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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

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Stance in spoken Lithuanian academic discourse: Hedging across university lectures in humanities and social sciences

Scholarly inquiry into metadiscourse in university lectures reveals instructors' tendency to mostly employ markers that reveal their stance towards the content and the participants of the lectures (Lee & Subtirelu 2015). Research shows that lecturers hedge their arguments while communicating with their student audiences (Poos & Simpson 2002; Biber 2006; Yang 2014, et al.). Hedges allow speakers to mitigate their statements, mark tentativeness, politeness and reveal personal relationship with the addressee (Poos & Simpson 2002). Comparing hedging across science domains reveals that it is significantly more predominant in university lectures in humanities and social sciences (Poos & Simpson 2002; Yang 2014). Like other stance markers, hedges in academic discourse serve as great means of revealing varied academic discourse construction patterns across science domains and disciplines. For example, hedging tendencies reveal that argumentation in the soft science domains is usually more based on the speaker's subjective interpretation (see Yang 2014). Hedging tendencies show that speakers in humanities and social sciences are more likely to present their arguments as subjective opinion rather than factual information, which simultaneously allows one to build a persona that might appear as less categorical and more willing to accept alternative views (ibid.). More fine-grained research into hedging across disciplines in spoken academic communication has been very limited. Hedging in spoken Lithuanian academic discourse has been largely unexplored, too. Thus, this exploratory investigation will attempt to fill this gap by providing insights into the use of hedges in Lithuanian spoken academic discourse across disciplines in humanities (i.e., linguistics, literature, philosophy) and social sciences (i.e., sociology, communication sciences, political sciences).

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