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Tenets of the 'unseen':
The preferred information source
for the supernatural in Tariana

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Alexandra Y. Aikhenvald

James Cook University

alexandra.aikhenvald@jcu.edu.au

Languages deploy various resources to express knowledge – especially the knowledge which correlates with special powers. In quite a few languages of the world, every sentence has to state how information was acquired. This grammatical marking of information source – known as evidentiality – offers a means of expressing knowledge obtained by different means, and accessible to different ‘knowers’. The ways in which shamans – who are privy to special powers and

special knowledge – will use evidentials are different from those for people who have no access to supernatural means. And the ways in which shamanic experience and practices are talked about by those who do not have the same powers differ from the ways in which ordinary, easily observable, experience is presented (see Storch 2010, on the role of the invisible in religion). The grammatical means of expressing access to what others cannot ‘see’ is what I would like to touch upon here.

Supernatural experience — the spirits of the jungle, the effect of healers and of various shamans, both benevolent and evil — plays an important role in the stories and in the everyday life of the speakers of Tariana, an Arawak language from the multilingual Vaupés Linguistic Area of north-west Amazonia in Brazil. Fear of spirits’ retaliation dictates the taboos. Healers are relied upon for personal well-being, and powerful shamans can inflict damage if offended or not placated enough. The Tariana language has an elaborate system of grammatical marking of evidentiality, with five terms. (Incidentally, four- or five-term evidentiality systems are an areal feature of the Vaupés; however, details vary). The use of evidentials depends on the information source of the speaker and sometimes also of the addressee. It also correlates with the speaker’s status — and whether or not they have access to the ‘unseen’.

I have been working with speakers of Tariana since 1991, and collected a large corpus of stories of varied genres (c. 35 hours of recordings). Among them were stories about shamanic practices, various types of dreams, taboos, origin myths, travels of ancestors, hunting stories and fairy tales. In 2012, after many of the elders and my original teachers had passed away, I got to work with two remaining older speakers who also had healing powers. We recorded, and then transcribed, a number of stories about traditional ‘blessings’ with healing powers. The stories were told using non-visual evidential. That the blessing is viewed as dealing with something ‘unseen’ was brought home to me in the reply, by Jorge, the healer, to my question. Evidentials are in bold throughout this text.

(1) Kwe-**nha** pi-ni pi-kale
how-PRES.VIS.INTERR 2sg-do 2sg-heart

pi-ñapa?
2sg-bless

‘How do you do blessing?’ (lit. how do you do bless heart)?

(2) Pa-ka-ka-nuku ne
IMP-see-SEQ-TOP.NON.A/S NEG

hyukade-**mha**
NOT.BE-PRES.NONVISUAL

di-daki sede-**na**
3sgnf-body NEG.EXIST-REM.PASTVISUAL

hiku-kade-**mha**
appear-NEG-PRES.NONVISUAL

‘When one looks, there is nothing, there has never been a body, it does not appear’

The non-visual evidential — the preferred choice in the descriptions of healing and shamanic practices — is not used by healers and shamans when they talk about themselves and their own experience (which is obtained visually, since a shaman ‘sees’ everything).

In §1, I start with a snap-shot of the Tariana evidential system and the preferred evidentials. In §2, I turn to the gamut of meanings of the non-visual evidential, with a focus on discourse about the supernatural powers. In §3, I look at the ways in which taboos and beliefs are phrased.

1. Evidentials in Tariana: an overview

To form a grammatical sentence in Tariana, the speaker has to explicitly state the information source, using a set of morphological markers (all of them clitics which occur on the verb or on any focussed constituent; see Aikhenvald 2003: 287-309).¹

Evidentials are marked only in main clauses. Visual evidentials are used if the speaker has seen the event, and non-visual evidentials refer to something heard, or smelt, or felt by touch. Inferred evidentials refer to something inferred based on visible results: as one infers that it has rained on the basis of puddles, or that someone has eaten chicken because their hands are greasy (they are also used if the speaker but not the addressee has access). Assumed evidentials will be used if a statement is based on general knowledge (and are used to express knowledge expected to be shared by speaker and addressee). Reported evidentials are employed if the information comes from a speech report. Evidential markers are fused with tense — present (zero-marked), recent past (marked with the suffix *-ka*), or remote past (suffix *-na*). No evidentials are distinguished in the future. The inferred and the assumed evidential have no present tense. The semantics of tenses correlates with the time of the happening and the time of when the information was acquired (Aikhenvald 2003: 289-90).

The following examples illustrate real-life situations when evidentials were used to express different information sources for the speaker (from author's fieldwork, 2012).

- (3) Nu-nami karak
1sg-father's.younger.brother chicken

di-merita-**naka**
3sgnf-fry-PRESENT.VISUAL

'My younger uncle is frying chicken'
(I (the speaker) see him)

- (4) Nu-nami karaka
1sg-father's.younger.brother chicken

di-merita-**mha**
3sgnf-fry-PRESENT.NONVISUAL

'My younger uncle is frying chicken' (I smell
the fried chicken, but cannot see this)

- (5) Nu-nami karaka
1sg-father's.younger.brother chicken

di-merita-**nhi-ka**
3sgnf-fry-INFERRED-RECENT.PAST

'My younger uncle has fried chicken' (I see
bits of grease stuck on his hands and he
smells of fried chicken)

- (6) Nu-nami karaka
1sg-father's.younger.brother chicken

di-merita-**si-ka**
3sgnf-fry-ASSUMED-RECENT.PAST

'My younger uncle has fried chicken' (I assume
so: he gets so much money he can afford it,
and he looks like he has had a nice meal)

¹ A reduced set of evidentials is used in questions, while imperatives have just one, reported, evidential (meaning 'do something on someone else's order'). The complex evidentiality system in Tariana has been largely calqued from Tucanoan languages (see Aikhenvald 2003). As a consequence, Tariana has the largest system of evidentials of all the Arawak languages. Baniwa of Içana/Kurripako and Piapoco, Tariana's closest relatives, have just one evidential marking reported information.

- (7) Nu-nami karaka di-merita-**pid**a-ka
 1sg-father's.younger.brother chicken 3sgnf-fry-REPORTED-RECENT.PAST

'My younger uncle has fried chicken' (I was told recently)

Table 1 summarises the meanings and the uses of evidentials in Tariana (see also Aikhenvald 2003: 294).

EVIDENTIAL	USE
Visual	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Information obtained through seeing 2. Information on events which can be easily observed 3. To refer to events for which speaker takes full responsibility 4. Generally known (and observable) facts; the preferred evidential in stories relating personal experience
Nonvisual	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To report events or states which the speaker has heard, smelt, tasted, or felt but not seen, including negative clauses (e.g. I did not see-nonvisual) 2. Physical and mental states 3. Accidental uncontrollable actions for which no responsibility is taken (hence use with verbs of obligation, feeling, illnesses, physical processes), as well as with verbs like 'be lost'; actions in dreams 4. Descriptions of actions of evil spirits who cannot be seen but can be felt and heard, and descriptions of actions by shamans and healers, and their attributes
Inferred	Information obtained through observing direct evidence of an event or a state
Assumed	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Information obtained by reasoning or common sense without visual or non-visual experience 2. Preferred evidential in some traditional stories and translations
Reported	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Information obtained through repetition of information related by someone else (secondhand and thirdhand) 2. Preferred evidential in story-telling obtained from someone else

Table 1. The meanings of evidentials in Tariana: a summary

A few further principles account for the use of evidentials. Different types of stories always go together with one kind of evidential, as tokens of a genre. In Tariana (just like in the overwhelming majority of other languages), stories and legends which the speaker heard from someone else are cast in the reported evidential. A story about what happened to the speaker is cast in visual evidential. The assumed evidential is used in traditional legends based on ‘signs’ known to the Tariana and thus information pertaining to the domain of shared knowledge by the group (see Aikhenvald 2003: 300, and Ramirez 1997: 140, for a similar use of the assumed evidential in Tucano, and Miller 1999: 67, on Desano).

In real life, the speaker will normally have access to more than one information source: what one can see one can often hear, and there is usually enough information for an inference and an assumption. Visually obtained information, if available, is preferred over any other information source. As Janet Barnes (1984: 262) put it for Tuyuca, an East Tucanoan language from the same linguistic area, ‘it does not matter what evidence the speaker later sees or what information he receives; if, at any point, he saw or is seeing the state or event he reports it using a visual evidential’. The next preferred choice will be nonvisual evidential, then inferred based on visible results, then reported, and only then the assumed.

These choices reflect the following hierarchy of preferred evidentials in Tuyuca, Tariana and also Tucano (see Barnes 1984: 262-4; also Oswalt 1986 for Kashaya, a Pomoan language). The preferences outlined in Diagram 1 reflect the every-day discourse and choices one has to make if more than one information source is available.

Visual < Non-visual < Inferred < Reported < Assumed

Diagram 1. Hierarchy of Preferred Evidentials in Tuyuca, Tariana, and Tucano

The preference for information source acquired through vision reflects the primary importance of what one sees reflected in words of popular wisdom such as ‘seeing is believing’, and the evidence of primacy of ‘vision’ as information source from studies in human cognition and child language acquisition (see Ünal and Papafragou 2018, Fitneva 2018, Courtney 2014 on Quechua, and the discussion of the importance of various senses in ritual by Beek 2010). Visually acquired information is the most reliable one, and in many languages a visual evidential is associated with certainty and generally known and universally accessible facts (see, for instance, Floyd 1999 on Wanka Quechua, and Wiemer 2018 on epistemic meanings of evidentials). In Tariana, one’s own non-visual report (which means reporting an event or state that the speaker had heard, smelt or tasted) is preferred to inferred, reported or assumed, in this order.

The assumed evidential (especially in its remote past tense form) combines reference to what the speaker and the addressee both know. Speakers of Tariana — and of many other languages with obligatory marking of information source — are careful in being precise about how they know things: misuse of evidentials may result in speakers’ being accused of incompetence, or, worse, sorcery and unwarranted access to knowledge which may betray an act of sorcery (see some examples in Aikhenvald 2003: 309-11). This could account for the ‘assumed’ evidential being

‘the bottom of the pile’ (further discussion of preferred evidentials is in Aikhenvald 2004: Chapter 10).²

What if the speaker is venturing into the domain beyond human eyes – that of the supernatural? The non-visual evidential will be used to relate the actions of evil spirits which are not ‘seen’. The non-visual evidential is prominent in stories about the actions of shamans and healers. This is what we turn to now.

2. What the ‘non-visual’ evidential is used for

The non-visual evidential has a gamut of meanings summarised in Table 1. It is used to report events or states which the speaker has heard, smelt, tasted, or felt but not seen, including negative clauses (e.g. I did not see-nonvisual). In (6) the nonvisual evidential refers to the smell of the fried chicken. In (8), LB talks about difficulties concerning his Tuyuca-speaking father-in-law, whose language he did not understand (lit. did not ‘hear’).

(8) du-haniri-ne pa-sape-hyu
 3sgf-father-COMIT IMP-talk-PURP

manhina-mhana
 be.difficult-REM.P.NONVIS

naku-nuku
 3pl+speech-TOP.NON.A/S

mhema-kade-mhana
 NEG+listen-NEG-REM.P.NONVIS

‘It was hard to talk to her father, (I) didn’t understand their language’

The non-visual evidential is used to refer to something that was felt, but not seen, as in (9): RB was bitten by a mucurá rat whom he could not see; he’d thought it was a snake and exclaimed ‘A snake bit me (nonvisual)’. This story, about the speaker’s hunting experience, is itself cast in visual evidential (remote past, since it happened some time before the story was told).

(9) nese nu-na matsia
 then 1sg-OBJ well

nu-kapi-da i-hwida-na-tuki
 1sg-hand-CL:ROUND INDF-head-AFF-DIM

nihwã-mha-niki paí!
 3sgnf+bite-PRES.NONVIS-COMPL Dad!

nu-a-na ãpi
 1sg-say-REM.PVIS snake

nihwa-mha-nikee
 3sgnf+bite-PRES.NONVIS-COMPL:DISTANCE

‘Then it (mucura rat) bit me strongly (lit. well) on the tip of my finger (nonvisual), Dad! I shouted, snake has bitten meee!’

The non-visual evidential can also be used to refer to something seen from a distance, but not quite discernible (comparable to the visual distal evidential in Tatyuo, an East Tucanoan language from the Colombian side of the Vaupés: Stenzel and Gomez-Imbert 2018). We saw some-

² Some authors have attempted to reformulate the idea of preferred evidentials as ‘best’ evidential. We avoid this term because of its inherently evaluative character. Typological parameters for the study of evidentiality are in Aikhenvald (2004, 2018a), and a bibliography in Aikhenvald (2015).

one walking in front of us at a distance, but could not quite see whether it was Batista Brito or not. One speaker asked *Bati-nha?* (Bati-PRES.VIS.INTERR) ‘Is it Batista?’. The other replied *Diha-mha* (he-PRES.NONVIS) ‘(It is) him (nonvisual)’. When Batista turned around and we saw it was him, she exclaimed *Diha-naka* (he-PRES.VIS) ‘(It is) him (visual)’.

When used with a first person subject, the non-visual evidential refers to an unintentional action. In (10), the speaker unintentionally cut their finger, and so they use the non-visual evidential:

- (10) nu-kapi-da nu-pisa-**mahka**
 1sg-hand-CL:ROUND 1sg-cut-REC.PNONVIS

‘I unintentionally cut my finger’

If the action has been done intentionally and in speaker’s full view, the visual evidential will be appropriate, as in (11).

- (11) karaka nu-pisa-**ka**
 chicken 1sg-cut-REC.PVIS

‘I cut up the chicken’

The nonvisual evidential is the preferred choice when talking about one’s feelings and physical and emotional states. As a speaker remarked once, ‘one cannot see’ what one feels. In (12), a speaker is complaining about a headache and a fever.

- (12) nu-hwida kai-**mha** adaki
 1sg-head ache-PRES.NONVIS fever

di-nu-**mha** nu-na
 2sgnf-come-PRES.NONVIS 1sg-OBJ

‘My head is hurting, fever has come to me (nonvisual)’

In (13), Marino is complaining of feeling miserable, using the non-visual evidential.

- (13) kherunikana-tuki nhua
 miserable/poor-DIM I

nu-rena-**mha**
 1sg-feel-PRES.NONVIS

‘I feel miserable’

Some predicates with modal meanings always require the nonvisual evidential — these include ‘be necessary’, ‘be unwilling’, ‘want’, and also ‘be difficult’ (as in the second line of (8).

The world of the jungle and river depths are inhabited by spirits who can see people and do damage to them; but remain invisible. This is where the nonvisual evidential becomes the preferred choice evidential (see Aikhenvald 1999, 2003 for a list of dangerous spirits). In (14), a spirit has made a storm come up unexpectedly, the hunters saw the earth move (hence the visual evidential) and felt the evil spirit *ñamu* kick them (non-visual evidential). The happening is summarised in the last sentence — the actions of the spirit are cast in non-visual remote past.

- (14)a apale ha-hipita
 differently DEM-CL:GROUND

di-ñupiru di-eku
 3sgnf-move.up.and.down 3sgnf-run

di-a-na ihmeni-ka wa-na
 3sgnf-go-REM.PVIS say:iiih-SEQ 1pl-OBJ

di-pitita-tha-**mhana**-niki
 3sgnf-kick-FRUST-REM.P.NONVIS-FULLY

‘The earth was moving up and down quickly,
 as there was a sound of *iñh*, the evil spirit
 almost kicked us (non-visual)’

(14)b diha ñamu keru-ka tuki
 he evil.spirit angry-SEQ little

wa-na di-hña-tha-**mhana**
 1pl-OBJ 3sgnf-eat-FRUST-REM.P.NOVIS

wa-na hi-kayu-**mhana**
 1pl-OBJ this-like-REM.P.NONVIS

di-ni ñamu
 3sgnf-do evil.spirit

‘Being angry, he almost ate us up (non-
 visual), the evil spirit acted upon us like this’

The non-visual evidential is used to refer to a happening where supernatural powers are supposed to be at play. A crippled boy covered with lesions brings home a lot of fish thanks to the help from his shaman grandfather; his neighbours suspect that he has some extraneous help and say, using the nonvisual evidential.

(15) puaya-**mha**-pita hĩ
 differently-PRES.NONVIS-AGAIN this

kayu di-ni-ka
 like 3sgnf-do-DECL

‘He is acting in a different way’ (nonvisual,
 since supernatural powers could be involved)

The non-visual evidential is consistently used in the descriptions of practices by shamans and healers. Traditionally, there used to be several types of male shamans (the cover term *mariẽrĩ*) with different degrees of powers depending on their stage of initiation and the snuff they are allowed to use (which would enable them to access visions and thus power; Aikhenvald 1999: 41 contains a list of shamans, their powers and types of snuff they sniff to activate these). In his description of what shamans do, Leonardo, one of the three remaining elders, used the non-visual evidential. An extract is at (16). Here, the non-visual evidential also describes what the shaman ‘sees’ as part of his actions. This is not how a shaman would talk about himself — see (19).

(16)a Kayka diha matsite maliẽri
 so he bad+NCL:ANIM shaman

diha kwaka di-ka-**mha**
 he whatever 3sgnf-see-PRES.NONVIS

enukwa-se ka-rena-mi-naku
 sky-LOC REL-besick-NOM-TOPNON.A/S

tapuli-se di-ka-**mha**
 dream-LOC 3sgnf-see-PRES.NONVIS

‘So the naughty shaman sees (nonvisual)
 the one who is sick because of the sky, he
 sees (them) in the dream (nonvisual),

(16)b kayu di-ni-ka diha
 thus 3sgnf-do-SEQ he

dhita-**mha** di-pusua
 3sgnf+take-PRES.NONVIS 3sgnf-suck

‘having done that, he takes and sucks
(the illness) (nonvisual),’

- (16)c *kayu-ka* *na-kawita*
thus-SEQ 3pl-pay
- na-yena-naku* *diha irenasi*
3pl-exceed-TOPNON.A/S he/it sickness
- di-yena-mha* *diha*
3sgnf-exceed/pass-PRES.NONVIS he
- maliëri* *diha wheru i-minari*
shaman he snuff INDF-master
- dhita-mha* *tapuli-se*
3sgnf+take-PRES.NONVIS dream-LOC

‘after they have paid a lot, the sickness
passes (nonvisual), the shaman, the
master of snuff takes (it away) in the
dream (nonvisual)’

In present-day Tariana society, there
appear to be no men with full shamanic powers.
Of the three remaining elders, two have bless-



Figure 1. Jorge Muniz, one of the two healers among
the Tariana (photo AA)

ing and healing powers and are referred to as
ka-ñapa (REL-bless) ‘blesser, healer’. One of them
is Jorge Muniz, from Periquitos — see Figure 1.

The other one is Leonardo Brito, from
Santa Rosa (he currently resides in São Gabriel
da Cachoeira, with his son Rafael, an aspiring
politician). In Figure 2, he is shown wearing
a traditional Tariana headdress *talama* at the
Tariana assembly in May 2012.



Figure 2. Leonardo Brito, one of the two healers
among the Tariana (photo AA)

Example (17) comes from a description of a
blessing as done by a healer.

- (17)a *diha dhita di-whe*
he 3sgnf+take 3sgnf-fall+CAUS
- di-uka di-ema-mha*
3sgnf-arrive 3sgnf-stand-PRES.NONVIS
- pa-hwanipa-se di-ñapa-li-se*
IMP-place.to.sit-LOC 3sgnf-bless-NOM-LOC
- ka-daki-mha*
REL-body-PRES.NONVIS

‘He takes and puts (the patient) on the

bench, the place of blessing (nonvisual),
the one with the body (nonvisual),

- (17)b hĩ hemari hawayá
this cubiu.fruit ingá.fruit
- du-kale du-dia-ka
3sgf-heart 3sgf-return-SEQ
- di-ni di-hwa-**mha**
3sgnf-do 3sgnf-stay-PRES.NONVIS

he makes her heart return (with) cubiu
fruit, with ingá fruit (nonvisual)...'

The non-visual evidential is consistently used to refer to shamanic attributes, as in (18), an explanation of the meaning of the term *marawati* (a type of *wheru*, snuff).

- (18) marawati wheru-**mha**
marawati snuff-PRES.NONVIS

'Marawati is shamanic snuff'

Only when a shaman talks about himself and his experience, the preferred evidential is visual. In a story about a shaman who turned into a jaguar and took away the heart of a man who was then supposed to die, the shaman is quoted as saying:

- (19) hi matsite-nuku
this bad+NCL:ANIM-TOP.NON.A/S
- di-kale nhuta-**na**
3sgnf-heart 1sg+take-REM.PVIS
- deikina di-ñale-mhade
afternoon 3sgnf-disappear-FUT

'I took the heart from this bad one, he
will die in the afternoon'

A statement about the powers of a known shaman (but not about what they do) can be cast in visual evidential if it is common knowledge. Jesús, a shaman of Wanano origin, visited us in the Tariana village of Santa Rosa; when I asked a Tariana speaker about his powers and his prophetic dreams, I received the following reply:

- (20) maliëri-pu-**naka** diha thui
shaman-AUG-PRES.VIS he all
- di-ka-**naka** mēda
3sgnf-see-PRES.VIS don't.you.know

'He is a real shaman (lit. very much a shaman, or big shaman), he sees everything'

The non-visual — rather than visual — evidential is the preferred choice for talking about supernatural experience one received 'firsthand', or which is considered a normal state of affairs. Generally known and not observable facts are cast in the non-visual evidential. This offers a limit to the applicability of the hierarchy of preferred evidentials: the type of knowledge and the type of entity that masters it — be it a spirit, or a shaman — dictates the evidential use.

3. Evidentials in beliefs and taboos

There used to be (and still are) numerous taboos concerning men's behaviour in the jungle when they go hunting and before they prepare to go on a hunting expedition. If a hunter wishes to be successful they cannot

have sex or think about women before they go. If they dream of a woman (especially a white woman, or a fish woman, who often appears in the shape of a white woman in a dream), this is a sign of danger — of a failed trip and potential encounter with the evil spirit who will eat him or take his heart away (see Aikhenvald 1999: 35-6, for further examples of taboos).

Common knowledge taboos tend to be cast in future (where no evidentials are distinguished), as in (21) and (22).

- (21) itsiri dinu-karu i-peya
 game 3sg+kill-PURP INDF-before
 ina tapulisa-ka
 women dream-SEQ
 ka-hña-kana di-a-mhade
 REL-eat-PASS 3sgnf-AUX-FUT

‘Having dreamt of women before hunting,
 he will be eaten (by the evil spirit)’

- (22) kasiri ipe pa-hña-ka thuya
 crocodile meat IMP-eat-SEQ all
 pa-mañeta-mhade
 IMP-forget-FUT

‘Having eaten crocodile meat, one will
 forget everything’

The most common ways of describing what to do and what not to do are cautionary tales, including those about a man who had dreamt of a woman and then went hunting, and how the evil spirit appeared to him and he had a narrow escape. These stories are always cast in reported

evidential, and end with (23), presenting the story as told by older people to the speaker.

- (23) kayu na: na-kalite-na
 thus 3pl+say 3pl-tell-REM.PVIS

pedalie-pe
 old-pl

‘Thus the old people told’

Instructions about what to do to achieve a desired result can be cast in non-visual evidential if they involve supernatural powers. An example comes from a procedural text about what to do to successfully snare fish through fasting, and avoiding noise and sex, told by GB (the speaker uses the impersonal form throughout; parts of this text were published in Aikhenvald 2018b). In the first line, the process of fasting is introduced using the nonvisual evidential.

- (24a) hindapada-mha mepuku
 any-PRES.NONVIS snare

pa-ni-kasu pa-tañe-nipe
 IMP-do-INT IMP-fast-NOM

‘This is (nonvisual) the process of
 fasting in order to make any (fish)snare’

- (24b) walikasu pheta-mha
 beginning IMP+take.out-PRES.NONVIS

kwaka mawi pheta
 what paxiuba.nut IMP+take.out

da:pi pheta-hyuna
 vine IMP+take.out-HABITUAL

- (24)c diha pheta-ka matsia
he IMP+take-out-SEQ well
- pa-tañe-**mha** ne syawa
IMP-fast-PRES.NONVIS NEG fire
- ma-kuka-kanade-**mha**
NEG-light-PASS+NEG-PRES.NONVIS
- ‘having taken it, one fasts well, the fire
is not lit (nonvisual),’
- (24)d ne yanape khesarakana-wani
NEG children naughty-CL:ABSTRACT
- sede-wani-**mha**-niki
NEG.EXIST-CL:ABSTRACT-PRES.
NONVIS-COMPL
- ne taliwa pa-phyari
NEG flute IMP-blow-NOM
- sede-**mha**
NEG.EXIST.PRES.NONVIS
- ‘there is no naughtiness from children
(nonvisual), there is no blowing flutes
(nonvisual)’
- (25)a pha awakada-se phamita-ka
IMP jungle-LOC IMP+burn/cook-SEQ
pa-hña kewere-peri
IMP-eat burnt.food-COLL
- pa-ni-ka
IMP-do-SEQ
- ‘If one cooks in the jungle burning food,’
- (25)b pa-sieta-ka ina
IMP-burn.firewood-SEQ women
- puima-ma-pe alia-ka
menstruate-fem-pl exist-SEQ
- ‘if one burns firewood, if there are
menstruating women,’
- (25)c hape-peri depiha pa-hña-ka
cold-COLL night.time IMP-eat-SEQ
- ina tapulisa-ka diha
woman dream-SEQ he
- ñamu ke:ru-**mha**
evil.spirit be.angry-PRES.NONVIS
- ‘if one eats cold food at nighttime, if one
dreams of women, the evil spirit is angry
(nonvisual)’
- (25)d wheru ka-pusuku-kari di-na
snuff REL-mix-REL.PAST 3sgnf-OBJ
- diha thuya kewere-peri
he/it all burnt.food-COLL
- di-thaku di-hwa
3sgnf-nose 3sgnf-fall

If the instructions what to do not to make the evil spirit angry contain the description of what the evil spirit would do if instructions are not followed, this will be cast in the non-visual evidential. An extract is at (25).

- deru-mha**
 3sgnf+stick-PRES.NONVIS
 ‘to him, the one who had sniffed the wheru
 snuff, all that burnt food sticks in the
 nose (nonvisual),’
- (25)e kayumaka diha ñamu
 thus he evil.spirit
- dihmeta keru-mha**
 3sgnf+feel be.angry-PRES.VIS
 diha ñamu keru-mha
 he evil.spirit be.angry-PRES.NONVIS
- di-ni-mha**
 3sgnf-do/act-PRES.NONVIS
 ‘so the evil spirit is angry (nonvisual),
 the evil spirit is angry (nonvisual), he
 acts (nonvisual),’
- (25)f walikasu-nuku
 beginning-TOP.NON.A/S
- iya-mha di-seta**
 rain-PRES.NONVIS 3sgnf-fall+CAUS
 ‘at the beginning he makes rain fall
 (nonvisual),’
- (25)g di-pumi kale di-pumi
 3sgnf-after wind 3sgnf-after
- awakada kadawa di-swa-ka
 jungle darkness 3sgnf-stay-SEQ
- di-a di-ni enu
 3sg-go 3sgnf-make thunder
- alia-mha**
 EXIST-PRES.NONVIS
 ‘then wind, then he sets in darkness in the
 jungle, there is thunder (nonvisual),’
- (25)h diha kadawa-wani
 he/it darkness-CL:ABSTRACT
- yehwe-mha diha ñamu**
 middle-PRES.NONVIS he evil.spirit
nihña nawiki-nuku
 3sgnf+eat person-TOP.NON.A/S
 ‘in the middle of the darkness the evil
 spirit eats the person up (nonvisual)’
- Common beliefs can also be cast in
 reported evidential. Clouds of bees are an omi-
 nous sign and predict imminent death:
- (26) mapisi-ka di-ñami-karu
 be.ominous-SEQ 3sgnf-die-PURP
- i-peya mapa nara
 INDF-before bee 3pl+fly
na-yena-pidana
 3pl-exceed-REM.P.REP
 ‘When there is an omen, before someone
 dies, many bees fly around’
- No taboos or descriptions of prohibited
 and undesirable actions are cast in visual, or
 any of the inferred evidentials — they contain
 a future projection, or are based on a speech
 report, or reflect the actions of unseen super-
 natural power and are cast as ‘nonvisual’.

5. To conclude

The world of those with supernatural powers is not accessible to the naked eye. In many languages with evidentials, experience associated with supernatural events is not 'seen' or 'witnessed'. Speakers of Trio and Wayana, North Carib languages, talk about shamanic attacks on them using a non-witnessed evidential. The explanation is that being attacked by a shaman generally 'brings on' or 'causes' an altered state of consciousness in the victim (Carlin 2018). In contrast, shamans themselves talk about their supernatural experience using a witnessed evidential, since what they report 'entails being in an alternate reality whereby the shaman is an active agent' (§3.2.1 of Carlin 2018). A speaker of Dyirbal would use a non-visible marker when they talk about spirits (Dixon 2014).

The nonvisual evidential is used as the preferential choice in Tariana when talking about the actions of spirits of the jungle, shamans and healers. In day-to-day life, the visual evidential is the way of presenting generally known facts. In contrast, things one cannot 'see' — including one's own feelings and physical states, the unseen actions of shamans, healers, and spirits, and the taboos invoking their powers — have to be cast in non-visual evidential.

In Tariana, as in many other languages (see, for instance, Aikhenvald 2004, Friedman 2003), evidentials can be strengthened using lexical reinforcement. Thus, to a visual evidential a speaker can add an explanation 'as I saw' (in case someone wonders). Incidentally, this illustrates the speakers' metalinguistic awareness of the evidential use. When the non-visual evidential is used to refer to something not seen but heard or smelt, a speaker might add, as an aside, an explanation, 'as he/she did not see (it), as he/

she was not looking'. A statement about an evil spirit can be accompanied by 'as it is not seen'.

The lexical comments to the nonvisual evidential were cast in a different way, with the verb 'think'. As we were transcribing the text about blessing (17), JB who was helping me commented saying *dihmeta-li-ne di-ni-mha* (3sgnf+think-NOM-INS 3sgnf-do-PRES.VIS) 'he is doing (nonvisual) (it) with his thinking'. Could it be the case that the non-visual evidentials in stories about blessing and healing go beyond the information source of the speaker (who cannot 'see' the doings), and reveal the information source of the shaman and healer himself and their access to the powers of the invisible mind?

Abbreviations:

AFF - affix; AUG - augmentative; AUX - auxiliary; CAUS - causative; CL - classifier; COLL - collective; COMIT - comitative; COMPL - completive; DECL - declarative; DEM - demonstrative; DIM - diminutive; EXIST - existential; fem - feminine; FRUST - frustrative; FUT - future; IMP - impersonal; INDF - indefinite; INS - instrumental; INT - intentional; LOC - locative; NCL:ANIM - noun class 'animate'; NEG - negation; NEG.EXIST - negative existential; NOM - nominalisation; NONVIS - nonvisual; OBJ - object; PASS - passive; pl - plural; PRES - present; PRES.VIS.INTERR - present visual interrogative; PURP - purposive; REC.P.NONVIS - recent past nonvisual; REC.PVIS - recent past visual; REM.PVIS - remote past visual; REL - relative; REM.P.NONVIS - remote past nonvisual; REM.P.REP - remote past reported; REM.PAST - remote past; SEQ - sequential; sg - singular; sgf - singular feminine; sngf - singular nonfeminine; TOP.NON.A/S - topical nonsubject; VIS - visual.

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