

## Engagement in Research Writing: Modal Verbs of Obligation in a Cross-linguistic and Cross-disciplinary Perspective

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Keywords: research writing, academic rhetoric, engagement markers, obligation modals, cross-linguistic, cross-disciplinary analysis

The last several decades have witnessed a keen scholarly interest in research writing: numerous studies have shared valuable insights on how disciplines and cultures shape and influence academic rhetoric (see Berkenkotter & Huckin 1995, Fløttum *et al.* 2006, Hyland & Bondi 2006, Hyland & Sancho Guinda 2012, *inter alia*). The key words in many of these studies are *author voice* or *author stance* that are inevitably linked to the concept of metadiscourse and its linguistic realization. Significant cross-linguistic and cross-disciplinary research has been carried out on such metadiscourse elements as hedges, boosters, self mention and attitude markers; however, some of metadiscourse markers are less investigated, especially cross-linguistically. A case in point is engagement markers, which include reader pronouns, interjections, questions, directives and obligation modals in Hyland's (2005) metadiscourse model. Those markers are important to research writing as they enable the author to focus the attention of the reader, call for an action, emphasize a point or strengthen the community sense, i.e. „explicitly build relationship with reader“ (Hyland 2005: 49).

The aim of the present paper is to investigate the semantic-pragmatic usage patterns of one type of engagement markers - obligation modals, in three science fields (humanities, medicine, technology) and two languages (English and Lithuanian). The paper analyzes the pragmatic patterns of engagement between the author and the reader created by the markers under study from both the 'big culture' (i.e. national culture) and the 'small culture' (i.e. disciplinary culture) (cf. Atkinson 2004) perspectives. Quantitative and qualitative approaches are employed alongside contrastive analysis to reveal the ways in which the two languages and three science fields overlap or differ with regard to the use of obligation modals as stance markers. The English language data is taken from the Academic language subcorpus of COCA, while the Lithuanian language data comes from Corpus Academicum Lithuanicum ([www.coralit.lt](http://www.coralit.lt)), a specialized synchronic corpus of written academic Lithuanian (roughly 9 million words). The preliminary results suggest that engagement patterns follow national culture/language trends rather than the disciplinary ones. The results also point towards interesting semantic-pragmatic differences in the ways engagement is created in different disciplines. Set within the context of other cross-linguistic and cross-disciplinary studies on author stance, this research contributes to a better understanding of how academic rhetoric is influenced by both the disciplinary convention and cultural tradition.

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