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# Evidentials and dubitatives in Finnish: perspective shift in questions and embedded contexts

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**Abstract:** This paper investigates the reportative evidential *kuulemma* and the dubitative *muka* in Finnish (Finno-Ugric). *Kuulemma* typically indicates that the speaker reports information provided by someone else (hearsay) and is not committed to the truth of the proposition, while *muka* (roughly: ‘supposedly, allegedly, as if’) typically signals that the speaker doubts the truth of the proposition, leaving open the information source. This paper explores perspective-shifting and whether these forms can be anchored to someone other than the speaker. I use corpus data and native speaker judgments to test what happens in questions, under the speech verb ‘say,’ and in free indirect discourse. In questions, both forms appear to stay anchored to the speaker (no interrogative flip). However, when embedded under ‘say,’ dubitative *muka* remains speaker-oriented, whereas reportative *kuulemma* can shift to the subject. In free indirect discourse, both can shift to the character whose point-of-view is expressed. I propose that these differences are partially related to subjectivity: Whereas *kuulemma* can be described in objective terms, it has been suggested that *muka* can express more nuanced affect such as surprise and irony. I suggest this subjective nature of *muka* is related to its speaker-oriented nature, echoing the speaker-orientation default of affective expressions (e.g. predicates of personal taste, epithets, interjections).

**Keywords:** reportative evidentials; hearsay; Finnish; perspective shift; subjectivity

## 1 Introduction

Evidential markers provide information about the nature of the information source that an individual has for a proposition (e.g. Aikhenvald 2004; Willett 1988). In the case of declarative main clauses, the relevant evidence holder is the speaker, and evidential markers can indicate whether the proposition refers to something

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that the speaker saw, heard about from someone else, or inferred from other information. Evidentials can also signal the speaker's level of commitment to the proposition, as information sources differ in reliability – for example, first-hand visual evidence is considered more reliable than reported information/hearsay. Some languages also have dubitative markers that express a speaker's lack of commitment to a proposition, often without specifying the information source.

While there exists a growing body of work on evidentials, less is known about dubitatives and related expressions. Furthermore, even with evidentials, many questions remain open, especially once we go beyond main clause declaratives. As noted by Korotkova (2015), attitude reports have played a central role in furthering understanding of many linguistic phenomena, but the distribution and interpretation of evidentials and dubitatives in attitude complements – e.g. embedded under *think* or *say* – is not yet well-researched (see also Schenner 2007; Sauerland and Schenner 2007, 2013, for further discussion of this gap). Questions are another context that is of both theoretical and empirical relevance, as they allow us to explore the behavior of evidentials and dubitatives in non-declarative contexts. Crucially, both questions and embedding under attitude verbs introduce a potential second evidence holder in addition to the speaker: the addressee in the case of questions and the main clause subject in the case of embedding. Thus, these contexts allow us to test whether reportatives and dubitatives allow for 'shifted' interpretations.

Strictly speaking, while reportatives are anchored to an evidence holder – i.e., the person who has received reportative evidence about an event – dubitatives are probably better described as being anchored to an attitude holder with a particular doxastic state – i.e., the person who doubts the relevant proposition. However, for ease of exposition, in this paper I will sometimes use the term 'evidence holder' for both, while acknowledging that they are underlyingly distinct.

This paper investigates the reportative evidential *kuulemma* and the dubitative *muka* in Finnish<sup>1</sup> (Finno-Ugric), focusing on their distribution and interpretation in questions and embedded under attitude verbs, in particular the nonfactive speech act verb *say*. The Finnish reportative evidential ('hearsay') particle *kuulemma* indicates that the speaker is reporting information provided by someone else and is not committed to the truth of the proposition. On the other hand, the dubitative marker *muka* (roughly translatable as 'supposedly, allegedly, as if', see e.g. Nordlund and Pekkarinen 2014) is typically described as signaling that the speaker doubts the truth of the proposition, while leaving open the nature of the information source.

To get a sense of how these expressions work in root declaratives, consider a scenario where someone tells me that Kaarina doesn't have time to exercise (1), but

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<sup>1</sup> Finnish has no specialized affixal evidential morphology, and uses particles.

I doubt this claim. In reporting this to another friend, depending on what I want to communicate I could use any of the three options in (2–4): the reportative evidential *kuulemma* (2), the dubitative marker *muka* (3), or both (4).<sup>2</sup>

(1) Plain sentence

*Kaarina ei ehdi urheilla.*  
Kaarina.NOM neg have-time do-sports  
'Kaarina doesn't have time to exercise.'

(2) Reportative evidential *kuulemma*

*Kaarina ei kuulemma ehdi urheilla.*  
Kaarina.NOM neg kuulemma have-time do-sports  
'Kaarina doesn't kuulemma have time to exercise / Kaarina doesn't have time to exercise, I heard.'

(3) Dubitative particle *muka*

*Kaarina ei muka ehdi urheilla.*  
Kaarina.NOM neg muka have-time do-sports  
'Kaarina doesn't muka have time to exercise / It's claimed that Kaarina doesn't have time to exercise, but I doubt this.'

(4) Reportative evidential combined with dubitative particle

*Kaarina ei kuulemma muka ehdi urheilla.*  
Kaarina.NOM neg kuulemma muka have-time do-sports  
'Kaarina doesn't kuulemma muka have time to exercise / Kaarina doesn't have time to exercise, I heard, but I doubt this.'

Assuming that speakers are cooperative and follow Grice's Maxim of Quality, saying (1) publicly commits the speaker to believing the relevant proposition *p*, here, that Kaarina does not have time to exercise. However, in (2), with the reportative evidential *kuulemma*, the speaker is not committed to the truth of *p*. More specifically, as discussed in Kuiiri (1984) and Kaiser (2022), *kuulemma* is neutral with respect to the speaker's beliefs about *p*.

While (i) the reportative *kuulemma* (ex. 2) allows the speaker to express a proposition *p* without expressing a public commitment to it and (ii) a plain declarative (ex. 1) commits the speaker to the truth of *p*, (iii) the dubitative *muka*

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2 Grammatical abbreviations used in this paper: NOM nominative, PAR partitive, GEN genitive, ACC accusative, ADE adessive, ALL allative, ESS essive, ILL illative, SG singular, PL plural, Px possessive suffix, ADV adverb. For reasons of brevity and readability, verbs are not glossed, and no glosses are provided for long examples where the syntactic/morphological details are irrelevant for the claims being made in this paper.

(ex. 3) allows the speaker to explicitly signal that they doubt the truth of *p*. Furthermore, as shown in (4), *muka* and *kuulemma* can co-occur without redundancy, confirming that they differ in their discourse contributions.

On the one hand, *kuulemma* signals that the speaker heard *p* from another source via a prior linguistic communicative event (e.g. Kuiru 1984: 33; Hakulinen et al. 2004, see also Pancheva and Rudin 2019 on reportatives more generally). On the other hand, I suggest that *muka* is more subjective, as it reflects the speaker's doxastic state – namely that, for whatever reason, the speaker doubts *p*. Thus, whereas use of *muka* involves a subjective judgment on the part of the speaker, use of *kuulemma* simply hinges on the existence of a prior communicative event – a factual, non-subjective property of prior discourse.

In this paper, I present an exploratory comparison of the shifting behavior of *kuulemma* and *muka* in questions and under attitude verbs – contexts that introduce a potential second evidence holder in addition to the speaker: the addressee in the case of questions and the main clause subject in the case of embedding. I speculate that the differences in the shifting behavior of *kuulemma* and *muka* in these contexts may be at least partly due to *kuulemma* conveying relatively objective information than *muka* which is intuitively more subjective. I also briefly consider Free Indirect Discourse. While the present paper does not aim to provide a detailed semantic analysis of these patterns, it provides novel empirical data from a non-Indo-European language regarding an under-explored aspect of evidentiality and seeks to provide a foundation for future work.

## 2 Reportative evidentials

Languages have a variety of evidential markers that are sensitive to different types of evidence (e.g. direct perceptual experience, reportative, inferential). The type of evidential discussed in this paper is the Finnish reportative form *kuulemma*. Before considering Finnish, this section provides a brief review of reportative evidentials from a crosslinguistic perspective.

### 2.1 Reportative evidentials outside root declaratives: distribution and interpretation

There exists considerable crosslinguistic variation in the distribution of evidentials outside of root declaratives. In some languages, evidentials can occur in embedded contexts, including complement clauses embedded under verbs such as *say* and *think*, but there is variation in terms of whether the speaker or the matrix subject

is construed as the evidence holder. Next, I provide a brief overview of typological variation regarding the distribution and interpretation of reportative evidentials in questions and embedded contexts in particular, before turning to the Finnish data.

### 2.1.1 Reportative evidentials in questions

Not all languages allow evidentials in questions but many do (e.g. Aikhenvald 2004; San Roque et al. 2017). When evidentials occur in questions, they often exhibit interrogative flip (e.g. Aikhenvald 2004; Faller 2002; Garrett 2001; Speas and Tenny 2003), where the anchor of the evidential (i.e. the evidence holder) shifts from the speaker to the addressee. This is illustrated in (5–6) for the Cheyenne reportative evidential *séstse* (Murray 2009, 2016). When reportative *séstse* occurs in a polar question (5) or a wh-question (6), the addressee is the relevant evidence holder and the marker can be roughly paraphrased as ‘given what you heard, what is the answer to this question?’.

(5) Cheyenne reportative

<i>Mó=’-é</i>	<i>-némene</i>	<i>-sétse</i>	<i>Annie?</i>
Q= EP-3	-sing	-RPT.3SG	Annie
‘Given what you heard, did Annie sing?’			

(Murray 2016)

(6) Cheyenne reportative

<i>Tóne’sé</i>	<i>é-ho’eohtse</i>	<i>-séstse?</i>
when	3-arrive	-RPT.3SG
i. ‘Given what you heard, when did he arrive?’		
ii. ‘He arrived sometime, I wonder when.’		

(Murray 2016)

However, Bhadra’s (2020) data from Telugu suggests that not all languages exhibit interrogative flip from the speaker to the addressee. (7) can be construed as asking the addressee to confirm the truth of the proposition but the reportative evidential makes reference to evidence possessed by the speaker, not the addressee.

(7) Telugu reportative

<i>Ram</i>	<i>roojuu</i>	<i>taagutaaDu</i>	<i>anTa?</i>
Ram	everyday	drinks	REP
‘(I heard) Ram drinks everyday, (is that true)?’			

(Bhadra 2020)

In addition to interrogative flip, in some languages evidentials in questions also allow conjectural question interpretations, exemplified by the paraphrase provided

in (6ii). The Cheyenne question in (6) can also be interpreted as a conjectural question (also called a deliberative question, self-addressed question, or a ‘question where no addressee is present,’ see Eckard and Beltrama 2019). Here, the question expresses the speaker’s curiosity about something and is not a true information-seeking question. However, as reportative evidentials in Finnish do not appear to allow for this construal, I do not consider it further.

In sum, when reportative evidentials occur in questions, in many languages – but not all – the addressee, not the speaker, is construed as the evidence holder (interrogative flip).

### 2.1.2 Reportative evidentials in embedded contexts

When it comes to the possibility of syntactically embedding evidentials, we again find considerable crosslinguistic variation. In many languages, evidentials cannot be embedded in complement clauses, including Cuzco Quechua, Shipibo-Konibo, Estonian, Kombai, Qiang, Tibetan, Bulgarian (see e.g. Aikhenvald 2004; Faller 2002; Garrett 2001; Sauerland and Schenner 2007). However, other languages do allow this, as shown by the St’át’imcets reportative evidential in (8) embedded under the speech verb *say* (from Matthewson et al. 2007: 228).

(8) St’át’imcets reportative  
*tsut kw s-Lémya7 kw s-melyih ku7 ta i7mats-s-a*  
 say det nom-Lémya7 det nom-marry report det grandchild-3poss-exis  
*s-Rose*  
 nom-R  
 ‘Lémya7 said that [she was told that] Rose’s grandchild got married.’  
 (Matthewson et al. 2007)

Here, the reported evidential is shifted and anchored to the matrix subject, Lémya7, not the speaker. The matrix subject, not the speaker, is the evidence holder referenced by the evidential.

In general, in languages where evidentials can be embedded, we observe cross-linguistic variation in whether the speaker or the matrix subject is the relevant evidence holder. Summarizing prior work, Korotkova (2015) notes that (a) in some languages, evidentials embedded under attitude verbs are obligatorily anchored to the speaker (e.g. Bulgarian as reported in Sauerland and Schenner 2007; Koev 2011, and in Georgian; Korotkova 2015), whereas (b) in other languages evidentials under attitude verbs obligatorily shift to the matrix subject, the subject of the attitude verb (e.g., Standard Tibetan; Garrett 2001, St’át’imcets; Matthewson et al. 2007) and (c) in yet others, shifting is optional and embedded evidentials can be anchored to either the speaker or the attitude subject (e.g. German; Schenner 2010; Bulgarian (Roumyana Pancheva, p.c. to Korotkova); and Turkish; Şener 2011).

Relatedly, in some languages, embedded evidentials that are anchored to the speaker can receive what Matthewson et al. (2007) call ‘reinforcement’ readings and Schenner (2010) calls ‘concord’ interpretations. For example, in the St’át’imcets example in (9) (Matthewson et al. 2007, ex. 61a), the reportative evidential *ku7* in the embedded is simply reinforcing the information already conveyed by the matrix verb that Mary said *p*. Thus, here the reportative does not make reference to a new communicative event but simply reinforces/repeats the information from the matrix verb. Thus, the speaker is the evidence holder in these cases.

(9) Context: Lémya7 saw Mary at the bank and Mary was obviously pregnant.  
Later, Lémya7 told you that Mary was pregnant. You yourself haven’t seen  
Mary yet. Then you tell me:  
*tsut kw s-Lémya7 kw sqweménn’ek ku7 s-Mary*  
say det nom-Lémya7 det pregnant report nom-Mary  
'Lémya7 said that Mary is pregnant.' [speaker was told by Lémya7; Lémya7  
witnessed it]  
(Matthewson et al. 2007)

In sum, crosslinguistically, evidentials embedded in attitude contexts vary in terms of whether they must be interpreted relative to the speaker (what one could call ‘no shift’), relative to the attitude subject (obligatory shift), or whether both interpretations are possible (optional shift). To capture this crosslinguistic variation, Korotkova (2015) analyses the evidence holder (what she calls ‘Origo’, following Garrett 2001) of evidentials as a special kind of shiftable indexical and further argues that languages that allow shifting have an evidential shifting operator EV (aka a monster, extending context-shifter ideas from Anand and Nevins’ (2004) work on indexical shift) in their lexicon that targets this indexical in particular. Thus, under her analysis, whenever the monster is present, the evidentials shifts to the subject of the attitude verb. We return to the idea of a shifting operator later in this paper.

### 3 Finnish reportative evidentials

We now consider the behavior of the Finnish reportative evidential *kuulemma* in questions and when embedded under verbs of saying, before looking at the dubitative *muka* in Section 4. As will become clear, contexts that introduce a potential second perspectival center in addition to the speaker – namely the addressee in questions and the main clause subject in embedding – reveal asymmetries in the interpretation of *kuulemma* and *muka*.

### 3.1 Finnish reportative evidentials in root clauses

Before looking at questions and embedding under attitude verbs, let us consider *kuulemma* in root declaratives (see Kaiser 2022 for an in-depth analysis). In essence, *kuulemma* expresses that the speaker received the information from someone else (10–11) (e.g. Kittilä and Sandman 2013) – i.e., *kuulemma* indicates that the current speaker is reporting second-hand information from someone else.

(10) *Hän kuulemma työskentelee öisin*  
 s/he.NOM kuulemma works nights.ADV  
 'S/he kuulemma works nights. (I hear she works at night time)'  
 (Hakulinen et al. 2004: 1425)

(11) *www*  
*Olen kuulemma joskus viikonlopuun jälkeen lapsena sanonut,*  
 Am kuulemma sometimes weekend-GEN after child-ESS said,  
*että...*  
 that....  
 'As a child, I kuulemma sometimes said, after the weekend, that....' (I've  
 been told that as a child, after the weekend I would sometimes say...)

In this paper, I use constructed examples, examples from prior work, as well as naturally-occurring examples from the internet that I identified through google searches and using the corpora hosted by the Finnish language bank (KORP, Borin et al. 2012), marked with 'www.' Using naturally-occurring examples from present-day Finnish provides insights into the rich contextual factors that guide the use and interpretation of reportative *kuulemma* and dubitative *muka*.

The reportative *kuulemma* is a free-standing trisyllabic word and does not inflect. It is in all likelihood derived from the verb 'to hear' combined with the first-person pronoun in non-canonical VS order (*kuulen ma* 'hear I') (see Sadeniemi and Vesikansa 1989).

In earlier work (Kaiser 2022), I show that with *kuulemma*, the speaker (in the terminology of Goffman 1979, the 'Animator') is not committed to the truth of the reported proposition *p* (see also Pancheva and Rudin 2019). In this regard, *kuulemma* resembles reportative evidentials in other languages (e.g. AnderBois 2014; Faller 2002, 2019).

Furthermore, for *kuulemma* to be felicitous, the information in the reported proposition *p* must have been previously communicated linguistically – i.e. spoken or written – by someone else (the 'Principal,' to use Goffman's term). In other words, the Principal (but not the Animator) must be discourse-committed to *p*. *Kuulemma* cannot be used if *p* is merely inferable from someone's behavior or other non-linguistic inferential evidence (see e.g. Kuiria 1984: 33, Hakulinen et al. 2004, Section 1606, p. 1524).

In addition, as illustrated in (12), the reported proposition *p* is at-issue information – i.e. *p* is put on the table – as shown by the fact that it can be used to answer the ‘question under discussion’ (QUD, see e.g. Simons et al. 2010; Tonhauser 2012 on the QUD test). Thus, *kuulemma* resembles reportative evidentials in other languages (e.g. AnderBois 2014; Faller 2019; Murray 2014) which also put *p* on the Table.

(12) QUD test

Speaker A: *Mitä Matti tekee juuri nyt?*  
 what.PAR Matti.NOM does right now?  
 ‘What is Matti doing right now?’

Speaker B: *Se lukee kuulemma tentteihin.*  
 it-NOM reads kuulemma exam-PL-ILL  
 ‘He is studying kuulemma for exams.’  
 (Kaiser 2022)

However, the information expressed by *kuulemma* itself is not-at-issue, as shown by it not being directly deniable (13). (See e.g. Tonhauser 2012 on the direct deniability test.) Speaker B’s response in (13) seeks to target only the meaning of *kuulemma*, just like B’s response in (12) targets *p* – but the response is infelicitous in (13), in contrast to (12).<sup>3</sup>

(13) Direct deniability test

Speaker A: *Matti lukee kuulemma tentteihin*  
 Matti.NOM reads kuulemma exam-PL-ILL  
 ‘Matti is kuulemma studying for exams.’

Speaker B: # *Ei, ei kukaan kertonut sinulle täitä.*  
 No, neg anyone told you-ALL this-PAR  
 # ‘No, no one told you this.’  
 (Kaiser 2022)

Given that *kuulemma* is neutral regarding to the speaker’s commitment to the reported proposition *p*, but *p* constitutes at-issue information, we may wonder whether *p* can be added to Common Ground, like assertions can. In Kaiser (2022) I show that *p* can be, but does not need to be, added to Common Ground. In this regard, *kuulemma* resembles Cuzco Quechua reportatives, regarding which Faller (2019) notes the following: “a reported proposition can update the discourse in ways similar to regularly asserted propositions, but only if the speaker intends this and if the addressee recognizes this intention” (Faller 2019: 8).

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<sup>3</sup> The response in (13) is adapted from Faller (2019). Similar responses are used by Faller (2014) and Murray (2010) to show that the content of reportative evidentials in other languages is also not-at-issue.

In sum, when *kuulemma* is used in root declaratives, the speaker is neutral about the truth of the reported proposition *p*, *p* must have been communicated linguistically, which entails that there exists another person who is publicly committed to *p*, *p* is at-issue information (i.e. put on the Table) that can potentially be added to the Common Ground, whereas *kuulemma* itself conveys not-at-issue information.

### 3.2 Finnish reportative evidentials in questions

Let us now look beyond root declaratives, starting with questions. Although many languages allow reportative evidentials in polar and wh-questions, in Finnish *kuulemma* seems to be odd in regular polar (yes/no) questions (14). However, *kuulemma* can felicitously occur in polar questions with negation (15) as well as in wh-questions (16).

(14) Polar (yes/no) question

#? *Muuttiko Liisa kuulemma Poriin?*  
 Moved-Q Liisa.NOM kuulemma Pori-ILL?  
 'Did Liisa move *kuulemma* to Pori?'

(15) Polar question with negation (www)<sup>4</sup>

*eikö se nykyään kuulemma asukin Tampereella?*  
 Neg-3SG-Q it.NOM nowadays kuulemma live-CL Tampere-ADE?  
 'Doesn't she currently *kuulemma* live in Tampere?'

(16) Wh-question (www)

*Miksi mulla aina (kuulemma) haisee henki pahalta?!*  
 Why I-ADE always (kuulemma) smell breath.NOM bad-ABL?!  
 'Why do I (kuulemma) always have bad breath?!'

In polar questions with negation, *kuulemma* is speaker-anchored – in other words, the speaker is the relevant evidence holder. For example, in (15), by using *kuulemma* the speaker signals that they have heard that the person being talked about lives in Tampere. Thus, there is no interrogative flip and *kuulemma* is not tapping into whether the addressee has heard this. Rather, *kuulemma* makes reference to reportative evidence possessed by the speaker who asks the question.

Similarly, *kuulemma* is speaker-anchored in wh-questions and does not appear to exhibit interrogative flip. In (16), the speaker signals that they have been told that their breath smells bad (i.e., the speaker heard this from someone else) and are trying to find out the cause of their halitosis.

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<sup>4</sup> The additive/scalar clitic *-kin* presumably also plays a role in the interpretation of this question, see ex. (20) for polar question with negation without this clitic that shows the same pattern.

In sum, *kuulemma* seems to be infelicitous in standard polar questions, but can occur in polar questions with negation and in wh-questions, where it has a speaker-anchored interpretation (does not exhibit interrogative flip). Why is the distribution of *kuulemma* constrained in this way? In the rest of this section, I argue that these distributional properties of *kuulemma* can be derived from independent properties of wh-questions and polar questions with negation (vs. standard polar questions), coupled with the observation that Finnish is a language where reportative evidentials do not exhibit interrogative flip, i.e., do not shift to the addressee in questions.

### 3.2.1 Background: questions in Finnish

To understand the asymmetrical distribution of *kuulemma* in different kinds of questions, let us first consider the semantics and pragmatics of polar questions.

Let's start with polar questions with negation. In traditional Hamblin semantics, a question denotes the set of possible answers. Thus, the denotation of a polar question like 'Is Ana coming to the party?' is the set of propositions {Ana is coming to the party, Ana is not coming to the party}. Regular polar questions can be regarded as having 'nonveridical equilibrium' (e.g. Giannakidou 2013), i.e., *p* and not *p* are equally likely.

However, in polar questions with negation, the question-asker may not regard *p* and not *p* as equally likely. For example, in English, the location of negation in polar questions correlates with whether the question-asker has any expectations about what the answer will be – i.e. whether the question is biased. Preposed ('high') negation in polar questions, as in (17), is associated with positive bias (e.g. Büring and Gunlogson 2000; Han 1998; Ladd 1981, and many others). Thus (17) triggers the implicature that the speaker thinks that Ana is coming to the party – i.e., the speaker thinks that the positive answer is likely to be true. This differs from polar questions with non-preposed ('low') negation, as in (18), which do not necessarily trigger this implicature (e.g. Romero and Han 2004 and many others). This empirical observation is summarized in (19).

- (17) High negation: positive bias  
*Isn't Ana coming to the party?*
- (18) Low negation: no bias  
*Is Ana not coming to the party?*
- (19) Generalization 1 (from Romero and Han 2004): "Yn-questions with preposed negation necessarily carry the epistemic implicature that the speaker believed or expected that the positive answer is true. Yn-questions with non-preposed negation do not necessarily carry this epistemic implicature."

What about negative polar questions in Finnish? Finnish does not exhibit the same kind of visible high-low distinction as English. This is because Finnish negation is a verbal element – it agrees with the subject in person and number – and like other finite verbs in polar questions, it raises to sentence-initial position (ex. 15, ex. 20, see also Kaiser 2006, assuming a noun is not in focus).

(20) Polar question with negation (www)

eikö        *itkulla*        *ja*        *naurulla*        *ole*        *kuulemma sama*  
 Neg-3SG-Q    crying-ADE    and    laughter-ADE    have    kuulemma same  
*tarkoitus: jännityksen tms. laukaisu?*

purpose: tension-ACC    or-similar    release?

‘Don’t crying and laughter kuulemma have the same purpose: releasing tension (or a similar feeling)?’

Thus, in Finnish polar questions, negation is always high; there is no visible difference between high and low negation, in contrast to English. Indeed, other things being equal, it seems that in Finnish a polar question with sentence-initial negation is ambiguous and can in principle (context permitting) receive a ‘positive (epistemic) bias’ reading – i.e., it can trigger the implicature that the speaker thinks the positive form of the proposition holds.

I suggest that the availability of this positive bias reading plays a key role in licensing use of *kuulemma* in polar questions with negation – basically, *kuulemma* can occur in a polar question when that question is biased, i.e., when the speaker believes or expects *p* to be true. Thus, (20) is easily construed as signaling that the speaker believes/expects that crying and laughter have the same function. (A full investigation of the interpretation bias in polar questions – including effects of NPIs and focus-sensitive particles – in Finnish is beyond the scope of this paper. Here I only consider polar questions with negation.)

### 3.2.2 *Kuulemma* in (biased) polar questions

In the preceding section I suggested that, independent of *kuulemma*, Finnish polar questions with negation can in principle be interpreted as having a positive epistemic bias (i.e., the speaker believes *p* or expects *p* to be true), unlike regular polar questions with no negation where the speaker has no bias towards *p* or not *p*. I propose that this interpretational asymmetry, which I attribute to independent properties of negation in Finnish, is related to the observation that *kuulemma* can occur in negated polar questions when they are interpreted as biased, but not in non-negated polar questions or in unbiased negated questions. Simply put, the idea is that for *kuulemma* to be licensed, there must be available a proposition *p* for *kuulemma* to target, and that this is the case in biased but not in neutral polar questions.

Recall that in root declaratives, *kuulemma* indicates that the speaker heard *p* from someone else, i.e., that there exists a prior Principal who is discourse-committed to *p*. In a context where the speaker has heard *p* from this other Principal but the speaker is perhaps not entirely certain and would like further confirmation about *p*, a reasonable conversational move is to ask a biased polar question, as in (20), instead of uttering a root declarative.

Crucially, in this kind of context where a speaker expects *p* to be true but wants further confirmation and asks a biased polar question, there is available a proposition *p* for *kuulemma* to target – namely the positive answer that the speaker is biased towards that they heard from someone else.

In contrast, on this view, the reason that neutral polar questions in Finnish are odd with *kuulemma* (ex. 14) is because, first, there is no proposition *p* for *kuulemma* to target and second, because *kuulemma* in Finnish does not exhibit interrogative flip.

Consider a situation where the speaker has heard *p* from someone else (i.e., there exists a Principal who is discourse-committed to *p*). Here, assuming people follow the Maxim of Quality, it seems odd for the speaker to not give any credence to this other person's assertion. In other words, if Mari tells me that Liisa has moved to Pori, it is infelicitous for me to use a neutral polarity question to ask others if Liisa has moved to Pori while also using *kuulemma* to indicate that I already heard this from someone else (in this case Mari). Hence, (14) sounds odd.

It's important to note that this approach hinges on *kuulemma* being speaker-anchored, i.e. it cannot flip to the addressee, cannot switch to being addressee-oriented. If *kuulemma* allowed interrogative flip, along the lines of the Cheyenne reportative *sèstse* (Murray 2009, 2016), it should presumably be licensed in neutral polar questions as well. Rather, what we find is that in Finnish, the relevant evidence holder is the speaker, regardless of whether *kuulemma* occurs in declaratives or in polar questions.

### 3.2.3 *Kuulemma* in wh-questions

Let us now turn to wh-questions. The 'why' question in (21) shows that *kuulemma* can occur in wh-questions when there exists a proposition *p* for *kuulemma* to target. Here, *kuulemma* targets the proposition 'the party is getting lots of new members quickly.' Echoing what we saw with polar questions, here *kuulemma* has a speaker-anchored reading.

(21) Wh-question (www)

... *miksi puolueeseen tulee kuulemma hyvää vauhtia*  
 ... why party-ILL come kuulemma good-PAR speed-PAR  
*uusia jäseniä?*  
 new-PL-PAR member-PL-PAR?  
 'why are new members kuulemma joining the (political) party at a good speed?'

Under my analysis, felicitous occurrence of *kuulemma* in 'why' questions is not surprising, as these questions are not incompatible with the speaker having heard a proposition *p* from someone else and now asking for more information about *p*.<sup>5</sup>

### 3.3 Finnish reportative evidentials in embedded contexts

In the preceding section I presented evidence suggesting that *kuulemma* can be used in (some) questions, but that it remains speaker-anchored and can only be used in contexts where the question conveys a proposition *p* that the speaker has reportative evidence for (i.e. that the speaker heard from someone else). Thus, unlike what is often reported in the literature for other languages, we see no signs of interrogative flip with the Finnish reportative.

Ultimately, the question data fits well with what Kaiser (2022) proposed for declaratives: In questions – just like in declaratives – when *kuulemma* is used, it indicates that the target proposition was previously expressed by another speaker (the Principal) who is discourse-committed to the proposition, unlike the current speaker (Animator). I propose that this explains why *kuulemma* is felicitous in biased polar questions and (some) wh-questions but not in regular polar questions: simply put, *kuulemma* can only be used when the utterance expresses a proposition *p* that the speaker (the evidence holder) heard from someone else.

Next, we consider another context with two potential evidence holders: *kuulemma* embedded under verbs of speaking (e.g. *say*). Here, the two possible evidence holders are the speaker and the matrix subject of the verb, rather than the speaker and the addressee. The next section explores the discourse profile of *kuulemma* in this context.

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<sup>5</sup> Native speaker judgments and corpus searches indicate that questions with a wh-word in subject or object position (e.g. *What did Anna kuulemma buy?*) are a less-welcoming environment for *kuulemma* than *why*-questions. I attribute to the fact that with argument-position wh-words, it is less clear what the proposition *p* is that *kuulemma* is targeting. Further work is clearly needed.

### 3.3.1 Domain of investigation: verbs of saying

Before continuing, it's worth pointing out that in this paper, I focus on embedding under *sanoa* 'to say,' a non-factive verb of saying. (Some examples also use *kertoa* 'to tell.') There are multiple reasons for this choice. First, both reportative *kuulemma* and dubitative *muka* can be embedded under verbs of saying, so they are well-suited for our aim of comparing these two elements. Second, using a neutral speech verb that does not provide cues about the subject's attitude towards the embedded proposition means that we can better detect effects of the evidential or dubitative, without other semantic factors coming into play. An attitude verb like 'to doubt' or 'to argue' would provide additional semantic information that could guide people's interpretation about whether the evidential or dubitative is speaker-anchored or subject-anchored; use of *say* avoids this issue. Third, I chose to use speech verbs as opposed to verbs of thinking of perception because the reportative evidential *kuulemma* is felicitous only in contexts where the information has been expressed linguistically by someone (e.g. Kuiiri 1984; Kaiser 2022).

However, an investigation of what happens with other kinds of attitude verbs such as the various version of 'think' in Finnish (e.g. *ajatella*, *luulla*), as well as *uskoaa* 'believe,' is an important direction for future work.

### 3.3.2 Matrix subject as evidence holder

*Kuulemma* can be embedded under attitude verbs, as in examples (22–23). In contrast to what we observed with questions, in this section we will see that native speaker judgments and corpus data indicate that *kuulemma* can be anchored either to the speaker or the third-person subject of the attitude verb. Either one can be construed as the relevant evidence holder of *kuulemma*.

First, let us consider examples that are easily interpreted with the matrix subject as the evidence holder, such as (22), where native speaker judgments indicate that *kuulemma* can be construed as indicating that it is Mari (the matrix subject) who heard from others about Liisa moving to Pori. Similarly, the context of the naturally-occurring corpus example in (23) shows that the boss had heard the relevant information from someone else (the bully).

(22) Finite embedded clause

Mari sanoi, että Liisa on kuulemma muuttanut Poriin.  
Mari.NOM said that Liisa.NOM has kuulemma moved Pori-ILL  
'Mari said that Liisa has kuulemma moved to Pori.'

(23) *www*

*Pomo otti minut puhutteluun ja kertoi että olen kuulemma ammattitaidoton ja epäluotettava työntekijä. Tää palaute oli tullut sen työpaikan pahimmalta kiusaajalta.*

‘The boss called me in and told me that I am kuulemma an unprofessional and unreliable employee. This feedback had been provided by the biggest bully at that job.’

### 3.3.3 Speaker as evidence holder

Examples (22–23) are naturally interpreted with *kuulemma* anchored to the matrix subject. However, as shown in (24–25), speaker-anchored interpretations are also possible. For example, *kuulemma* in (24) can be naturally interpreted as anchored to the speaker: the speaker signals that they heard the information (about hernias being a frequent consequence) from someone else, namely from the doctor who just told them.

(24) *www*

*Lääkäri sanoi, että on kuulemma ihan yleistä tuo*  
 Doctor.NOM said, that is kuulemma quite common that.NOM  
*tyrän tuleminen*  
 hernia-GEN occurrence.NOM

‘The doctor said getting a hernia is kuulemma quite common.’

This is what Schenner (2007) calls ‘evidential concord,’ as this use of *kuulemma* simply reinforces the information already conveyed by the matrix clause, namely that it was the doctor who said *p*.

Another example of a concord use is in (25). In this example, where the Finnish pop star Stig is talking about his hit song, the most plausible reading is the evidential concord construal: His mother told Stig that they used to listen to Roy Orbison’s tape often in the car, and the evidential *kuulemma* simply reinforces this. In other words, it signals that Stig (the speaker) heard this from his mother (i.e., he is the relevant evidence holder that *kuulemma* is anchored to). It is not the case that his mother heard the information from a third party. In other words, a matrix subject-oriented reading is not plausible here.

(25) Context: The Finnish musician Stig is explaining why his hit song is called 'Roy Orbison'. He says: (www)

Äiti sanoi, että meillä on kuulemma automatkolla  
 Mother.NOM said that we-ADE have kuulemma car-trips-ADE  
 soinut paljon Roy Orbisonin kasetti  
 played lot Roy Orbison-GEN tape-NOM  
 'Mom said that during roadtrips we kuulemma had Roy Orbison's tape often  
 playing'

Another example of a speaker-anchored concord use of *kuulemma* is in (26). The most natural reading is that *kuulemma* refers to the communicative event of the surgeon telling the speaker about the pinched nerve; the surgeon has first-hand evidence and did not hear this information from anyone else. Thus, the relevant evidence holder is again the speaker, not the sentence subject.

(26) www

Kirurgi soitti ja sanoi että hermopinnettä ei ole  
 Surgeon.NOM called and said that pinched-nerve-PAR is NEG  
 kuulemma kaularangassakaan  
 kuulemma cervical-spine-INE-CL  
 'The surgeon called and said that the pinched nerve is kuulemma not in the  
 cervical spine either'

In sum, when embedded under *say*, the reportative *kuulemma* is potentially ambiguous. It can be used when the speaker heard *p* from someone else or when the matrix subject heard *p* from someone else. In other words, *kuulemma* can be anchored to the speaker or the matrix subject.

### 3.4 Taking stock: Finnish reportative evidentials

The data we have considered so far indicates that whether the Finnish reportative evidential can shift away from the speaker to another evidence holder depends on who the other possible evidence holder is. In the case of questions, there seems to be no shifting to the addressee: *kuulemma* fails to show interrogative flip and maintains a speaker-oriented reading. However, when embedded under attitude verbs (more specifically, the basic verb of saying, *sanoa*), *kuulemma* can optionally shift from the speaker to the matrix subject. This suggests that whatever mechanism is responsible for shifting under *say* – for an example some kind of shifting operator that applies to *kuulemma*, though here I remain agnostic about the details of this mechanism – can optionally occur in embedding contexts but not in questions.

## 4 Dubitatives

Compared to reportative evidentials, dubitative expressions have received much less attention in theoretical research. In this paper, I am concerned with the Finnish particle *muka*, which expresses the speaker's doubt about a particular proposition. Attempts to review prior crosslinguistic work on dubitatives are complicated by this term being used in different ways in different research traditions. For example, Schenner (2007) and Sauerland and Schenner (2007, 2013) use the term dubitative for a form in Bulgarian that, in addition to being associated with indirect evidence, additionally "conveys that the speaker has considerable doubts concerning the truth of the proposition expressed" (Sauerland and Schenner 2013: 134). In contrast, in research on Plains Cree, the term dubitative is used for the particle *étokwè* which expresses personal inference and could be glossed as 'presumably' or 'I guess' (Blain and Dechaine 2007). While the notions of inference and uncertainty are related, they are not fully equivalent. In light of these nuances, a full review of the phenomenon of dubitativity and the term 'dubitative' is beyond the scope of the present work, though I strive to comment on crosslinguistic differences where possible.

### 4.1 Dubitatives in questions and embedded contexts

The empirical profile of dubitatives in questions and embedded contexts crosslinguistically is not yet well-investigated. In particular, there seems to be surprisingly little systematic crosslinguistic comparative work on dubitatives in questions. Broadly speaking, a speaker expressing doubt about the truth of a proposition is highly compatible with that speaker asking a question about that proposition. Thus, it seems reasonable to speculate that dubitatives can occur in questions.

Furthermore, there does not seem to be any reason to expect dubitatives in question to show interrogative flip, i.e. to be construed as tapping into the addressee's doubts – in fact, quite the opposite. In declaratives, the speaker is the one who has doubts about the proposition, and this is expected to also hold in questions. Unlike reportative evidentials, there's no communicatively plausible reason to expect dubitatives in question to be interpreted as signaling that the addressee is the one who doubts the proposition. It's communicatively meaningful for someone who doubts a proposition to use a question to ask others if it's true, but seems much less communicative meaningful for a speaker to pose a question to an addressee if the speaker believes the addressee has doubts about the truth of the proposition to start with.

In sum, it seems that the a priori expectation is that dubitative elements can occur in questions and that they will be speaker-anchored. However, the behavior of

dubitatives in the second context we are concerned with, embedding under attitude verbs, is less clear.

Sauerland and Schenner (2007) investigate the behavior of the dubitative in Bulgarian, which is a periphrastic verbal form consisting of two occurrences of perfect morphology. It expresses “indirect evidence and doubt” (Sauerland and Schenner 2007:533). Sauerland and Schenner analyze the two occurrences of perfect morphology in dubitative sentences like (27) as constituting two components, ‘REP’ and ‘DUB’. Thus, on their analysis, the “dubitative in Bulgarian is inherently embedded under assertive REP” (p. 146).

Using (27), they show that the dubitative, when embedded under ‘to say,’ is obligatorily speaker-oriented and cannot shift to the attitude subject.

(27) Bulgarian dubitative

*Maria kaza če Todor bil imal červena kosa*  
Maria said that Todor be-REP has-DUB red hair.

‘Maria said that Todor has red hair.’ (Maria has reportative evidence for *p* but the speaker doubts *p*)  
(Sauerland and Schenner 2007)

According to Sauerland and Schenner, (27) receives a reading where the speaker of the sentence doubts the information provided by Maria (i.e., that Todor has red hair). Thus, the dubitative is speaker-oriented. Sauerland and Schenner also argue that the dubitative cannot receive a shifted (non-speaker-oriented) reading, i.e., that (27) would not be felicitous in a context where Maria doubts the claim that Todor has red hair but the speaker knows it to be correct.

In contrast to Bulgarian, in Finnish the dubitative and the reportative are fully independent morphemes. While the Finnish dubitative and reportative can co-occur (Kaiser 2022), they do not need to do so (ex. 1–4); dubitative *muka* can occur entirely independently of reportative *kuulemma* and vice versa. Thus, Sauerland and Schenner’s analysis of Bulgarian cannot be extended directly to Finnish.

## 5 Finnish dubitatives

### 5.1 Finnish dubitatives in root clauses

Before turning to the behavior of the dubitative in questions and under attitude verbs, let us briefly consider root declaratives (see Kaiser 2022 for an in-depth analysis). Historically, *muka* evolved from a reportative evidential, but in present-day use it “indicates a speaker’s dubitative stance” (Nordlund and Pekkarinen 2014:

53).<sup>6</sup> Kangasniemi (1992) describes *muka* as “an expressive adverb which enables the speaker or writer to indicate that he or she has got the information from someone else and personally doubts whether it is true or does not agree with it” (Kangasniemi 1992: 207).

In many cases where *muka* signals the speaker’s doubt, the speaker received the information via a prior linguistic communicative event. However, unlike the reportative *kuulemma*, *muka* can also be used to express doubt about propositions that have not been directly linguistically expressed by another person in a prior speech (or writing) event. Thus, in some contexts the existence of the Principal is rooted in inference, rather than explicit commitment (see Kaiser 2022).

In terms of its discourse update potential, *muka* resembles *kuulemma*, in that the proposition *p* in the scope of *muka* contributes at-issue meaning as shown by the fact that *p* can be used to answer the QUD (i.e., is put on the Table), as shown in (28).

(28) QUD test

Speaker A: *Mitä Matti tekee juuri nyt?*  
 what.PAR Matti.NOM does right now?  
 ‘What is Matti doing right now?’

Speaker B: *Se lukee muka tentteihin.*  
 It.NOM reads muka exam-PL-ILL  
 ‘He is studying muka for exams.’

(Kaiser 2022)

However, *muka* itself (like *kuulemma*) contributes not-at-issue meaning. This is shown by the direct deniability test (29) which indicates that information conveyed by *muka* cannot be directly challenged or denied. Assuming that direct deniability/challengeability is a diagnostic of at-issueness, this indicates that the doubt meaning of *muka* is not-at-issue.<sup>7</sup>

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6 *Muka* can also be used to express intentional pretense (see e.g. Kaiser 2022; Kangasniemi 1992; Nordlund and Pekkarinen 2014). I do not discuss this use in the present paper, but see Kaiser (2022) for details. Furthermore, according to Nordlund and Pekkarinen (2014), *muka* can in – some contexts – convey the speaker’s sarcastic attitude, and can also be associated with mirativity. There may also be historical dialectal differences in the use of *muka* between eastern and western dialects (see Nordlund and Pekkarinen 2014).

7 In addition to Faller (2019) and Murray (2014), other research also uses the infelicity of various kinds of addressee-referring denials as a diagnostic for not-at-issue meaning (e.g. “You are not being frank” (Almazán 2019); “you are not committed to saying that” (Beltrama 2016); “You don’t believe this (...) You never believe any stories about your arch-nemesis...” (Taniguchi 2017)).

(29) Direct deniability test

Speaker A: *Matti lukee kuulemma tentteihin*  
 Matti.NOM reads kuulemma exam-PL-ILL  
 'Matti is kuulemma studying for exams.'

Speaker B: # *Ei, et sinä epäile tätä*  
 No, neg-2SG you.NOM doubt this-PAR  
 # 'No, you don't doubt this.'

(Kaiser 2022)

Although *muka* resembles *kuulemma* in that the target proposition *p* is at-issue but *muka* itself is not, the two forms differ in terms of whether *p* can be added to Common Ground. With *kuulemma*, Kaiser (2022) shows that the reported proposition *p* can be added to Common Ground if the speaker intends to do this and the addressee accepts this (see also Faller 2019). This differs from *muka*: Kaiser (2022) shows that the proposition *p* in the scope of *muka* cannot be added to Common Ground, although it has been put on the Table. In this regard, a proposition in the scope of *muka* patterns unlike asserted propositions and also unlike propositions modified by *kuulemma*.

## 5.2 Finnish dubitatives in questions

The dubitative *muka* can occur in 'regular' as well as negated polar questions (30–31), in addition to wh-questions (32). In all cases, use of *muka* signals the speaker's doubt. For example, in (30), the speaker doubts the proposition that 'microwave popcorn is more convenient than normal popcorn', and in (31) the speaker doubts/does not believe the proposition that 'one can't find actors in Finland.' Indeed, presence of *muka* is associated with a preference to interpret the question as having the illocutionary force of an assertion that has the opposite polarity that what is apparently being asked – i.e., use of *muka* is associated with rhetorical questions (see e.g. Sadock 1971, 1974 for an early discussion of rhetorical questions). However, rhetorical questions in Finnish do not require presence of *muka*.

(30) Polar question (www)

*En ymmärrää micro-popcornea, onko ne*  
 Neg1SG understand microwave-popcorn-PL-PAR, is-Q they  
*jotenkin muka kätevämpiä kuin normaalit popparit?*  
 somehow muka more-convenient than normal-PL popcorn-PL?  
 'I don't understand microwave popcorn, is it somehow muka more  
 convenient than normal popcorn?'

(31) Polar question with negation (www)

*Eikö Suomesta muka löydy näyttelijöitä*

Neg3SG-Q Finland-ELA muka find actors?

'Can't one muka find actors in Finland?'

(32) Wh-question (www)

*mitä tässä muka on uutta?*

What-PAR here-INE muka is new-PAR?

'What here is muka new?' (implying that nothing is new)

At this stage, I leave a detailed analysis of the relation between *muka* and rhetorical questions for future work. What is most relevant for our purposes here is that in questions like (30–32), the doubter is clearly the question-asker, not the addressee. In other words, *muka* is anchored to the speaker and does not shift.

### 5.3 Finnish dubitatives in embedded contexts

The dubitative *muka* can be embedded under *sanoa* 'say', as in (33–34). Native speaker judgments suggest a preference for a speaker-oriented interpretation,<sup>8</sup> such that the actual speaker of the sentence (not Mari) is the one who doubts whether Liisa has moved to Pori in (33). The same pattern is illustrated by the corpus example in (34). Here, the one doubting the customer service representative's statement is clearly the speaker, not the customer service representative. (This example uses a 'lauseenvastike'-construction, a participial complement clause.)

(33) Finite embedded clause

*Mari sanoi, että Liisa on muka muuttanut Poriin.*

Mari.NOM said that Liisa.NOM has muka moved Pori-ILL

'Mari said that Liisa has muka moved to Pori.'

(34) Context: a person angrily contacts the postal service because according to the postal service's web-tracking, the package is still at the main post office in Vantaa, not yet at the person's local branch: (www)

*postin aspa sanoi puhelimessa paketin*

post-GEN customer-service-NOM said phone-INESS package-GEN

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<sup>8</sup> Other corpus examples suggest that a speaker-oriented reading, while seemingly preferred, may not be obligatory. It seems that at least in some contexts the matrix subject can also be a possible evidence holder. However, further research is needed.

olevan muka lähipostissa  
being muka local-post-office-INNESS  
'and the customer service representative of the postal service said the  
package is muka at the local branch'

## 5.4 Taking stock: Finnish dubitatives

The examples considered so far suggest that, more than the reportative *kuulemma*, the dubitative *muka* has a strong preference for speaker-anchored interpretations. In questions, echoing what we saw with *kuulemma*, *muka* maintains a speaker-oriented reading. When embedded under *sanoa* 'to say', the dubitative *muka* seems to be more strongly speaker-oriented than the reportative *kuulemma*.

Why would *muka* have a stronger speaker-orientation than *kuulemma*? I suggest that this may be due to the relatively more subjective nature of *muka*. As discussed above, *kuulemma* requires the presence of a particular communicative configuration – namely that the current speaker heard *p* from another source during a prior linguistic communicative event. Thus, *kuulemma* provides objective information: whether a prior communicative event occurred is a factual matter. In contrast, *muka* seems to be arguably a more subjective and affective expression. It indicates the doxastic state of a particular speaker – i.e., signals that, for some reason, this individual doubts (or disbelieves) *p*. Other people in the same context may not experience the same level of doubt. Furthermore, as Nordlund (2011) points out, *muka* often has an affective/expressive component and can signal irony, surprisal or disapproval ("Sen sisältävään lausumaan liittyy lisäksi usein affektiivinen ironian, hämmästelyn tai paheksunnan sävy," Nordlund 2011: 485). Thus, *muka* and *kuulemma* differ fundamentally in their level of subjectivity, and it may be that the stronger speaker orientation of *muka* relative to *kuulemma* stems from the former being a more subjective expression.

## 6 Reportatives and dubitatives in free indirect discourse

So far, we have explored the possibility of shifting away from the speaker as the evidence holder in questions and under *sanoa* 'to say.' In this section, I briefly consider whether *kuulemma* and *muka* can shift in narrative contexts involving free indirect discourse (FID). FID is a literary phenomenon which presents a character's

speech or thoughts without embedding or explicit quotation marks (see e.g. Banfield 1973; Eckardt 2015; Fludernik 1993; Kaiser 2015; Maier 2015; Redeker 1996; Schlenker 2004; Sharvit 2008). Thus, FID differs from direct speech, which uses explicit quotation to directly represent the words (or thoughts) of a character, and from reported speech, which uses clauses embedded under verbs of saying.

For reportative *kuulemma*, which we already saw shows shifting under the verb *sanoa* ‘to say,’ the question now becomes: Can *kuulemma* shift when it is not embedded under a speech verb? If so, this would indicate that whatever mechanism or operator triggers shifting of the evidence holder from the speaker to a third-person referent can also occur in matrix clauses, without the presence of an (overt) embedding predicate.

For dubitative *muka*, which has so far shown itself to be strongly speaker-oriented, the question becomes whether it can ever be shifted away from the speaker. Especially in light of the affective nature of *muka*, we might start to wonder whether we will see parallels to expressives (e.g. Potts 2007), which are strongly speaker-oriented but can shift in FID contexts (e.g. Kaiser 2015, see also Harris and Potts 2009).

Examples (35) and (36) show that in FID contexts, both *kuulemma* and *muka* can shift away from the speaker.

(35) Reportative *kuulemma* (www)

*Flink veti syvään henkeä ja soitti Saaralle. Tyttö vastasi pirteänä.*

*Sasu-nalle oli kutistunut pesussa, mutta se ei kuulemma haitannut yhtään,  
nyt sen saisi taskuun.* (from the novel ‘Lunastaja’ by Pasi Lönn, 2013)

‘Flink took a deep breath and called Saara. The girl answered brightly.  
Sasu-bear had shrunk in the wash, but that *kuulemma* wasn’t a problem,  
now it fit in one’s pocket.’

In (35), *kuulemma* is anchored to Lasse Flink, the character in the story, not to the narrator/writer of the text: *kuulemma* indicates that Flink heard from someone (Saara) that the stuffed toy shrinking in the wash wasn’t a problem.

(36) Dubitative *muka* (www)

*Mona alkoi miettiä ostoslistaa. Kaupassakäynti oli hänen työtään sekin. Esa ei hoitanut sitä, ei muka ehtinyt. Mona oli yritynyt painostaa, mutta tyhjä jäätkaappi ja tytöjen kiukku oli lannistanut hänet muutamassa päivässä.*

(from the novel ‘Aurinko astunut mereen’ by Taru Väyrynen, 2021)

‘Mona started to think about the grocery list. Grocery shopping was part of her duties. Esa didn’t take care of it, didn’t *muka* have time. Mona had tried to pressure him, but the empty fridge and the girls’ anger had discouraged her within a matter of days.’

In (36), *muka* reflects Mona's doubts about Esa not having enough time for grocery shopping, it is not speaker-/narrator-anchored but shifted to a third person character. These kinds of examples show that both *kuulemma* and *muka* can shift away from the speaker (here, the narrator) to a third-person character, even in matrix contexts, even when not embedded under an attitude verb, as long as they are in the scope of FID.

Given that *muka* seems very reluctant to shift away from the speaker under *say* whereas *kuulemma* easily shifts in this context, the FID examples suggest that whatever mechanism is responsible for shifting in FID contexts may well be distinct from the mechanism that allows *kuulemma* to shift under *say*. Otherwise, if it were the same mechanism, we would have no clear explanation why this mechanism would make *muka* shift in FID contexts but not under *say*. Future work is needed to shed more light on these questions.

## 7 Conclusions

In order to further our typological understanding of evidentiality and related phenomena in non-root contexts, this paper set out to explore the interpretation of the reportative evidential *kuulemma* and the dubitative expression *muka* in Finnish in contexts with multiple potential evidence holders. Based on the behavior of these forms in (a) questions, (b) embedded under *say* and (c) in free indirect discourse contexts, I observe the following: In questions, both forms stay anchored to the speaker – in other words, Finnish does not show the kind of interrogative flip we see in some other languages. However, when it comes to embedding under *say*, *muka* remains stubbornly speaker-oriented, whereas *kuulemma* is more ambiguous and can shift from the speaker to the subject. In free indirect discourse contexts, both forms can shift away from the speaker to the story character whose point-of-view is being expressed.

I speculate that the greater reluctance of *muka* to shift away from the speaker may stem from the affective, expressive nature of this element, essentially echoing the speaker-orientation preference exhibited by the general class of expressives (e.g. epithets, predicates of personal taste, curse words, see e.g. Potts 2005, 2007, see also Grosz et al. 2023 who suggest that face emoji may also belong in the class of expressives).

More broadly, I suggest that the differences we observe in the shifting behavior of *kuulemma* and *muka* may stem at least partially from this subjectivity/objectivity asymmetry: Whereas *kuulemma* can be described in purely objective terms (it signals that the current speaker is not committed to the truth of *p* and heard it via an earlier speech event), *muka* signals a particular speaker's doxastic

attitude towards *p* and often also expresses more nuanced affect such as irony, surprise and disapproval (e.g. Nordlund 2011). This subjective, affective nature of *muka* may be related to its speaker-oriented nature – an idea that should be more rigorously assessed in future work. I suggest that once we acknowledge this distinction between dubitative *muka* and reportative *kuulemma*, we can start to develop analyses that seek to capture the commonalities and differences in their distribution and interpretation in embedded contexts.

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