

Epistemic qualifications of the English marker *likely* and its equivalents in Lithuanian

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In the recent decade there have been a number of cross-linguistic studies dealing with the formal and functional comparison of evidential and epistemic markers. Much attention has been devoted to the modal verb *must* (Mortelmans 2010; Tšink nien and Van Olmen 2012), the verb *seem* (Johansson 2001; de Haan 2007; Aijmer 2009; Usonien and Tšink nien 2013), English epistemic and evidential adverbials (van der Auwera *et al.* 2005; Mortensen 2006; Simon-Vandenberghe and Aijmer 2007; Usonien and Tšilien 2010) and their correspondences in Germanic, Romance, Baltic and Slavic languages. The current study focuses on the epistemic qualifications realized by the English adjective and adverb *likely* and its equivalents *panašu* and *tikėtina* in Lithuanian, which etymologically relate to the semantic domain of comparison and belief. Although these markers have been investigated in both English (Quirk *et al.* 1985; Biber *et al.* 1999; Bamford 2005; Mindt 2011) and Lithuanian (Tekorien 1990; Akelaitis 2011; Ruskan 2012), little attention has been paid to their formal and functional features cross-linguistically in different types of discourse.

The aim of the present study is to identify functional similarities and differences of *likely* and its Lithuanian equivalents *panašu* and *tikėtina* within the category of epistemicity (Boye 2012) in journalistic and academic discourse. The markers will be compared in terms of their frequency, syntactic features (Complement-Taking-Predicates (CTPs) followed by *that* or *to*-complement clauses, adverbials), functions, collocational profile and type of discourse. The English data have been drawn from the academic and newspaper sub-corpora found in the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA). The Lithuanian data have been obtained from the news sub-corpus of the Corpus of the Contemporary Lithuanian Language (CCLL) and the Corpus of Academic Lithuanian (CorALit).

The preliminary results of the study show that *likely* and *tikėtina* primarily mark the likelihood of the proposition. However, in contexts with explicit evidence and argumentation, they may acquire evidential functions in a similar manner to the modal verbs *must* and *may* (Fetzer 2014). The Lithuanian CTP *panašu* primarily expresses inferences based on perceptual or conceptual evidence, and thus it is qualified as an evidential marker. However, in contexts of insufficient or less reliable evidence, it may denote the author's reduced commitment and acquires the function of an epistemic modifier. The present study contributes to a better understanding of the evidential use of epistemic markers and the epistemic use of evidential markers. It aligns with the view that the evidential reading of a marker is triggered by the retrieval of the source of information from the micro or macro linguistic context (Wiemer and Kampf 2012: 15617). Functional similarities and differences of *likely*, *panašu* and *tikėtina* may be explained by their syntactic features (complementation type, adverbial use), collocational and lexical semantic properties.

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