

Oleksandr KapranovEnglish Department, NLA University College
Norway
oleksandr.kapranov@nla.no

UDK 551.583:81'42

DOI: 10.4312/vestnik.16.109-129

Izvirni znanstveni članek



EVIDENTIALITY IN CLIMATE CHANGE DISCOURSE BY KING CHARLES III

1 INTRODUCTION

The issue of climate change is both urgent and complex (Gardiner, 2024; Yasmin, 2024). In light of its critical importance to the existence of humanity and the wider survival of life on the planet, climate change-related topics are routinely addressed by a multitude of actors, including politicians, celebrities, and royalty (Wetts, 2023). As far as British royal figures are concerned, King Charles III is known as a passionate advocate of climate change mitigation (Kapranov, 2024a), whose opinions and speeches on the issue of the climate seem to resonate within both political and societal circles in the United Kingdom (UK) and far beyond its borders (Marshall, 2011). Typically, King Charles III's public speeches and written communication on climate change appear to be supported by science-based evidence (Lovelock & Lovelock, 2013). In this regard, it should be noted that the issue of climate change in political discourse in the UK is usually regarded through the lens of scientific evidence (Sébastien et al., 2014; Strassheim & Kettunen, 2014), which involves objective and specialized knowledge (Russo, 2019). In contrast, however, a number of British mass media actors portray the issue of climate change through an impressionistic prism that verges either on the apocalyptic imagery of "doom-and-gloom" or a denial of the reality of climate change (Morgan & Di Giulio, 2018; Rae, 2021; Weik von Mossner, 2021).

Given that climate change-related discourse by the mainstream political parties in the UK is based on scientific evidence (Levidow & Papaioannou, 2015), it is, perhaps, not surprising that climate change discourse by King Charles III (hereinafter – the King) appears to be informed by evidence (Lovelock & Lovelock, 2013). Presently, however, there seems to be insufficient research on how such evidence is manifested linguistically and discursively in the King's speeches on climate change (Kapranov, 2024a). Seeking to fill the current gap in scholarship, the article presents a mixed-methods study that aims to learn about evidentiality associated with climate change in a corpus of the King's speeches on the topic of climate change that are available on

the official site of the British Royal Family, www.royal.uk. The corpus is investigated within the scope of the linguistic notion of evidentiality. It should be borne in mind that in linguistics and discourse studies evidentiality is regarded as the linguistic marking of evidence (Bednarek, 2006: 635). While we will dwell upon the notion of evidentiality further in the article, let us observe for now that evidentiality in linguistics is assumed to express “the kinds of evidence a person has for making factual claims” (Anderson, 1986: 273).

In light of the aforementioned view of evidentiality, this study sets out to answer the following research question (**RQ**):

RQ: What are the manifestations of evidentiality in the corpus of the King’s speeches on the issue of climate change?

Guided by the RQ, the article is structured as follows. First, the theoretical premises associated with evidentiality are provided in section 2. Second, a review of the literature on climate change in political discourse in the UK is given in section 3. Thereafter, in section 4, the present study is introduced and discussed. Finally, the summary of the findings, the limitations of the study, and possible directions associated with future research are outlined in section 5.

2 EVIDENTIALITY: THEORETICAL PREMISES

The theoretical premises of the study are grounded in an approach to evidentiality that regards it as the information source behind a message and how the source is marked linguistically (Anderson, 1986; Carretero & Zamorano-Mansilla, 2015). Put differently, evidentiality may be argued to involve the source-based verification and authentication of statements and/or claims that are used by an interlocuter (Anderson, 1986). Evidentiality as a category in its own right is manifested in some languages (e.g. Finnish) by the grammatically obligatory markers (Aikhenvald, 2007: 209), typically represented by evidential morphemes (Mushin, 2001). It is posited in the literature that evidential markers point out to the nature of the information source in a proposition (Aikhenvald, 2007; Kaiser, 2024). In this regard, Kaiser (2024: 1) argues that evidential markers typically “indicate whether the proposition refers to something that the speaker saw, heard about from someone else, or inferred from other information”. Additionally, evidential markers may convey the speaker’s level of commitment to the proposition, given that information sources range in reliability from first-hand evidence to reported hearsay (Kaiser, 2024: 2).

English, however, lacks explicit morphosyntactic evidential markers, which are also referred to as evidentials (Brugman & Macaulay, 2015), that “indicate both source and reliability of the information” (Rooryck, 2001: 125). As previously mentioned, English does not have obligatory evidentials that mark the source of evidence morphosyntactically (Brugman & Macaulay, 2015: 202). However, it possesses a range of lexical, semantic, and pragmatic means that may refer to the information source, in particular, lexical verbs that are associated with claims, opinions, and reports (Aikhenvald, 2007). In other words, the literature argues that English, in which evidentiality is non-grammaticized (Papafra-gou, 2000), may develop an evidential dimension by using, predominantly, lexical and semantic forms (Aikhenvald, 2007) in a variety of pragmatic contexts (Ifantidou, 2001; Nuyts, 2006; Oleniak, 2020). Aikhenvald’s (2004) contention is encapsulated in Table 1, which summarizes her classification of the evidential dimension expressed by semantic means.

Table 1: Aikhenvald’s (2004) Classification of Evidentiality Based upon Semantic Means

#	Category	Explanation
1	Assumption	Evidence that is based upon logical reasoning, assumption, or general knowledge
2	Hearsay	Evidence that is based upon reported information with no reference to those it was reported by
3	Inference	Evidence that is based on visible or tangible evidence, or results
4	Non-visual sensory	Evidence that is based upon information acquired via hearing, smelling, tasting, or touching
5	Quotative	Evidence that is based on reported information with an overt reference to the quoted source
6	Visual	Evidence that is based upon information acquired through seeing

While Aikhenvald’s (2004) classification of evidentiality is argued to be applicable to most languages, including English, Rooryck (2001: 127-128) demonstrates that English, in particular, makes an extensive use of parenthetical constructions in order to manifest evidentiality. Rooryck’s (2001) view of parenthetical constructions as evidentials in English is summarized in Table 2, below.

Table 2: The Use of Parenthetical Constructions as Evidentials in English According to Rooryck (2001)

#	Category	Example
1	Nonvisual sensorial	Jules is back, I feel/I sense
2	Sensory inferential, visual deduction	Jules is back, I see
3	Hearsay	Jules is back, I hear/they say
4	Quotative	Sarah said, ...
5	Inferential	I realize/I found out ...; it turns out, ...
6	Circumstantial, unspecified source	It seems/it appears, ...
7	Speculative	I believe/think/suppose/presume/guess/ suspect/assume/, ...
8	Surprisal	I'm afraid/I'm sorry, ...

It follows from Table 2 that Rooryck's (2001) approach to evidentiality is indicative of the contention concerning the relation – or rather, interrelation – between evidentiality on the one hand, and epistemic and evaluative marking (e.g. I'm afraid) on the other. It should be observed that similar views are found in Bednarek (2006), who argues that epistemic marking and, in particular, epistemological positioning, often overlap with evidentiality. In this regard, Bednarek (2006: 635) specifies that epistemological positioning “deals with questions such as ‘Who is the source of information?’, ‘What is the basis of someone's (the writer's or a third party's) knowledge?’, ‘How certain is their knowledge?’”.

It is inferred from Bednarek's (2006) view of evidentiality in English that, in addition to the aforementioned semantic dimension, evidentiality in English may be manifested by discursive means. These are said to consist of pointing to the source of evidence in the text, with the sourcing based upon one of the following: (i) perception, (ii) general knowledge, (iii) proof, (iv) obviousness, (v) unspecified, (vi) hearsay, and (vii) mindsay (Bednarek, 2006). Similarly to Bednarek (2006), González, Roseano, Borràs-Comes, and Prieto (2017) argue that evidentiality may be marked in discursive contexts in the manner that is outlined in Table 3.

Table 3: Evidentiality Marking in Discursive Context According to González et al. (2017)

#	Types of Evidentiality Marking	Discursive Characteristics
1	Direct	Personal access to information; Speaker's personal involvement
2	Indirect/mediated	Non-personal access to information via science-mediated, tradition-mediated, common knowledge-mediated, and reported sources; Speaker's non-personal involvement; Mediated knowledge coming from third parties (science, tradition, common knowledge, etc.)

Concluding the present outline of the literature on evidentiality, it could be posited that there is a growing body of studies that deal with evidentiality in English, which, as already mentioned, does not have obligatory morphosyntactic evidentials. Given the absence of morphosyntactically marked evidentiality in English, one of the current directions in researching evidentiality consists of exploring its discursive functions in various forms of discourse. Presently, however, there are no state-of-the-art linguistic investigations that focus on evidentiality in English-medium climate change discourse. The study which is further presented and discussed in this article is thus one of the initial attempts to shed light on this under-researched topic. Prior to proceeding to the study, however, let us briefly review the literature on climate change discourse in the UK.

3 CLIMATE CHANGE IN POLITICAL DISCOURSE IN THE UK: LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature generally indicates that scientific evidence concerning the issue of climate change is crucial in policymaking (Demeritt, 2006; Fløttum & Dahl, 2011; Pieczka & Escobar, 2013). The British political tradition, in particular, is characterized by a robust involvement of science in policymaking that concerns climate change (Shackley & Wynne, 1995). Specifically, the literature demonstrates that scientific evidence-based policymaking was adopted in the UK in 1999 in the Modernising Government White Paper (Strassheim & Kettunen, 2014: 261). Furthermore, the literature posits that British policymaking culture and its respective discourse are essentially evidence-based (Sébastien et al., 2014). In this light, the present review seeks to summarize the literature that, at least, mentions evidence (for instance, science-based) in political discourse on climate change in the UK.

While evidence-based policymaking has been a much-debated concept in the UK (Levidow & Papaioannou, 2015), the major British political parties have availed

themselves of scientific findings reported by the British climate change advisory bodies (Averchenkova et al., 2021). In this regard, the literature suggests that scientific evidence, which is provided by external experts in the field, facilitates the legitimization of the UK governments' policy framework concerning the measures of climate change mitigation (Levidow & Papaioannou, 2015). Furthermore, the literature posits that British political parties seem to take into consideration expert advice on the issue of climate change and incorporate it into their respective climate change discourse, thus contributing to evidence-based policymaking (Averchenkova et al., 2021: 1218), which is reflective of regulatory practices, policy assessments, and stakeholder involvement (Strassheim & Kettunen, 2014).

As far as policymaking associated with climate change is concerned, the major political parties in the UK share a common view that the issue of climate change poses a serious threat both locally, in the UK, and worldwide (Kapranov, 2015a). To illustrate the point, climate change discourse by both the Conservative and Labour governments involves science-based evidence that points to the immense scope of the issue (Kapranov, 2018a). It is, then, not surprising that both Conservative and Labour prime ministers refer to the issue of climate change through the discursive lens of battle and war, and allude to the gargantuan challenge which it poses (Kapranov, 2017).

Another typical aspect of British policymaking concerning the issue of climate change involves the bipartisan (i.e. Conservative and Labour) discourse that construes climate change in economic terms (Kapranov, 2018b). Specifically, the bipartisan climate change discourse in the UK seems to be informed by evidence garnered by governmental and corporate actors, who point out the costs associated with climate change mitigation and amelioration, such as CO₂ emission reductions (Kapranov, 2015a). In this regard, the former British prime minister Rishi Sunak highlighted the way the British economy responds to the issue of climate change as a challenge to economic prosperity (Kapranov, 2024b). Judging from the literature, it can be argued that an extensive reliance on science-based evidence associated with climate change has contributed to the economization of the issue in British politics, which, in its turn, is reflected in the current political discourse on climate change in the UK (Von Malmberg & Strachan, 2005).

It should be noted that while the scientific approach to climate change constitutes a typical feature of the British mainstream political discourse, the right-wing as well as the extreme left-wing political parties in the UK do not seem to involve science-based evidence in their respective discourse on climate change (Lockwood, 2018). In particular, the British far-right parties ignore science-based evidence in their communication with the public. Moreover, their climate change discourse is characterized by an ethno-nationalist and authoritarian perspective that seems sceptical towards climate change (Forchtner, 2019; Kapranov, 2023).

Summarizing the outline of the literature, it can be argued that climate change in the British mainstream political discourse is predominantly informed by scientific evidence.

However, little is known about climate change discourse by the King as far as evidence and evidentiality are concerned. In the subsequent section of the article I thus present a study that aims to learn about evidentiality in the corpus of the King's speeches on climate change.

4 THE PRESENT STUDY: ITS RESEARCH QUESTIONS, CORPUS, AND METHODOLOGY

The present study, as mentioned above, seeks to illuminate how evidentiality is manifested in the corpus of speeches on the issue of climate change delivered by the King. In line with Kaiser (2024) and Aikhenvald (2004), evidentiality in this study is regarded as a category that signals the information source, in other words, "whether a speaker has direct evidence for something, heard it from someone, or inferred it" (Kaiser, 2022: 2). Informed by the seminal publications by Aikhenvald (2004) and Kaiser (2024), evidentiality is applied to the King's speeches on climate change in order to learn about the categories of evidentiality associated with this issue. Following this reasoning, the RQ was formulated and outlined in the introductory part of the article. Hopefully, providing answers to the RQ will facilitate our understanding of the King's discursive strategy of deploying evidence associated with climate change in the corpus of his speeches.

In line with the RQ, specific attention in the study is paid to the construal of sourcing as the cornerstone of evidentiality. As far as the definition of sourcing is concerned, I follow Bednarek (2006), who regards it as a construal that provides an answer to the query "To what/whom can this be attributed?", so that the basis of knowledge becomes clear due to the reference to, for instance, perception, assumption, and so forth. Acknowledging a possible overlap between evidentiality and epistemological positioning as postulated by Bednarek (2006) and Mushin (2001), the study does not attempt to illuminate the King's attitudes towards the sources of knowledge and evidence concerning climate change, since such an endeavour merits a separate investigation. Hence, the overlap between epistemological positioning (i.e. the King's attitude towards knowledge about climate change) and evidentiality is not pursued in the present investigation.

The corpus of the study involved the King's speeches on climate change available on the official website of the British Royal Family, www.royal.uk. In line with the prior studies (Kapranov, 2015b, 2017, 2018b, 2021, 2024b), the website was searched by means of applying the following keywords associated with the issue of climate change: *anthropogenic climate change*, *climate change*, *climate change mitigation*, *extreme weather*, *extreme drought*, *extreme flooding*, *global warming*, *greenhouse gasses*, and *CO₂ emissions*. The search returned 20 speeches on climate change delivered by the King within the timeframe from 2005 to 2023 (see Primary Sources for the links to the speeches). The official transcripts of his speeches on climate change were downloaded from

www.royal.uk, saved as Word files, and analysed in the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), version 20.0 (IBM 2011) in order to compute the descriptive statistics that involved the total number of words = 36,272; mean words = 1,813.6; and standard deviation of words = 842.1.

In terms of the methodology, the analysis involved the following steps. Firstly, I conducted the qualitative part of the analysis in line with Bednarek (2006). It was text-driven and was executed manually without attempts to categorize the sources on an *a priori* basis. In other words, I searched the corpus of the King's speeches for the instances that manifested evidentiality, i.e. discursive passages, clauses, phrases, and lexical items that pointed to the source of information. Secondly, the identified sources of evidentiality were analysed for their possible fits with the semantic categories of evidentiality, which were proposed and developed by Aikhelvald (2004), namely (i) *assumption* (based upon logical reasoning, assumptions, and general knowledge); (ii) *hearsay* (based upon reported information with no reference to those it was reported by); (iii) *inference* (based on visible or tangible evidence or results); (iv) *non-visual sensory* (based upon information acquired via hearing, smelling, tasting, and touching); (v) *quotative* (based on reported information with an overt reference to the quoted source); and (vi) *visual* (based upon information acquired through seeing). The choice of Aikhenvald's (2004) typology was motivated by its universal applicability to the languages with and without obligatory morphosyntactic markers of evidentiality. Thirdly, once the categories of evidentiality associated with climate change were classified in accordance with this typology, they were turned into numerical representations and processed in SPSS (IBM, 2010) in order to calculate the ratio (as a percentage) of each individual category to the total number of occurrences of evidentiality in the corpus.

It should be specified that I only analysed the cases of evidentiality associated with the issue of climate change. To illustrate the point, the following two sentences should be considered:

- (a) Princess Anne reckons that climate change is getting worse as we speak.
- (b) Princess Anne reckons that Kate Middleton is visiting her aunt in Cheshire.

Both (a) and (b) could be argued to involve instances of evidentiality with the clearly marked source of evidence and linguo-discursive means that refer to it. However, only sentences similar to (a) were analysed in the study owing to their propositional content, which was related to the topic of climate change, while sentences similar to (b) were excluded from the analysis. Importantly, it should be noted that in the analysis sentences similar to (a) were analysed on the clausal level rather than on the lexical or phrasal level. The decision to limit the analysis to the clausal level was in line with González et al. (2017), who pointed to the clausal and supraclausal levels (i.e. paragraph) as an optimal solution for the analysis of evidentiality in discursive environments in those languages

that lack obligatory morphosyntactic marking of evidentiality. The results of the analyses are further presented in section 4.1 of the article.

4.1 Results and discussion

The quantitative analysis of the corpus has revealed that there are 208 instances of evidentiality in total. This finding is expanded upon in Table 4, below.

Table 4: The Descriptive Statistics of the Instances of Evidentiality in the Corpus

#	Descriptive Statistics	Measure
1	The total number of the instances of evidentiality	208
2	Mean instances of evidentiality	10.4
3	Standard deviation instances of evidentiality	3.1
4	Maximum instances of evidentiality	15
6	Minimum instances of evidentiality	6
7	Range of instances of evidentiality	9

We can observe in Table 4 that the corpus is marked rather substantially by the instances of evidentiality, with the mean occurrence of evidentiality being 10.4 and the range being nine. Furthermore, we can see in Table 4 that the minimum occurrence of the instances of evidentiality in the corpus is six, which means that each individual speech in the corpus involves at least six instances of evidentiality. In other words, it is evident from the descriptive statistics summarized in Table 4 that each speech bears the mark of evidentiality. This finding is indicative of the King's attention to evidence, which he incorporates in his speeches on climate change. The finding seems to be particularly relevant to the quite recent debate concerning the presence or, alternatively, absence of evidence in climate change discourse in the UK (Demeritt, 2006; Fløttum & Dahl, 2011; Morgan & Di Giulio, 2018; Russo, 2019; Weik von Mossner, 2021; Wetts, 2023). In particular, the present finding appears to lend indirect support to the literature, which indicates that climate change discourse by the reputable political and corporate actors in UK is, predominantly, evidence-based (Kapranov, 2015a; Russo, 2019; Weik von Mossner, 2021; Wetts, 2023), with the King's speeches on climate change being no exception.

Furthermore, the presence of evidentiality in the corpus appears to corroborate the literature (Shackley & Wynne, 1995; Pieczka & Escobar, 2013; Sébastien et al., 2014; Strassheim & Kettunen, 2014; Levidow & Papaioannou, 2015; Averchenkova et al., 2021), which indicates that evidence-based discourse on climate change is rather typical in the British political tradition. Even though the King is not a politician *per se*, the presence of evidentiality in his speeches on climate change is suggestive of a certain

discursive convergence of his speeches on climate change and those of British political actors representing the major mainstream parties. Additionally, we may argue that the presence of evidentiality in the King's speeches sets his climate change discourse apart from the climate change discourse by British right-wing and the extreme left-wing political actors that, typically, lacks references to evidence, especially science-based evidence (Lockwood, 2018; Forchtner, 2019).

In addition to unpacking the quantitative dimension of evidentiality in the corpus, it seems pertinent to establish how evidentiality is manifested qualitatively in the King's speeches on climate change. Guided by Aikhenvald's (2004) categories of evidentiality, it has been discovered in the present study that evidentiality in the corpus is manifested by the following categories: *assumption*, *hearsay*, *inference*, *non-visual sensory*, *quotative*, and *visual*. These findings are presented in Table 5, which provides the categories of evidentiality associated with climate change and the ratio (as a percentage) of an individual category in relation to the total number of instances of evidentiality in the corpus.

Table 5: The Categories of Evidentiality in the Corpus

#	Categories of Evidentiality	The Ratio of Category of Evidentiality
1	<i>Assumption</i>	25.0 %
2	<i>Hearsay</i>	5.8 %
3	<i>Inference</i>	13.9 %
4	<i>Non-visual sensory</i>	7.2 %
5	<i>Quotative</i>	36.5 %
6	<i>Visual</i>	11.5 %

Let us discuss the categories of evidentiality associated with climate change in the corpus (see Table 5) in more detail. It follows from Table 5 that *quotative* is the most frequent category of evidentiality in the corpus (36.5%), which is followed by *assumption* (25.0%), and *inference* (13.9%). The least utilized categories are *visual* (11.5%), *non-visual sensory* (7.2%), and *hearsay* (5.8%). We thus continue our discussion by focussing on the *quotative* and *assumption* categories, given that they seem to be dominant in the corpus.

Given that *quotative* is the most frequent category of evidentiality in the corpus, we may contend that the King relies substantially on outside sources, which he then incorporates in the discursive fabrics of his speeches on the issue of climate change. The King also quotes himself as the source of evidence, i.e. he employs self-quotations. While we will return to the King's self-quotations later in the discussion, let us illustrate the *quotative* category of evidentiality associated with climate change with an excerpt taken from one of his speeches delivered in 2015:

(1) Through extreme weather events, it is already causing ecosystem collapse, loss of habitation, poverty, starvation, migration and conflict. Some five years ago, the Lancet's Commission on Climate Change described it as 'The greatest threat to human health of the 21st Century' and this warning has been echoed worldwide by the American Medical Association, Academy of Paediatrics, College of Preventative Medicine and Public Health Association, the Australian Medical Association, the World Federation of Public Health Organizations and the World Health Organization. (A speech at a meeting about "Putting Health at the Centre of the Climate Change Debate: The Role of the Health Community in the Run Up to COP21" at the Royal Society in London on 25.02.2015)

In (1), the King uses the so-called direct type of quoting by citing "The greatest threat to human health of the 21st Century", which refers to climate change. He mentions the source of evidence, i.e. the Lancet Commission on Climate Change, and employs the reporting verb "describe" in the simple past tense in order to link the quote to the rest of the clause. It should be specified that the source of evidence is the annual report by the Lancet Commission on Climate Change, which is published by a reputable scientific panel of experts (Watts et al., 2017).

While most instances of evidentiality in the corpus are similar to (1) in the sense that they involve direct citations and, less often, indirect quotations with the explicit reference to the source, there are a number of self-quotations in the corpus such as, for example, "However, I said when I was in Brazil just two months ago that we had 100 months left in which to take the necessary action" (a speech at the Third May Day Business Summit on Climate Change in London on 1.05.2009). The occurrences of self-quotations are not numerous in the corpus, but presumably the King takes the liberty of quoting himself from time to time owing to his active involvement in the process of climate change mitigation, and his personal interest in the issue (Kapranov, 2024a). Given that the King has been delivering speeches on climate change since the early 1990s, when he was still the Prince of Wales, we may posit that he could be considered a person who is quite knowledgeable about the issue. In addition, the King presides over several foundations that carry out climate change-related activities. His self-quotations on the issue of climate change thus seem to be well-grounded in his personal involvement in the matter.

As Table 5 further reveals, the second most frequent category is *assumption*. It should perhaps be mentioned that the title of this category appears to be quite fuzzy, given that Aikhenvald (2004) regards it as the category of evidentiality whose evidence is based upon (i) logical reasoning, (ii) assumption, and/or (iii) general knowledge. In the corpus, the latter two aspects of the category seem to be used the most, namely assumption and general knowledge, respectively. An example of *assumption* is provided by excerpt (2):

(2) Taking action to address an issue like climate change – largely invisible, somewhat nebulous, still rather unpredictable in its precise consequences, is not an easy decision, I know. And I suspect there are quite a few sceptics here still. (A speech at the Celtic Nations Business Summit on Climate Change in Cardiff on 7.11.2007)

In (2), the proposition, which indicates that there are climate change sceptics who claim that the issue of climate change is “largely invisible, somewhat nebulous, still rather unpredictable in its precise consequences”, has its source of evidence in the comment clause “I suspect”. We may argue that the comment clause “I suspect” denotes an assumption rather than states factual knowledge. To reiterate, *assumption* appears very often as the category of evidence in the corpus. Its frequent occurrence may represent a discursive strategy on the part of the King to be perceived as a person who can conjure, reason, and draw inferences. Presumably, this strategy is meant to counterbalance the *quotative* category of evidentiality, which dominates the corpus. Arguably, it is not the King’s intention to be perceived by his audience as overbearing with quotations and references to scientific sources. It is likely that in order to facilitate an impression of being close to the audience he utilizes *assumption* as a manifestation of being on a par with his interlocutors.

The aforementioned contention seems to be reinforced by the finding that general knowledge as an aspect of *assumption* occurs quite frequently in the corpus. This is further illustrated by excerpt (3):

(3) BT and Vodafone have both continued to promote their flexible and home-working models, thereby reducing carbon emissions. Royal Mail has pioneered an innovative payroll-giving scheme with the Woodland Trust that encourages employees to reduce emissions and then offset what is left. And Chess PLC, a small business providing communications services, has rewarded employees who car-share with free parking. Improving energy efficiency and cutting back on the appalling levels of waste are the kind of simple things we can all do. (A speech at the Second May Day Business Summit on Climate Change in London on 1.05.2008)

In (3), the King makes statements about various organisations’ climate change activities by giving the impression that the members of his audience know the same facts, and thus no quotative evidence is required. In other words, we may argue that in (3) the King seeks to be on the same level as his audience by means of referring to the shared knowledge, which needs neither further explanation nor quoting external sources to corroborate it. It is quite feasible that the King, or his speechwriters, use *assumption* that involves general knowledge to create an effect of affinity between the King and his audience.

Finally, let us briefly illustrate the third frequent category of evidentiality associated with climate change, namely *inference*, which accounts for 13.9 % of all instances of evidentiality in the corpus. It should be, perhaps, reiterated that according to Aikhenvald (2004), *inference* typically involves visible and/or tangible outcomes and consequences. An example of *inference* in the corpus is provided by excerpt (4) below.

(4) Actions which are good for the planet are also good for human health: taking a more active approach to transport by walking and cycling and adopting healthy diets reduce greenhouse gas emissions, but also reduce rates of obesity, heart disease, cancer and more saving lives and money. Reductions in air pollution also result with separate and additional benefits to human health. A healthy planet and healthy people are two sides of the same coin. (A speech at The Royal Society in London on 25.02. 2015)

In (4), the King shares his observations and thoughts with the audience, which are, presumably, based upon evidence that the King regards as a result of prior factual knowledge concerning the interplay between climate change mitigation (e.g. “a more active approach to transport by walking and cycling and adopting healthy diets reduce greenhouse gas emissions”) and human health (e.g. “reduce rates of obesity, heart disease, cancer”). In (4), *inference* that is manifested by the King’s statements is not fortuitous but stems from tangible results and facts that are based upon prior observations, reasoning and research. We can argue that *inference* in (4) takes into account perceptible and ponderable outcomes of the intersection of the issue of climate change on the one hand and the topic of human health on the other hand.

5 CONCLUSION

The article has presented and discussed a mixed-methods investigation of evidentiality in the corpus of speeches on the topic of climate change delivered by the King. It has been found that there are recurrent instances of evidentiality in the corpus. The corpus analysis has revealed that evidentiality associated with the issue of climate change is manifested by the following semantic categories: *assumption*, *hearsay*, *inference*, *non-visual sensory*, *quotative*, and *visual*. Most of the instances of evidentiality associated with climate change are represented by the *quotative* category. This finding is interpreted in the study as the King’s discursive convergence on evidence-based climate change discourse by the British political actors, who represent the major mainstream political parties in the UK. Given that *assumption* is the second most frequently used category in the corpus, it is argued that its use forms part of the King’s discursive strategy of presenting himself as equal to his audience.

It can be concluded that the King's speeches on climate change are characterized by multiple instances of *quotative* evidentiality, which convey a tone of respect, seriousness, and trustworthiness. However, the present findings should be taken with caution, given that the study is one of the first attempts to apply the notion of evidentiality to climate change discourse. Despite the limitations of the study associated with the exclusive focus on the categories of evidentiality found in Aikhenvald (2004), the present investigation offers some novel avenues to be explored in future research, which, for instance, could focus on a possible interplay between King Charles III's attitude towards knowledge about climate change and evidentiality associated with climate change.

Acknowledgements

I express my gratitude to the editor and two anonymous reviewers for their insightful comments and suggestions.

PRIMARY SOURCES

www.royal.uk

HM King Charles III. A speech by His Majesty The King at the opening of COP28, Dubai, U.A.E. 1 December 2023, <https://www.royal.uk/news-and-activity/2023-12-01/a-speech-by-his-majesty-the-king-at-the-opening-of-cop28-dubai-uae>

HRH Prince Charles. A speech by The Prince of Wales at a meeting about Forests and Climate Change at Lancaster House. 29 October 2015. <https://www.royal.uk/clarencehouse/speech/speech-prince-wales-meeting-about-forests-and-climate-change-lancaster-house>

HRH Prince Charles. A speech by HRH The Prince of Wales at a meeting about "Putting Health at the Centre of the Climate Change debate: The role of the Health community in the run up to COP21", The Royal Society, London. 25 February 2015, <https://www.royal.uk/clarencehouse/speech/speech-hrh-prince-wales-meeting-about-putting-health-centre-climate-change-debate-role>

HRH Prince Charles. A speech by HRH The Prince of Wales at The Prince of Wales's International Sustainability Unit's meeting on Forests, Climate Change and Development. 26 January 2015, <https://www.royal.uk/clarencehouse/speech/speech-hrh-prince-wales-prince-wales-international-sustainability-units-meeting-forests>

HRH Prince Charles. A speech by HRH The Prince of Wales at the Energy and Climate Change Meeting in Campeche, Mexico. 4 November 2014. <https://www.royal.uk/clarencehouse/speech/speech-hrh-prince-wales-energy-and-climate-change-meeting-campeche-mexico>

- HRH Prince Charles. A speech by HRH The Prince of Wales on climate change and the environment at Cape Town University. 5 November 2011, <https://www.royal.uk/clarencehouse/speech/speech-hrh-prince-wales-climate-change-and-environment-cape-town-university>
- HRH Prince Charles. A speech by HRH The Prince of Wales to the “Deal or No Deal” Corporate Leaders Group on Climate Change Conference. 14 July 2010, <https://www.royal.uk/clarencehouse/speech/speech-hrh-prince-wales-deal-or-no-deal-corporate-leaders-group-climate-change-conference>
- HRH Prince Charles. A speech by HRH The Prince of Wales at the Copenhagen Climate Change Summit. 15 December 2009, <https://www.royal.uk/clarencehouse/speech/speech-hrh-prince-wales-copenhagen-climate-change-summit>
- HRH Prince Charles. A speech by HRH The Prince of Wales to open the Nobel Laureates Symposium on Climate Change, St James’s Palace, London. 27 May 2009, <https://www.royal.uk/clarencehouse/speech/speech-hrh-prince-wales-open-nobel-laureates-symposium-climate-change-st-jamess-palace>
- HRH Prince Charles. A speech by HRH The Prince of Wales at the Third May Day Business Summit on Climate Change, London. 1 May 2009, <https://www.royal.uk/clarencehouse/speech/speech-hrh-prince-wales-third-may-day-business-summit-climate-change-london>
- HRH Prince Charles. A speech by HRH The Prince of Wales on climate change from tropical deforestation, Mansion House, London. 10 December 2008, <https://www.royal.uk/clarencehouse/speech/speech-hrh-prince-wales-climate-change-tropical-deforestation-mansion-house-london>
- HRH Prince Charles. A speech by HRH The Prince of Wales for the Bali to Poznan Corporate Leaders Group on Climate Change conference, St James’s Palace, London. 16 July 2008, <https://www.royal.uk/clarencehouse/speech/speech-hrh-prince-wales-bali-poznan-corporate-leaders-group-climate-change-conference-st>
- HRH Prince Charles. A speech by HRH The Prince of Wales at the Second May Day Business Summit on Climate Change, London. 1 May 2008, <https://www.royal.uk/clarencehouse/speech/speech-hrh-prince-wales-second-may-day-business-summit-climate-change-london>
- HRH Prince Charles. A speech by HRH The Prince of Wales on climate change to the European Parliament in Brussels. 14 February 2008, <https://www.royal.uk/clarencehouse/speech/speech-hrh-prince-wales-climate-change-european-parliament-brussels>
- HRH Prince Charles. HRH The Prince of Wales about The Bali Communiqué on Climate Change, Financial Times (Global Edition). 30 November 2007, <https://www.royal.uk/clarencehouse/speech/article-hrh-prince-wales-about-bali-communiqué-climate-change-financial-times-global-edition>
- HRH Prince Charles. A speech by HRH The Prince of Wales at the Celtic Nations Business Summit on Climate Change, Cardiff. 7 November 2007, <https://www.royal.uk/>

clarencehouse/speech/speech-hrh-prince-wales-celtic-nations-business-summit-climate-change-cardiff

HRH Prince Charles. Closing remarks by The Prince of Wales at the May Day Business Summit on Climate Change, St James's Palace, London. 1 May 2007, <https://www.royal.uk/clarencehouse/speech/closing-remarks-prince-wales-may-day-business-summit-climate-change-st-jamess-palace-london>

HRH Prince Charles. A speech by HRH The Prince of Wales to introduce An Inconvenient Truth, a film by former Vice-President Al Gore, to a climate change seminar of business leaders in Woking. 23 March 2007, <https://www.royal.uk/clarencehouse/speech/speech-hrh-prince-wales-introduce-inconvenient-truth-film-former-vice-president-al-gore>

HRH Prince Charles. A message (by video) from HRH The Prince of Wales to accept the British Environment and Media Award for raising awareness of climate change. 22 March 2006, <https://www.royal.uk/clarencehouse/speech/message-video-hrh-prince-wales-accept-british-environment-and-media-award-raising-awareness>

HRH Prince Charles. A message (by video) from HRH The Prince of Wales to the DEFRA Conference 'Climate Change: The Business Forecast'. 6 October 2005, <https://www.royal.uk/clarencehouse/speech/message-video-hrh-prince-wales-defra-conference-climate-change-business-forecast>

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- AIKHENVALD, Alexandra Y. (2007) Information source and evidentiality: what can we conclude. *Rivista di Linguistica* 19/1, 209–227.
- AIKHENVALD, Alexandra Y. (2004) *Evidentiality*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- ANDERSON, Lloyd B. (1986) Evidentials, paths of change and mental maps: Typologically regular asymmetries. W. Chafe/J. Nichols (eds.), *Evidentiality: The Linguistic Coding of Epistemology*. Norwood: Ablex, 273–312.
- AVERCHENKOVA, Alina/Sam FANKHAUSER/Jared J. FINNEGAN (2021) The influence of climate change advisory bodies on political debates: evidence from the UK Committee on Climate Change. *Climate Policy* 21/9, 1218–1233. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14693062.2021.1878008>.
- BEDNAREK, Monika (2006) Epistemological positioning and evidentiality in English news discourse: A text-driven approach. *Text & Talk* 26/6, 635–660. <https://doi.org/10.1515/TEXT.2006.027>.
- BRUGMAN, Claudia/Monica MACAULAY (2015) Characterizing evidentiality. *Linguistic Typology* 19/2, 201–237. <https://doi.org/10.1515/lingty-2015-0007>.
- CARRETERO, Marta/Juan R. ZAMORANO-MANSILLA (2015) Evidentiality as conversational implicature: Implications for corpus annotation. *Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences* 212, 146–150. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2015.11.312>.

- DEMERITT, David (2006) Science studies, climate change and the prospects for constructivist critique. *Economy and Society* 35/3, 453–479. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03085140600845024>.
- FLØTTUM, Kjersti/Trine DAHL (2011) Climate change discourse: Scientific claims in a policy setting. *Fachsprache* 33/3–4, 205–219. <https://doi.org/10.24989/fs.v33i3-4.1372>.
- FORCHTNER, Bernhard (2019) Climate change and the far right. *Wiley Interdisciplinary Reviews: Climate Change* 10/5. <https://doi.org/10.1002/wcc.604>.
- GARDINER, Stephen (2024) Guidelines for a global constitutional convention for future generations. H. Abe/M. Fritsch/M. Wenning (eds.), *Intercultural Philosophy and Environmental Justice Between Generations. Indigenous, Africa, Asian, and Western Perspectives*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 178–203.
- GONZALEZ, Montserrat/Paolo ROSEANO/Joan BORRAS-COMES/Pilar PRIETO (2017) Epistemic and evidential marking in discourse: Effects of register and debatability. *Lingua* 186, 68–87. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lingua.2014.11.008>.
- IBM (2011) *IBM SPSS Statistics for Windows, version 20.0*. New York: IBM Corp.
- IFANTIDOU, Elly (2001) *Evidentials and Relevance*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- KAISER, Elsi (2024) Evidentials and dubitatives in Finnish: perspective shift in questions and embedded contexts. *Folia Linguistica*, 1–28. <https://doi.org/10.1515/flin-2024-2002>.
- KAISER, Elsi (2022) Eyewitness reports vs. statistical evidence: An experimental investigation of evidence types and epistemic certainty. *Evidentiality in Language and Discourse*. Galați: Dunărea de Jos University of Galați Press, 2–3.
- KAPRANOV, Oleksandr (2024a) Self-mentions in climate change discourse by King Charles III. *Journal of Contemporary Philology* 7/1, 29–46. <https://doi.org/10.37834/JCP2471029k>.
- KAPRANOV, Oleksandr (2024b) Between a burden and green technology: Rishi Sunak's framing of climate change discourse on Facebook and X (Twitter). *Information & Media* 99, 85–105. <https://doi.org/10.15388/Im.2024.99.5>.
- KAPRANOV, Oleksandr (2023) Throwing soup at Van Gogh: The framing of art in climate change activism by British mass media. *Discourses on Culture* 19/1, 175–200. <https://doi.org/10.2478/doc-2023-0008>.
- KAPRANOV, Oleksandr (2021) Discursive representations of education for sustainable development in policy documents by English medium instruction schools in Estonia and Norway. *Discourse and Communication for Sustainable Education* 12/1, 55–66. <https://doi.org/10.2478/dcse-2021-0005>.
- KAPRANOV, Oleksandr (2018a) Conceptual metaphors associated with climate change in British political discourse. R. Augustyn/A. Mierzwińska-Hajnos (eds.), *New Insights into the Language and Cognition Interface*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 51–66.

- KAPRANOV, Oleksandr (2018b) Shell's image of climate change and its representations in the British financial press. G. E. Garzone/W. Giordano (eds.), *Discourse, Communication and the Enterprise: Where Business Meets Language*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 392–409.
- KAPRANOV, Oleksandr (2017) The framing of climate-change discourse by Shell and the framing of Shell's climate change-related activities by the Economist and the Financial Times. *Bergen Language and Linguistics Studies* 7, 55–69. <https://doi.org/10.15845/bells.v7i0.1088>.
- KAPRANOV, Oleksandr (2015a) Do international corporations speak in one voice on the issue of global climate change: The case of British Petroleum and The Royal Dutch Shell Group. C. Can/A. Kilimci/K. Papaja (eds.), *Social Sciences and Humanities: A Global Perspective*. Ankara: Detay Yayıncılık, 306–322.
- KAPRANOV, Oleksandr (2015b) Conceptual metaphors in Ukrainian prime ministers' discourse involving renewables. *Topics in Linguistics* 16/1, 4–16. <https://doi.org/10.2478/topling-2015-0007>.
- LEVIDOW, Les/Theo PAPAIOANNOU (2015) Policy-driven, narrative-based evidence gathering: UK priorities for decarbonisation through biomass. *Science and Public Policy* 43/1, 46–61. <https://doi.org/10.1093/scipol/scv016>.
- LOCKWOOD, Matthew (2018) Right-wing populism and the climate change agenda: exploring the linkages. *Environmental Politics* 27/4, 712–732. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09644016.2018.1458411>.
- LOVELOCK, Brent/Kirsten LOVELOCK (2013) *The Ethics of Tourism: Critical and Applied Perspectives*. New York: Routledge.
- MARSHALL, Jonathan P. (2011) Climate change, Copenhagen and psycho-social disorder. *Portal: Journal of Multidisciplinary International Studies* 8/3, 1–23.
- MORGAN, Edward A./Gabriela M. DI GIULIO (2018) Science and evidence-based climate change policy: collaborative approaches to improve the science–policy interface. S. Serrao-Neumann/A. Coudrain/L. Coulter (eds.), *Communicating Climate Change Information for Decision-Making*. Cham: Springer, 13–28.
- MUSHIN, Ilana (2001) *Evidentiality and Epistemological Stance*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- NUYTS, Jan (2006) Modality: Overview and linguistic issues. W. Frawley (ed.), *The Expression of Modality*. Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton, 1–26. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110197570.1>.
- OLENIAK, Mariana (2020) The specific features of definitional and statistical universals with respect to certain linguistic categories. *Dacoromania* 25/1, 66–80.
- PAPAFRAGOU, Anna (2000) *Modality: Issues in the Semantics-Pragmatics Interface*. Emerald: Bingley.
- PIECZKA, Magda/Oliver ESCOBAR (2013) Dialogue and science: Innovation in policy-making and the discourse of public engagement in the UK. *Science and Public Policy* 40/1, 113–126. <https://doi.org/10.1093/scipol/scs073>.

- RAE, Maria (2021) Hyperpartisan news: Rethinking the media for populist politics. *New Media & Society* 23/5, 1117–1132. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444820910416>.
- ROORYCK, Johan (2001) Evidentiality (part 1). *GLOT International* 5/4, 125–133.
- RUIU, Maria Laura/Gabriele RUIU/Massimo RAGNEDDA (2024) Between “empowering” and “blaming” mechanisms in developing political/economic responses to climate change. *Sociological Inquiry* 94/1, 263–289. <https://doi.org/10.1111/soin.12538>.
- RUSSO, Katherine E. (2019) Speculations about the future: populism and climate change in news discourse. E. Hidalgo-Tenorio/M.-Á. Benítez-Castro/F. De Cesare (eds.), *Populist Discourse. Critical Approaches to Contemporary Politics*. London: Routledge, 190–206. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429026751>.
- SÉBASTIEN, Léa/Tom BAULER/Markku LEHTONEN (2014) Can indicators bridge the gap between science and policy? An exploration into the (non) use and (non) influence of indicators in EU and UK policy making. *Nature and Culture* 9/3, 316–343. <https://doi.org/10.3167/nc.2014.090305>.
- SHACKLEY, Simon/Brian WYNNE (1995) Global climate change: the mutual construction of an emergent science-policy domain. *Science and Public Policy* 22/4, 218–230. <https://doi.org/10.1093/spp/22.4.218>.
- STRASSHEIM, Holger/Pekka KETTUNEN (2014) When does evidence-based policy turn into policy-based evidence? Configurations, contexts and mechanisms. *Evidence & Policy* 10/2, 259–277. <https://doi.org/10.1332/174426514X13990433991320>.
- VON MALMBORG, Fredrik/Peter A. STRACHAN (2005) Climate policy, ecological modernization and the UK emission trading scheme. *European Environment* 15/3, 143–160. <https://doi.org/10.1002/eet.384>.
- WATTS, Nick et al. (2017) The Lancet Countdown: tracking progress on health and climate change. *The Lancet* 389, 1151–1164.
- WEIK VON MOSSNER, Alexa. (2021) Feeling bad? Veganism, climate change, and the rhetoric of *Cowspiracy*. C. Hanganu-Bresch/K. Kondrlik (eds.), *Veg(etari)an Arguments in Culture, History, and Practice: The V Word*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 245–269. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-53280-2>.
- WETTS, Rachel (2023) Money and meaning in the climate change debate: Organizational power, cultural resonance, and the shaping of American media discourse. *American Journal of Sociology* 129/2, 384–438. <https://doi.org/10.1086/726747>.
- WILLETT, Thomas (1988) A cross-linguistic survey of the grammaticization of evidentiality. *Studies in Language* 12/1, 51–97.
- YASMIN, Musarat (2024) Framing vulnerability: An ecolinguistic analysis of gender and climate change discourse. *Current Research in Environmental Sustainability* 7. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.crsust.2024.100258>.

POVZETEK

EVIDENCIALNOST V GOVORIH KRALJA KARLA III. O PODNEBNIH SPREMEMBAH

Podnebne spremembe predstavljajo velik izziv za ljudi, okolje, planet nasploh, še zlasti pa za posamezne države (Gardiner, 2024; Yasmin, 2024). Če proučujemo obravnavo te tematike v posameznih državah, lahko na primeru Združenega kraljestva (ZK) opazimo, da so podnebne spremembe stalna tema političnih razprav glavnih političnih akterjev (Kapranov, 2024a; Ruii et al., 2024). Ti podnebne spremembe predstavljajo skozi prizmo znanstvenih dokazov (Sébastien et al., 2014; Strassheim & Kettunen, 2014). Tudi trenutni britanski monarh, kralj Karel III., naj bi po nekaterih navedbah svoje izjave o podnebnih spremembah v javnih govorih in pisnih sporočilih za javnost podkrepljeval z znanstvenimi dokazi (Lovelock & Lovelock, 2013). A vprašanje, kako so dokazi oz. natančneje evidencialnost predstavljeni v govorih kralja Karla III. o podnebnih spremembah, še ni bilo podrobneje obravnavano. Zaradi pomanjkanja tovrstnih raziskav v pričujočem prispevku predstavljamo rezultate raziskave z mešanim metodološkim pristopom, katere cilj je bil (i) prepoznati, (ii) klasificirati in (iii) analizirati kategorije evidencialnosti v korpusu govorov kralja Karla III. o podnebnih spremembah. V raziskavi evidencialnost obravnavamo kot samostojno jezikovno kategorijo (Aikhenvald, 2004), ki razkriva »različne vrste dokazov, s pomočjo katerih posameznik podaja stvarne trditve« (Anderson, 1986: 273). Analiza korpusa na podlagi Aikhenvaldove (2004) klasifikacije evidencialnosti je pokazala, da evidencialnost v govorih kralja Karla III. sodi v več kategorij: (i) domneva, (ii) govorica, (iii) sklepanje, (iv) nevidno zaznavno, (v) citatno in (vi) vidno. Hkrati je v korpusu mogoče zaznati prevladovanje citatne vrste evidencialnosti, kar kaže na to, da govori kralja Karla III. o podnebnih spremembah v veliki meri predstavljajo na dokazih temelječa mnenja o tej temi.

Ključne besede: podnebne spremembe, evidencialnost, govori o podnebnih spremembah, kralj Karel III.

ABSTRACT

EVIDENTIALITY IN CLIMATE CHANGE DISCOURSE BY KING CHARLES III

The issue of climate change is a serious challenge to human beings, the environment, the planet in general and individual countries in particular (Gardiner, 2024; Yasmin, 2024). As far as the issue of climate change in individual countries is concerned, in the United Kingdom (UK), for instance, climate change resurfaces quite routinely as a topic of political debates by the major political actors (Kapranov, 2024a; Ruii et al., 2024), who usually regard it through the lens of scientific evidence (Sébastien et al., 2014; Strassheim & Kettunen, 2014). The current British monarch,

King Charles III, is also reported to use science-based evidence in his public speeches and written communication on the issue of climate change (Lovelock & Lovelock, 2013). Presently, however, little is known about how evidence, and more specifically, evidentiality are represented in King Charles III's speeches on this issue. In light of the lack of studies on evidentiality in King Charles III's speeches on climate change, the article presents a mixed-methods study, which aims to (i) identify, (ii) classify and (iii) analyse the categories of evidentiality in a corpus of speeches on climate change delivered by King Charles III. The study is informed by the view of evidentiality as a category in its own right (Aikhenvald, 2004), which expresses "the kinds of evidence a person has for making factual claims" (Anderson, 1986: 273). Guided by Aikhenvald's (2004) classification of evidentiality, the analysis of the corpus revealed that evidentiality in King Charles III's speeches on climate change was manifested by several categories, namely (i) assumption, (ii) hearsay, (iii) inference, (iv) non-visual sensory, (v) quotative, and (vi) visual. Furthermore, the analysis established that the quotative category of evidentiality was dominant in the corpus. The finding was taken to indicate that King Charles III's speeches on the issue of climate change involved, to a substantial degree, evidence-based judgements on the matter.

Keywords: climate change, evidentiality, speeches on climate change, King Charles III