

## **Evidentiality, Egophoricity and Epistemic Modality in Scientific Discourse: Finnish Musicology as a Case Study**

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The analysis of epistemic categories such as evidentiality, egophoricity and epistemic modality had its origin in the research on oral discourse, departing mainly from the research on phenomena found in non-European languages (Bergqvist & Kittilä 2020). An early observation underlines this approach:

[...] while for us definiteness, number, and time are obligatory aspects, we find in another language location near the speaker or somewhere else, source of information – whether seen, heard, or inferred – as obligatory aspects [...] (Boas 1938: 132-133).

Languages of special purpose (LSP) are varieties of their respective languages in which, first and foremost, *source of information*, i.e. the proof of evidentiality, is such an “obligatory aspect”. One might thus come to the assumption that the core idea of Boas’ assessment (even though LSPs are not languages in their own right) applies to them as well: Scientific argumentation is based on providing the source of the knowledge presented, may it be existing literature, result of an experiment, the *doxa* or even the speaker’s own invention. But scientific texts also display a special attitude towards egophoricity – here understood, referring to Dahl (2000: 58), as “egophoric references”, expressing the subjective position of the speaker: Whether or when the person of the scientist hides behind the text or steps into the foreground (by avoiding or using first person singular pronouns and other markers of egophoricity), is an often controversial point in different cultures of academic writing (Hyland 2002). Epistemic modality, e.g. in the form of taking stance by means of boosters or distancing themselves by hedges (Hyland 1998; 2000) or even “strengthening the argument by weakening the claim“ (Meyer 1997) are means of presenting scientific findings that authors usually employ with deliberation and often strategic and/or culture-specific implications, as, with regard to Finnish language, a study by Salmi-Tolonen (1992) has shown. With this in mind, we may analyse written utterances from specialised texts and scientific writings, asking which role epistemic categories and their interaction play both on intratextual and, especially on transtextual, discourse-related levels. This approach, as an explicit dealing with written scientific discourse, has been taken by, e.g., Janik (2007) and Toscher (2019), both with reference to the field of historiography.

My paper concentrates on examples from Finnish musicological discourses on art music. This field is of special interest for several reasons: Writing about art, especially about music and even more so in Finland, is a subject that is to a huge extent a matter of interpretation, where backing up findings by evidence is often challenging. In addition, we often have to take a

considerable imbalance of expertise between writers and readers into consideration. In such a scenario (see Busch 2018 for verticality in discourse) between the communication partners, the experts' subjective position and stance may exert a strong influence and sometimes might even outweigh comparatively weak evidentiality: Authority by (asserted) expertise provides discursive power, but also the possibility and danger of manipulation. The neutral aspect of expressing epistemic authority (Bergqvist & Kittilä 2020: 6ff.) may consequently be loaded with strong claims. The examples my analysis is based on are taken from specialised texts on Finnish music from a timespan of several decades, thus intending to show how the interrelations between the closely connected epistemic categories developed in one field of expertise, but in different historical phases. I will also attempt to identify diachronically constant and possibly even typical uses of epistemic categories against the background of previous research on Finnish academic writing, even though only additional contrastive analysis will prove whether a certain way of use is "typically Finnish" or even "typical for a Finnish musicological text". Thus, my main goal is to provide a systematised analytical approach that, abstracting from music, could be transferred to the analysis of scientific discourses of other genres under the aspect of epistemic categories as well.

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