijnen**

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1. Introduction

The concept of evidentiality has been found in contemporary linguistics since the mid-eighties (Anderson 1986).¹ It refers to a grammatical category encoding the source of information as the type of knowledge the speaker uses in order to utter a speech act. Whereas evidentiality is often a grammatical category in non-European languages (either obligatory or not), it is optionally represented in the lexicon in West European, i.e. Romance and Germanic languages. In this paper the focus will be on this lexical aspect. Within the framework of cognitive functional linguistics the existence of lexically motivated evidentiality has received some attention. The phenomenon generally has been discussed in connection with aspects of modality (cf. Nuyts 2001). Although the concept of evidentiality can be applied to other parts of speech and collocations, most research has been done on verbs. In traditional grammars evidentials belong to the category of (semi-)auxiliary verbs. The majority of the publications focus on *seem* equivalents: Askedal 1998, Diewald 2000 and 2001, Vliegen forthc. on German *scheinen*; De Haan 1999 and 2007, Vliegen forthc. on Dutch *schijnen*; Aijmer 2009 on English *seem*, Cornillie 2007 on Spanish *parecer*. In addition, Cornillie 2007 deals with the Spanish *appear* equivalent *resultar* and Vliegen 2010 with the corresponding Dutch verb *blijken*. There are also some results from Sanders & Spooren 1996 (see Section 3).

This paper consists of two complementary parts. The first, historical part discusses the rise of the evidential meaning and the development of various constructions. Although the principle options are available rather early, the stabilization of a system takes quite some time, including the rise and fall of some of them. The second part on Modern Dutch discusses the options that each verb picks from this inventory, the system being stabilized. Moreover, there is some evidence of continuing change (see Section 3 *blijken*).

I will concentrate on the following three Dutch verbs in a number of constructions: *schijnen*, *lijken* (look like) en *blijken*. In Section 2 I will have a look at some historical data in order to sketch in some detail the historical development of these verbs and their main constructions. The historical examples come from different sources. The Middle Dutch quotations partly come from the Middle Dutch Dictionary (MNW), partly from the Digital Library of Dutch Literature (DBNL). Younger historical examples are from the DBNL. The subject of Section 3 is their use in written Modern Dutch.² The data are from the Dutch newspaper NRC. Section 4 discusses the results with respect to grammaticalization. In this section I will also briefly address the aspect of ‘reliability’ as presented in Cornillie 2009.

2. Historical development

In this section I will start with *schijnen*, then continue with *blijken* and end with *lijken*. All verbs show the well-known development with respect to grammaticalization. Their meaning has been shifting from concrete to abstract, or more specifically from lexical to evidential. The earliest examples of the verb *schijnen* show a full intransitive verb with the meaning *stralen* (*shine*) (see Vliegen forthc. for a discussion). Celestial bodies in (1) and also gems in (2) serve as grammatical subjects (De Haan 2007: 140). Furthermore, there are some early examples with a more abstract meaning like in (3).

- (1) Die mane scheen scone ende claer. (1320–1330) (De Haan 2007: 142)
the moon shone beautifully and bright
‘The moon was shining beautifully and bright’
- (2) Een carbonkelsteen, die so claer omtrent hem seen (Bloeml. 1, 184, 81)
a carbuncle.stone that so clear around him shone
‘a carbuncle that was shining so clear around’
- (3) Nonne die ooc heilich sceinen (De Haan 2007: 142)
nuns who as.well holy appear
‘Nuns who appear holy as well’

Three constructions with evidential meaning emerge: the copular construction (COP), the infinitival construction (INF) and the *dat* (*that*)-construction (DAT). However, particularly in the case of the COP it is not at all easy to decide in individual cases whether it is a full verb with an adverb or the copular verb with an adjective: adverbs and adjectives in predicative use do not have different morphological markings. Moreover, the interpretation is hindered because the full verb already suggests a subjective interpretation (Askedal 1998: 62, Diewald 2001: 94).

Van der Horst (2008:451) assumes that the COP came into use not before the end of late Middle Dutch (1350–1500) or in early Modern Dutch (16th century). Although there is an example of the bare infinitive construction from the 13th century (4), most examples of *schijnen* contain a present participle: *dolende* in (5), *wesende* in (6), a construction that would disappear in favour of the INF with *te* (*to*) in (7, 8, 9) later on. How these changes took place in detail is rather obscure. In a discussion of comparable facts in German Diewald (2001:103f.) takes the position advocated by Dal (1952:108f.) that the assimilation of the final dental consonant of the present participle leads to a conflation of the forms of the present participle and the infinitive. However, I fully agree with the more cautious position of Van der Horst (2008:886). In his opinion there were three co-existential constructions — perhaps somewhat different in meaning — for some time: present participle, bare infinitive (Van der Horst: short infinitive) and *te*-infinitive (Van der Horst: long infinitive). For some reason the construction with the present participle disappeared. A causal relationship cannot be attested yet. According to Diewald (2001:349), in German the constructions first show up with the infinitive *sein* (*be*). Later on combinations with other verbs are found. Again, in Dutch this might be correct in general. However, early exceptions are found like example (4) with the bare infinitive ‘voeren.’ Example (9) is an example of the INF with an experiencer *my* (*me*) (see Section 3 for current use).

- (4) Als oft si waren van verre comen
 as if they were from far come
 Groten vaet hebsi vernomen
 big barrels have.they taken
 Als oft si quamen dor woistinen
 as if they came through deserts
 Dar si in watre voeren scinen
 there they in water carry seemed
 ‘big barrels they have taken as if they came through deserts’ in which they
 seemed to carry water’ (13th century)
- (5) ende hoe selke altoes schinen dolende
 and how such always seem wandering
 ‘and how such (people) always seem to wander’ (13th century)
- (6) Het schijnt wesende een besloten hof mit mueren
 it seems being an enclosed court with walls
 ‘it seems to be an enclosed court with wall’ (1486)
- (7) so datter scheen alle die vuylicheyte der werelt vergadert te sijn
 so that.there seemed all the dirt of.the world gathered to be
 ‘so that there seemed to be gathered all dirt of the world’ (1516)

- (8) Nochtan waren fonteynen niet verre vanden mueren
 although were wells not far from.the walls
 daer die poorters scenen te sceppen heymelijc watere:
 there the burghers seemed to take secret water
 ‘although there were wells not far from the walls where the burghers seemed
 to take secretly water’ (1477)
- (9) my schijnt te.samen van de Homerischer Goden Godlicken dranck
 me seems together from the Homeric gods divine drink
 met Nepenthe, droncken te zijne,
 with Nepenthe, drunk to be
 ‘(all) together seemed to me to be drunk from the divine drink
 with Nepenthe from the Homeric gods’
 (Erasmus. Transl. Willem Geillyaert, Embden 1560)

De Haan’s claim (De Haan 2007:141 and Diewald 2001: 104) that the impersonal *dass*-construction in German is a product of the 18th century has to be rejected. The German example (10) dates from the 13th century. It already shows this impersonal construction. Few examples of a personal biclausal construction with coreferential subjects in main clause and subclause (11) are found. This type fell into disuse and was seemingly replaced by the INF shortly after (see Vliegen forthc. for a discussion).

- (10) dâ schein daz er in gerne sach
 there seems that he him gladly saw
 ‘it seemed that he liked him’ (13th century (MHDWB), see Vliegen forthc.)
- (11) si liezen dâ wol schînen / daz si wâren unverzagt. (MHDWB)
 they let there well seem / that they were fearless
 ‘they showed there well that they were fearless’ (late 13th century)

In Dutch, too, there are early examples of *dat* from the 14th century (12) on, including biclausal examples (13). In later examples with an impersonal subject, especially if it is enclitical, the verb has the appearance of an evidential marker (14). There is also a paratactic variant (15):

- (12) De naem van desen mantel is ypocrisie ende is gheuoert mit vellen
 the name of this coat is hypocrisy and is lined with furs
 van vossen al schijntet van buyten datse mit lammeren geuoert is.
 of foxes although seems.it from outside that.he with lambs lined is
 ‘The name of this coat is hypocrisy and it is lined with the fur of foxes
 although it seems to be lined with (the fur of) lambs from outside’ (15th
 century)

- (13) Si schinen dat si weten algader die verborgenheit des
they seem that they know all.together the mysteriousness of.the
Vader. (1390–1410) (De Haan 1999:83)
Father
'They seem to all know the mysteriousness of the Father'
- (14) Tschijnt dat hi van duechden scrijft menich sermoen
it.seems that he out.of virtue writes many sermon
'It seems that he out of virtue writes many a sermon' (1548)
- (15) Tschijndt sy sijn vol liefden /en charitaten
it.seems they are full love and charity
'they are seemingly full of love and charity' (1548)

As was noted above, the verb *blijken* shows a development similar to that of *schijnen*. The main difference to *schijnen* is the total loss of its original meaning 'glinsteren, schitteren' ('shine, sparkle'), as is shown in example (16) (see Vliegen 2010). The 'new' evidential meaning occurs in all constructions from the 14th century on (examples 17 and 18). Here again Van der Horst (2008: 451) assumes that the copula did not come into use before the end of late Middle Dutch (1350–1500) or in early Modern Dutch (16th century). A notable fact in many examples is the presence of the source in the COP, this source usually being a text (17). The source is expressed by a PP with *in* (*in*), later on with *uit* ('out', *from*). Here also, combinations with the infinitive *wesen* or *zijn* (both meaning *to be*) (examples 19 en 20) first appear in the INF. Example (20) is also interesting because *blijken* has been combined with an experiencer (*aen my* ('on me', *to me*)). Nowadays there are some restrictions on this use (see Section 3).

- (16) Alsi sagen den brant blikem,
as.they saw the fire glow
'as they saw the fire glowing' (early 14th century)
- (17) Alst blijct in den brieve aldus Beghinnende:
as.it appears in the letter thus beginning
'As it appears from the letter that begins as follows' (1300–1325)
- (18) het blijct wel dat hi moet Van breken clagen.
it appears well that hi must from break complain
'It appears clearly that he must complain about breaking' (around 1400)
- (19) Dus blijckt, na al dese rekeninge, de Schilder-const ouder als
so appears after all this calculating the painting-art older than
Rooms bouwinge te wesen.
Romes buildings to be

‘So it appears, after all these calculations, that the art of painting is older than the buildings of Rome’ (1604)

- (20) maer het blijkt aen my waer te zijn, datmen de kleyne Dieven
 but it appears on me true to be, that.one the small thieves
 hanght, ... (1659)
 hangs
 ‘But it appears to me true that the small thieves are hanged ...’

The third verb, *lijken*, does not appear until the 17th century in its grammaticalized meaning, although Van der Horst (2008: 451) mentions one example from Middle Dutch. In this case, even more than in the case of the two other verbs, the lexical meaning already (*lijken (op) (look alike/resemble)*) suggests a degree of subjectivity. Therefore it is difficult to separate the two readings. As will be shown in Section 3, the connection between the lexical (21) and the evidential meaning (22) is still strong nowadays. Other constructions containing *lijken*, i.e. DAT and INF, are found significantly later than these constructions with *schijnen* and *blijken*.

- (21) Wadt soudet lijcken dat wij sonder kennisse, ... souden
 what should.it look.like that we without knowledge should
 approbeeren tgeene anderen wedervaert, ...
 approve what others DAT happens
 What would it look like if we would approve without knowledge of what
 happens to others (Hoof, first half 17th century)
- (22) Het lijckt wat te wesen, en ’t is lijckwel niet,
 it looks.like something to be and it is yet not
 ‘It seems to be quite something and yet it is nothing’ (Brederoo, early 17th
 century)

It can be concluded that the meaning shift of *blijken* and *schijnen* is already a fact in the 13th century, the grammaticalization of the COP being the first stage. *Blijken* loses its lexical meaning. Towards the end of the 14th century the DAT is in use, at first with coreferent subjects, later on with an impersonal subject. There are a couple of rivalling constructions containing a present participle or an infinitive. Eventually the *te*-infinitive is the preferred option. Early examples show the infinitival forms *wesen/zijn*. The evidential meaning of the verb *lijken* and the respective constructions seem to be modelled after the two other verbs.

3. Use in written Modern Dutch

In this section I will concentrate on the lexical meaning versus the evidential meaning, as well as on the various constructions: COP, DAT and INF. The Dutch reference grammar ANS (1007–1009) presents the three verbs together with some other less frequent semi-auxiliaries. Indeed, they share a number of syntactic properties, for instance aspects of verb clustering (see Askedal 1998 for an extensive overview of the strongly related verb *scheinen* in German). As will be demonstrated, the actual use of the various constructions of the verbs shows remarkable differences.

The contrasts between the evidential meanings of the three verbs are subtle. Sanders & Spooren (1996: 243) conclude from their experimental data on infinitival constructions that these verbs each express a different degree of certainty: *blijken* expresses “the factuality of information”, *lijken* expresses “a lower degree of certainty”, whereas *schijnen* expresses “uncertainty”. The data presented below will show that there are even more subtle differences, as for instance the (im)possibility of the use of an experiencer.

The corpus data are taken from the corpus of the Dutch newspaper NRC (INL-Leiden, 27 million words). *Blijken* and *lijken* are much more frequent than *schijnen*. For *blijken* there are 725 examples of the aforementioned constructions COP, DAT, INF, and its use as a main verb as well as 113 examples of various other constructions (September 1994, one month), for *lijken* there are examples 893 + 81 examples (September 1994, one month), for *schijnen* there are 995 + 42 examples (January–December 1994, twelve months).³

schijnen

Schijnen still has its lexical meaning (23). The evidential meaning especially is present in the COP (24) and INF (25) (see Table 1). Experiencers are rare. Moreover, their use is rejected by most native speakers (see Vliegen forthc. for details). Apart from the impersonal DAT (26), a parenthetical construction (29 occurrences) with *naar* (*as*) is found (27). In this variant *hearsay* is indicated. In some examples the temporal auxiliary has been dropped: *Hij scheen geraakt (te zijn)* (*He seemed (to be) touched*). Almost all cases involve achievements. Because of this rather verbal aspect I decided to add them to the INF. Of course, it is possible to treat them as belonging to COP. The corresponding figures are indicated in the headline of Tables 1, 2 and 4.

- (23) De zon scheen en ze probeerden te bedenken welke verjaardag ze nog nooit hadden gevierd.
 ‘the sun was shining and they tried to think of which birthday they never had celebrated’

- (24) Alles om me heen scheen zo schoon en zuiver (te zijn).
'everything around me seemed to be so clean und pure'
- (25) Sommigen van hen schijnen nachtmerries over te houden aan het harde werken op de ergometer, een soort roeimachine.
'some of them seem to keep nightmares about the tough work an the ergometer, a kind of rowing machine'
- (26) Het schijnt dat de effectiviteit van een WC wordt getest met het doorspoelen van pingpongballen; ...
'it seems that the efficiency of a toilet is tested by flushing table tennis balls'
- (27) En de ijselijke kreten van de naar het schijnt jaarlijks toenemende populatie van groene papegaaien met gele buikjes.
'and the horrible shrieks of the, as it seems, every year increasing population of green parrots with yellow bellies'

Table 1. *schijnen*: frequencies. *9 past participles without *te zijn*

<i>schijnen</i>	main	COP	DAT	INF	total
	212	61	38	*684	995
	21.3%	6.1%	3.8%	68.8%	100.0%

blijken

As was demonstrated in Section 2, this verb has long lost its original meaning. In addition to the COP (30), the DAT (31) and the INF (32), the verb can also be used as a full verb (28) without any further constituent apart from the subject. This use as a full verb seems to be an entirely new development. The use of an experiencer is possible, except for the INF and, rather remarkably, the simple present of the main verb use and the present of the DAT (**Het blijkt me (dat Jan ziek was) (It appears to me that John has been ill)* vs. *Het bleek mij (dat Jan ziek was) (It appeared to me that John has been ill)*) (see Vliegen 2010 for details). Unlike *schijnen*, this verb shows as many DAT occurrences as INF occurrences (see Table 2). There seems to be a division of labour. In the main verb construction (29) and the DAT (31) the source often is explicitly mentioned. This points to inference from direct evidence. This seems to be a confirmation of the statement in Sanders & Spooren 1996 that *blijken* is in need of strong evidence, even more than in their case of the INF. In the COP and the INF the source is almost never explicitly mentioned (see Table 3). Constructions with *zo(als) (as)* (33) (source: 24 out of 76 occurrences) are also found.

- (28) Dat blijkt.
'That is obvious'

- (29) Dit blijkt uit het jaarverslag over de het boekjaar 1992/93.
'this appears from the annual report of the financial year 1992/93'
- (30) Maar gelukkig blijkt mijn twijfel op dit punt misplaatst.
'but fortunately my doubt appears to be out of place at this point'
- (31) Uit die woorden blijkt dat Van den Broek het zelf niet helemaal geloofde.
'these words show that Van den Broek himself did not quite believe this'
- (32) Toch blijkt de bereidheid tot compromissen haar grenzen te hebben.
'however, the willingness to compromises appears to be limited'
- (33) Dit heeft zijn uitwerking niet gemist, zo blijkt uit het verslag.

Table 2. *blijken*: frequencies constructions, *14 past part. without *te zijn*

<i>blijken</i>	main	COP	DAT	INF	total
	116	166	221	*222	725
	16.0%	22.9%	30.5%	30.6%	100.0%

Table 3. *blijken* PP: *uit* (indication of source)

<i>blijken</i>	main source	COP source	DAT source	INF source
	96 (116)	0 (166)	129 (221)	1 (222)
	82.8%	0.0%	58.4%	0.5%

lijken

Apart from the lexical meaning (34), the COP (35) and the INF (37) are the most frequent constructions (see Table 4). This is similar to the distributions of *schijnen*. The difference is the use of an experiencer. Except for the lexical meaning, an experiencer is always possible. An experiencer is specifically used in the COP (46 out of 327 (14.1%)). It refers almost exclusively to the speaker. The DAT only combines with the lexical meaning (36). However, the lexical (*als*)*of*- (*as if*) construction, which indicates irreality of the subclause, is more frequent (42 occurrences). The difference between the lexical and the evidential meaning is subtle. Example (35) can be understood in two ways: paraphrasing by 'lijkt **op** een crue grap', with a PP, renders the lexical meaning, whereas paraphrasing with an experiencer 'lijkt **me** een crue grap' gives the evidential meaning. Both possibilities exclude each other. The difference between the near synonyms *schijnen* en *lijken* seems to be that *schijnen* points to hearsay, whereas *lijken* by means of an optional experiencer is able to point to the speaker exclusively (see also Section 4.).⁴

- (34) Ook buiten het veld leek hij absoluut niet op een nieuweling.
‘Also outside of the pitch he definitely did not look as a rookie’
- (35) Dat hij, ..., wegens verbale agressie veroordeeld is, lijkt een crue grap.
‘That he, ..., has been found guilty of verbal aggression, seems to be a cruel joke’
- (36) Het lijkt erop dat de Amerikaanse uitgeverijen de homomarkt ontdekt hebben.
‘it looks like the American publishers have discovered the homosexual market’
- (37) Iedereen lijkt de auto’s en de wegen zat te zijn.
‘everybody seems to be fed up with the cars and the roads’

Table 4. *lijken*: frequencies constructions, *58 past part. without *te zijn*

<i>lijken</i>	lexical	COP	DAT	INF	total
	121	327	16	*406	870
	13.9%	37.6%	1.8%	46.7%	100.0%

4. Results

De Haan (1999: 75) lists a number of criteria for grammaticalization of lexical evidentials, referring to Anderson (1986: 274f.).⁵ Two of them are relevant here. The first criterion (1) implies that the evidential is part of the main clause. This is the case in the INF, whereas the evidential is in a clause of its own in the DAT. The second criterion (2) states that evidentiality is the dominant meaning of the verb. I add a third criterion (3). Like modals, fully grammaticalized evidential verbs do not have a syntactic valency of their own, and therefore they cannot have for instance an experiencer (3) (Diewald 2000: 344).

This corpus study reveals that there are grades of grammaticalization between the verbs but also between the constructions of the same verb. *Blijken* as a whole satisfies criterion 2; the evidential meaning is the only meaning of the verb, while the INF also satisfies criteria 1 and 3. The evidential is part of the main clause and the INF does not allow an experiencer. The COP and the DAT (the first one with some restrictions) allow for an experiencer and therefore do not satisfy criterion 3. The evidential is not part of the main part of the clause in the DAT: criterion 1 is not fulfilled. The strength of grammaticalization for *blijken* is as follows: INF > COP > DAT. *Schijnen* as a verb does not satisfy criterion 1 because it has a lexical meaning as well, but it does satisfy criterion 3: an experiencer is not allowed. DAT again does not fulfil criterion 1. The strength of grammaticalization for *schijnen* is

as follows: INF > COP/ DAT. *Lijken* does not fulfil criteria 1 and 3 because it has a lexical meaning as well and it does allow for an experiencer. DAT is even not evidential. Summarizing, *blijken* and *schijnen* have been grammaticalized most, although not equally in all aspects, whereas *lijken* is (far) less grammaticalized. The main difference between *blijken* en *schijnen* is the fact that *blijken* is an evidential per se but does not fully satisfy criterion 3, whereas *schijnen* still has a lexical meaning but does satisfy fully criterion 3 when used as an evidential.

In a recent article, Cornillie (2009) proposes connecting the source of information with grades of reliability of this information on the one hand, and connecting the epistemic speaker comment with grades of likelihood on the other hand. Reliability then can be understood as ‘shared’ or ‘non-shared’. According to Cornillie, the following types of sources are then available: the speaker (non-shared), the speaker and others or other entities (shared), others (?) (2009: 58). The information is more reliable if the evidence is shared. Unfortunately, Cornillie does not mention how to judge the type of source where the speaker is excluded. Nevertheless, the optional use or alternatively obligatory absence of the experiencer might be a criterion in order to classify evidential verbs and their constructions as ‘shared’ or ‘non-shared’. Along this line one might characterize *schijnen* in all constructions as ‘shared’, whereas *lijken* can be both ‘shared’ and ‘non-shared’. However, this will be an area for further research.

Notes

* I would like to thank Margit Rem for the tentative translation of example 4 and Mike Hannay for correcting my English. I am also grateful for comments from two anonymous reviewers.

1. Jakobson introduced “EVIDENTIAL” as “a tentative label” in 1957 (Jakobson 1990: 392).
2. The introduction to the Dutch corpus PAROLE refers to the period 1982–1998 as Modern Dutch (“modern-Nederlands”). (<http://www.inl.nl/nl/corpora/parole-corpus-2004>). Unfortunately, this corpus is not available at the moment. The introduction to the corpus based digital dictionary ANW classifies the period from 1970 up to now (<http://anw.inl.nl>) as contemporary (“eigentijds”). See also note 3.
3. One of the reviewers has some doubts about the representativity of this corpus. I checked the ANW: *blijken* and *lijken* have similar figures; *schijnen* has about 10% of these figures. See also note 2.
4. Interestingly, both verbs have to be translated as *scheinen* in German. In contrast to Dutch *schijnen* this verb allows optionally an experiencer.
5. De Haan does not take the copular construction into account.

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