



58. Linguistisches Kolloquium
Linguistics Colloquium 58
58e Colloque international de linguistique

Sprachenvielfalt in der Welt und für die Welt
Linguistic Diversity in the World and for the World
La diversité linguistique dans le monde et pour le monde

ABSTRACTS



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Modal connectors conveying doubt in the discourse of humanities and social sciences

The expression of modality in academic language has been studied from various perspectives. Much scholarly attention has been paid to the expression of epistemic modality, which conveys the author's position in an academic text. In the context of this type of studies, works that analyse hedging, i.e., markers of academic discourse that convey the author's invitation to debate (Hyland 1996, 1998; Šinkūnienė 2008, 2011, 2012), can also be mentioned. The expression of non-epistemic modality and its peculiarities in academic discourse have been studied to a lesser extent (Šinkūnienė 2015; Giltrow 2005). In Hyland's works (2002, 2005, 2008), on the other hand, non-epistemic modal verbs are placed in the wider category of directives.

This study analyses academic texts written by students in the humanities and social sciences (bachelor theses) and by researchers working in these fields (research papers). The aim is to investigate which modal connectors conveying doubt are used in the academic texts of early and advanced authors in these fields. In this study, a text-linguistic approach is used: the relevant data is obtained from the corpora consisting of 480 student papers (240 in the humanities; 240 in the social sciences) and 342 research papers (153 in the humanities; 189 in the social sciences). Quantitative content analysis is also used, i.e., some of the data analysed is presented in terms of frequency of usage. The objectives are to: 1) present the frequency of the modal connectors conveying doubt used in the academic texts in question; 2) compare the trends in the use of modal connectors conveying doubt in the academic works of students and researchers; 3) compare the use of these modal connectors in the works of researchers from different academic fields. The hypothesis of the study states that modal connectors conveying doubt are used more frequently in student papers than in research papers.

Thus, the study has two levels: first, it analyses academic works of people working in the same field but with different experience, and then it examines the trends in the use of modal connectors conveying doubt in the works of different academic fields.

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