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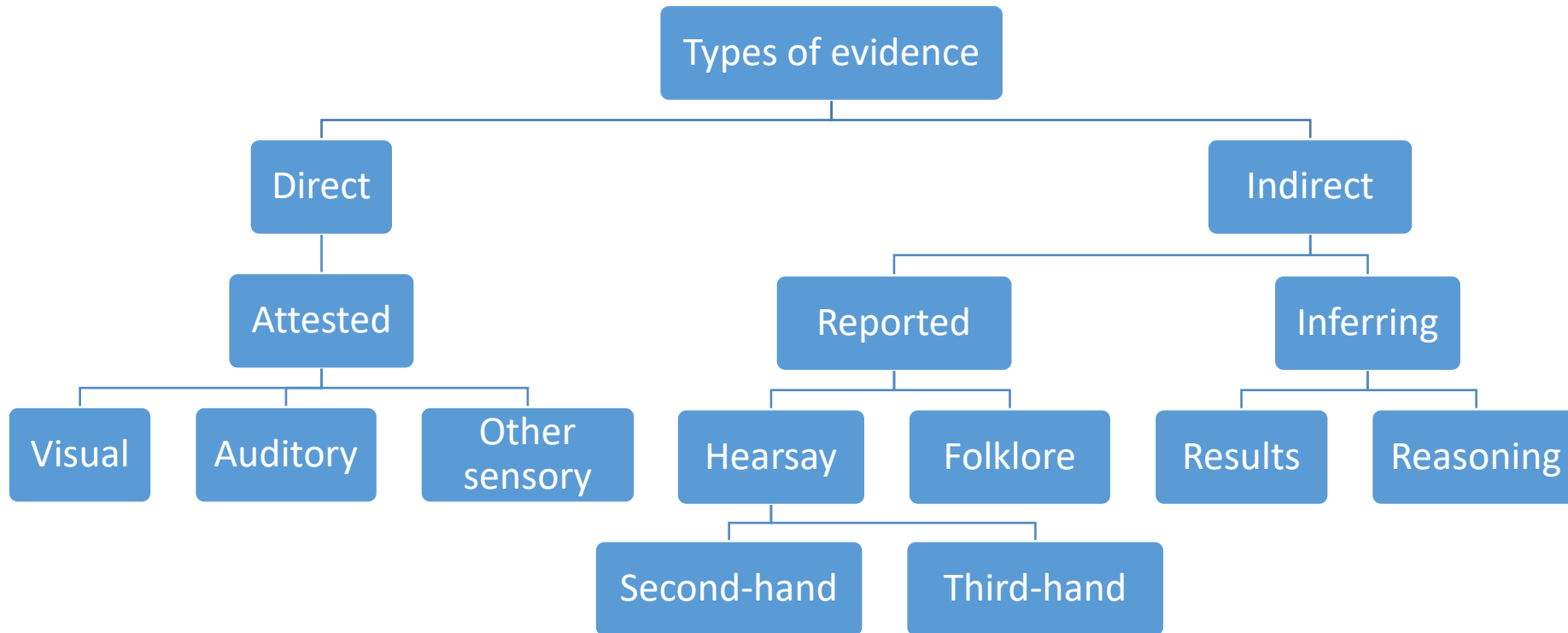
Evidentiality in Australian languages with a focus on Miriwoong

EVIDENTIALITY = **evidence** + -ial + -ity

Definition

- Evidentiality is
“the linguistic means deployed to signal the evidence that a speaker has for a particular statement, including [...] the nature of that evidence” (Adelaar & Lau 2017:1)
- epistemic modality is
the speaker’s degree of certainty or commitment to the truth of the statement (Tan & Mursell 2018:187)
 - (i) *He **may** have gone home.*
 - vs.
 - (ii) *You **must** go now.* → deontic modality (Velupillai 2012:222)

Types of evidentials



Evidential hierarchy after Willett (1988:57), based on adaptation by Faller (2002:90)

Evidential strategies in English

(Shaffer 2012)

- hearsay/reported (speech) evidentials

(1) ***I've heard** he takes steroids.*

(2) ***They say** she's really nice.*

- inferential evidential

(3) ***It looks like** it's going to rain today.*

Order of preference

(Song 2018)

- where a speaker has several sources, a hierarchy applies:

VISUAL < NON-VISUAL SENSORY < INFERRED < REPORTED < ASSUMED

Evidentiality in Australian languages

(Mushin 2012)

- evidential meanings are found in many Australian Aboriginal languages, but no language has an ‘obligatory’ system (cf. Tariana (Arawakan: Brazil))
- dedicated evidential meaning is usually expressed by
 - particles (free, uninflected forms)
 - clitics (prosodically dependent on the preceding word)

(4) *kudanyu=wali yirrba kamu*

(Garrwa: 10.4.00.1.KS)

strong=EVID fall later

‘It might rain a lot later’ [said looking up at the sky]

→ **clitic**

Evidentiality in Australian languages II

(Mushin 2012)

(5) *julaki nayi karri junu*

bird this east PERHAPS

'I think there are birds here eastwards.'

→ **particle**

(Garrwa: 3.9.03.4.DG)

Evidentiality in Australian languages - Usage

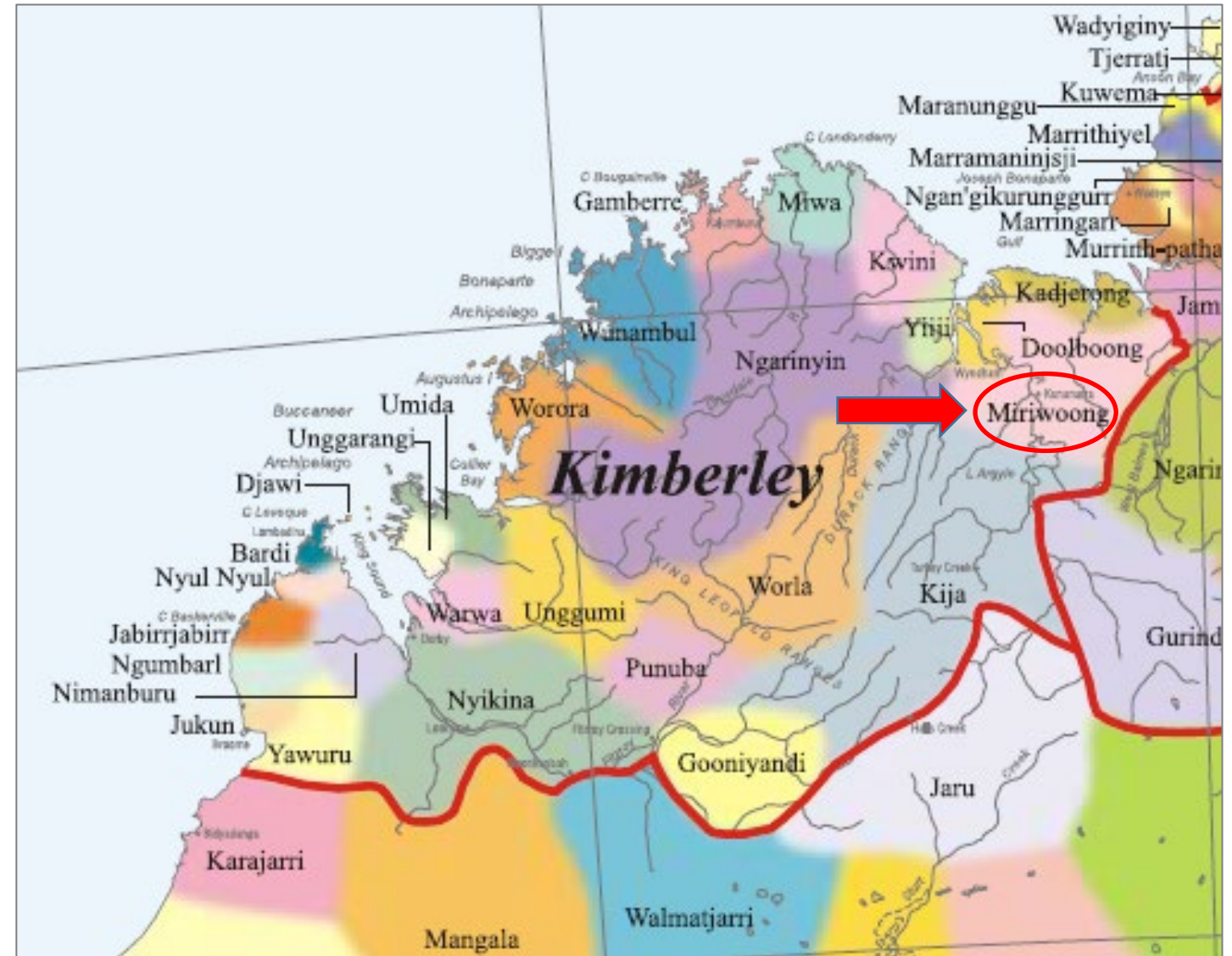
(Mushin 2012)

- Epistemic authority derives from sanctioned ownership of information
 - Assertion of direct **visual evidence** as an expression of
 - **certainty**
 - a high degree of epistemic **authority over the information**
- When the information is known but no authority is claimed:
 - 'I don't know', 'go ask X'

The Miriwoong language



Acknowledgement: In the 1990s it was Frances Kofod's intention to complete her PhD thesis comparing the three Jarragan languages. However, for a number of reasons this was never finished. One of the reasons was a period of restrictions on the sharing of written Miriwoong. This situation changed, enabling my own research to be undertaken with permission of MDWg and permission from Kofod, allowing me to draw on her early research, recordings and transcriptions of Miriwoong language with many now deceased Miriwoong elders.



(<http://www.abc.net.au/indigenous/map>)

Evidentiality in Miriwoong

(Kofod in prep. (2020))

- Miriwoong inflecting verbs:

in addition to the realis, irrealis, subjunctive, hortative, imperative verb forms:

small number of epistemic modal forms: secondary prefix:

- hypothetical *-i-*
- evidential *-iya-*: affirming the speakers' belief in the truth of the statement

Evidentiality in Miriwoong II

(Kofod in prep. (2020))

(6)

(Miriwoong)

(a) *ginayin*

g(i)-n-a-yin

3sgmS-be/stay_PRES-REAL-3sgmIPF

'he is/stays'

(b) *giyandayin*

g-**iya**-n-da-yin

3sgmS-EVID-be/stay_PRES-REAL-3sgmIPF

'he must be/be staying'

Hypotheticals in Miriwoong

(Kofod in prep. (2020))

(7)

(Miriwoong)

(a) *geniya*

g(e)-ni-ya

3sgmS-be/stay_PAST-REAL

'he was/stayed'

(b) *gininja*

g-i-ni-nja

3sgmS-HYP-be/stay_PAST-REAL

'he would have stayed'

Evidentiality in Miriwoong II

(Kofod in prep. (2020))

- (8) *Ngoowaga berra ngoonjoo-yilemtha. Barriwoo-yoowoorr yilag. Berriyandawoon, gawoothaging ninggoowoong.* (Miriwoong: MM-H131-10)

ngoowaga berra ngoonjoo-yile-m-tha
nothing there tobacco-PRIV-LOC-EXST

barr-i-woo=yoowoorr yilag
2nsSIMP-go_IMP-IMP=1nsincBEN down

berr-**iya**-n-da-woon gawoothagi-ng
3ns**S-EVID**-be/stay_PRES-**REAL**-3ns**IPF** who_ns-NOM

ninggoowo-ng
country_man-NOM

‘There is no tobacco there. You lot should go down there for us.

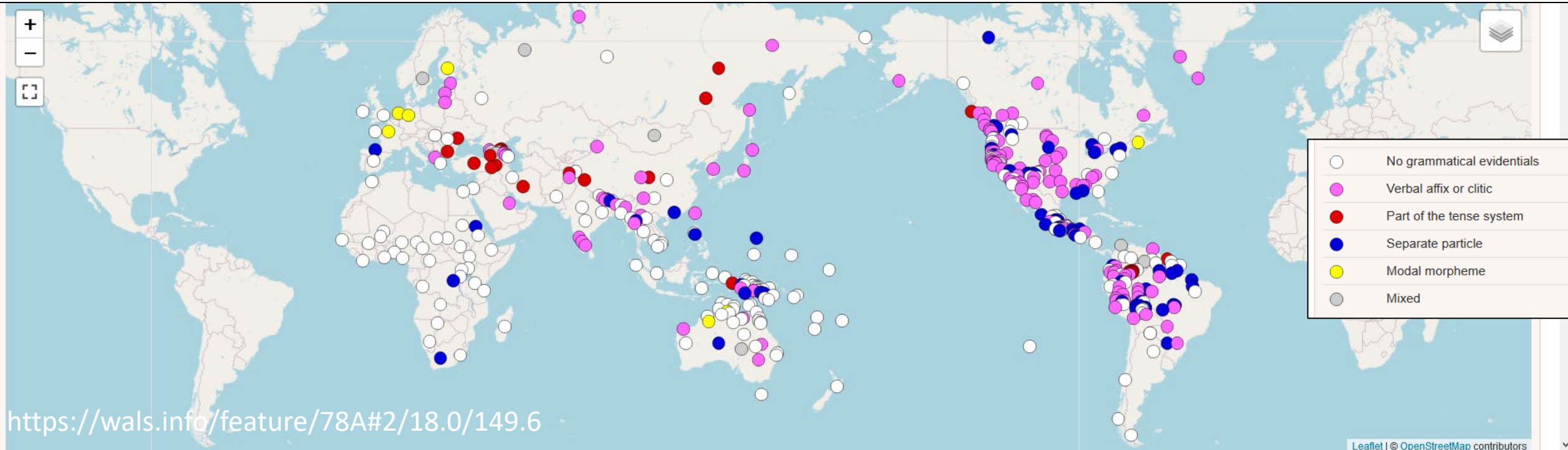
There must be some countrymen staying there.’

[with the implication that they could be asked for tobacco]

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Thank you for your attention!



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