

Epistemic modality, evidentiality and mirativity

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In the relevant literature, it is a much disputed issue whether epistemic modality and evidentiality constitute separate categories or whether the differentiation between them is rather scalar than clear-cut.

In Palmer (2001; first edition 1986), which is considered a standard work on mood and modality, epistemic modality and evidentiality are reduced to a common core meaning, as they are both covered by the Palmer's term "propositional modality" (2001: 22). In Palmer's definition, propositional modality is concerned with "the speaker's attitude to the truth-value or factual status of the proposition". With epistemic modality, "speakers express their judgements about the factual status of the proposition, whereas with evidential modality they indicate the evidence they have for its factual status" (2001: 8). Authors like Aikhenvald, on the other hand, regard evidentiality as "a category in its own right, and not a subcategory of epistemic or some other modality, or tense-aspect" (Aikhenvald/Dixon 2003: 1)

Another point of contention concerns the demarcation between evidentiality expressed by means of lexical elements on the one hand and "real" evidentials markers on the other – the latter being entitled to the term "evidentials" provided that they are sufficiently grammaticalised. Not surprisingly, the question "How much is sufficient?" is answered differently by different authors. For example, it is controversial whether the Germanic languages exhibit real evidential markers at all.

In my contribution, I will mainly focus on two issues. Firstly, it will be discussed whether the German modal *müssen* in its epistemic use in contemporary German (e.g. *Norwegen muss ein schönes Land sein*) is undergoing a development toward a secondary, evidential interpretation, similar to the development of the Dutch modal *moeten* (cf de Haan 1999: 92). Secondly, I will discuss whether German *sollen* and *wollen* in their quotative use (*Peter soll/will krank sein*) may be labelled real evidential markers, cf Diewald (2004), who does not count the two modals among the evidentials. With regard to both issues, I will draw on feedback from native speaker informants.

Furthermore, a third (and related) category, mirativity, the "grammatical marking of unexpected information" (DeLancey 1997: 35), will also be referred to and briefly typified.

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