

# Epistemic modality in professional communication

## *Epistēmiskā modalitāte profesionālajā saziņā*

**Gunta Roziņa, Indra Karapetjana**

Latvijas Universitāte, Humanitāro zinātņu fakultāte

Anglistikas nodaļa

Visvalža iela 4a, Rīga, LV-1050

E-mail: [gunta.rozina@lu.lv](mailto:gunta.rozina@lu.lv), [indra.karapetjana@lu.lv](mailto:indra.karapetjana@lu.lv)

The study is concerned with the use of epistemic modality in professional communication. M.A.K. Halliday's seminal theory of Systemic Functional Linguistics laid the theoretical foundation of the present study, which focuses on the language use in the social context. It analyses various aspects of modality and explores the use of language functions in professional communication. The empirical part of the paper is devoted to the analysis of selected instances of the use of modality in banking discourse from the perspective of the qualitative study. The conclusion has been drawn that epistemic modality in professional communication in banking discourse is used to characterise the interactants' opinion expressed within a range of a positive and negative polarity. Consequently, it can be confirmed that the discourse of banking represents a well-established written communication model. It includes the following components: a) factual information (message), b) the discourse-relevant communication means (the language used for instrumental purposes), c) situational context, d) communicative effect created to achieve the communicative goal.

**Keywords:** communication; professional communication; modality; epistemic modality; language functions.

## 1. Modality and language functions

Halliday, being the developer of an approach to linguistics known as Systemic functional linguistics, considers that 'language is an integral part of human experience' (Jewitt et al. 2016, 30). His theoretical views are based on the idea that language being a social semiotic system 'is a resource for making meaning' (ibid.). The scholar holds the view that Systemic functional linguistics can be 'applied to any field of activity that involves human interaction' (ibid. 54), as it deals with the analysis of language-in-use from the perspective of ideational, interpersonal and textual language functions. Regarding the social context of language use and its functional register parameters, Halliday (1978) explores the application of three variables: *field*, *tenor* and *mode*, where the *field* reveals the subject matter, or processes, participants and circumstances, the *tenor* shows social relations, and the *mode* deals with the resources for organizing texts. Considering Halliday's (1978) theoretical contributions, it can be stated that there exists a wide variation of the linguistic resources that can be employed in different social contexts.

The present study is limited to focusing on the analysis of the fulfilment of the interpersonal function in communicative discourse, which can be manifested through *modality* and *mood* (Halliday 1985). *Mood* expresses the *speech function*, for example, offering, ordering, requesting, recommending, advising and many

others (Simpson 1990). The author asserts that ‘modality refers to a speaker’s attitude toward opinion about the truth of a proposition expressed by a sentence’ (Simpson 1990, 64). Halliday notes that *modality* refers to the area of expressing the *meaning* that indicates the polarities of statements between *yes* and *no* (Halliday 1985, 335).

With this idea in mind, the research interest of this paper concerns the analysis of modality in profession-bound communication, that is the banking discourse, and it concentrates on the application of the outstanding Hallidayan (1985) theoretical contribution that relates to the subtypes, categories, orientations, values and the polarities of modality.

Modality is used as a linguistic representation of expressing the meaning of probability and usuality, and it is realized as an indication of the language user’s opinion expressed within a range of a positive and negative polarity (Halliday 1985). The scholar (ibid.) contends that modality in the clause can be manifested via the categories of *subjectivity* and *objectivity*, but the ‘distinction that determines how the subjective and objective modality will be expressed’ depends on ‘four possible orientations’, such as a) explicit or implicit subjective orientation and, b) explicit or implicit objective orientation (Halliday 1985, 332–336), where the explicit objective orientation expresses something clearly and directly, while the implicit one means that something is not being openly stated.

The scholar (ibid. 335) specifies that modality has two subtypes: *modalization*, which concerns the *probability* and *usuality* (i.e. frequency) distinctions, and *modulation*, which involves the *obligation* and *inclination* distinctions. Both subtypes can have the explicit and implicit orientations.

Within the subtype of modalization, the *probability* distinction can be expressed through the orientation of the subjective explicitness, that is, a probability statement that is clearly and directly made to mark a personal opinion. It is communicated with the help of the linguistic expressions, such as *I think, I am certain, in my opinion*; e.g.:

- (1) *In my opinion, the employees are paid by direct money transfer to their bank account.*

In addition, the *probability* distinction can be expressed through the orientation of the subjective implicitness; it can express interactants’ attitude to the degree of obligation (i.e. a probability statement that is indirectly made to mark a personal opinion), and it is manifested through the modal auxiliaries *must* and *may*; e.g.:

- (2) *The employees may be paid by direct money transfer to their bank account.*

Besides, the *probability* distinction can be indicated through the orientation of the objective implicitness, that is, a statement that is indirectly made and is not influenced by a personal opinion. In general, it can be expressed by the adverbs *probably* and *certainly*; e.g.:

- (3) *The employees are probably paid by direct money transfer to their bank account.*

The objective implicit probability (i.e. a probability statement that is clearly and directly made and is not influenced by a personal opinion) can be communicated using such linguistic expressions as *it is likely, it is certain*; e.g:

(4) *It is likely that the employees are paid by direct money transfer to their bank account.*

As regards the *usuality* distinction, it does not manifest the orientation of the subjective explicitness at all. It can be revealed through the orientation of the subjective implicitness (e.g. by means of the modal auxiliary *will*), through the orientation of the objective implicitness (e.g. by means of the frequency adverbs *usually, always, sometimes*), or through the orientation of the objective explicitness (e.g. by means of the expression *it is usual for*). Besides, it should be marked that it is the polarity that establishes an integral constituent of modality in a variety of discourses. In general, Halliday and Matthiessen (2004, 146–147) state that there exist ‘intermediate degrees’ [...] that fall in between *sometimes* and *maybe*, and ‘these intermediate degrees, between negative and positive poles, are known collectively as modality’. They have the three ‘values’ that are based on the modal judgement: high, median and low. Thus, a high level modality value can be realized by the modal auxiliaries *must, ought to, need, has to, is to*; a median level modality value can be realized by the modal auxiliaries *will, would, shall, should*; a low level modality value can be realized by the modal auxiliaries *may, might, can, could* (Halliday 1985, 337–339). Besides, it has to be emphasized that modulation refers to the modality of proposals, such as commands and offers, whereas modalization deals with the description of information and refers to the modality of propositions, such as statements and questions. Thus, modality applies to speech functional components of propositions and proposals.

In view of this and considering the conventional commonalities of modalization in the banking discourse, the present study limits itself to analysing the probability meaning area within the interpersonal language function of propositions that can be communicated through:

- 1) the modal auxiliary verb *must* (high level probability, high level certainty; e.g. *that must be my new bank account number; that certainly is my new bank account number*);
- 2) the modal auxiliary verb *may* (low level probability, e.g. *that may be my new bank account number; that possibly is my new bank account number*);
- 3) the modal auxiliary verb *cannot* (high level negative probability, e.g. *that cannot be the latest money transfer; that certainly is not the latest money transfer; it is not possible that it is the latest money transfer*);
- 4) the modal auxiliary verb *may not* (low level negative probability, e.g. *that may not be the latest money transfer; that possibly is not the latest money transfer*).

## 2. Approaches to the study of modality

Different approaches to the study of modality are known in linguistics, e.g.:

- 1) the traditional deontism vs epistemism dichotomy (e.g. Palmer 1990; Simpson 2005);
- 2) extrinsic (i.e. epistemic modality) vs intrinsic modality (i.e. deontic modality) (e.g. Biber et al. 1999);
- 3) dynamic (i.e. epistemic modality) vs root modality (i.e. deontic modality) (e.g. Palmer 2003);
- 4) root vs epistemic modality, where epistemic modality is concerned with a speaker's assumptions or assessment of possibilities (e.g. Coates 1983, 1992; Heine 1992), and root or non-epistemic modality is concerned with the necessity, or the possibility 'of acts performed by morally responsible person' (Lyons 1977, 823). According to Coates (1992), root modality covers a range of meanings, such as permission, obligation, possibility and necessity (Coates 1992, 55).

It is important to note that philosophical semantics (e.g. Swanson 2008) uses the term *epistemic modality* to refer to the case of modalization and the term *deontic modality* to describe modulation.

Palmer (1990) remarks that deontic modality is concerned with 'influencing actions, states or events'. Many linguists (among others, Palmer 1986; Stubbs 1986) have considerably contributed to the research of modal auxiliaries, and they contend that modal auxiliaries constitute 'the central organizing principle of the language' (Stubbs 1986, 2). They work together in a systematic way (Palmer 1990, 6). To demonstrate his idea of 'a systematic way' of interaction of modal auxiliaries, Palmer (1990) offers an example for further consideration; for instance, to turn down an invitation in a polite way, native speakers of English often use the phrase *I would if I could, but I can't so I won't* (Palmer 1990, 7). It may be evident that the presented example reveals the systematic nature of modal auxiliaries, and it demonstrates that the situational context determines the selection of modal auxiliaries in a relevant communicative event. Besides, it seems important to note that the meanings of modal auxiliaries can vary across contexts of language use, or even they can change the meanings of utterances depending on cultural values that determine the communicative event the interactants are involved in.

It is essential to note that modality plays a significant role in the study of communication. So far, considerable research has been conducted to reveal the complex nature of modality in order acknowledge that modality is an important constituent of the communicative event.

Coates (1983a, 1992b) and Heine (1992) state that when we use a modal auxiliary for the purposes of epistemic modality, we express:

- a) the state of our *belief* or *knowledge*, or degree of *certainty/uncertainty* about a specific subject matter,
- b) the degree of *likelihood*.

At this point, some examples should be offered to support the above-given statement:

- (5) *It might be pork, but it might be beef as well* (a lack of certainty is expressed by the modal auxiliary *might*).
- (6) *Well, it must be pork, I'm sure* (certainty is expressed by the modal auxiliary *must*).
- (7) *You can take the course "International communication" at the University of Latvia* (the modal auxiliary *can* implies proposal in this case).
- (8) *You should never take more than two international communication courses in one academic year* (the modal auxiliary *should* implies a degree of *stronger* advice in this case).
- (9) *You have to take at least two international communication courses during one academic year to write your term paper in this subject* (the modal auxiliary *has to* implies *strong* advice in this case).
- (10) *You must take at least two international communication courses if you intend to write your graduation paper in the area of applied linguistics* (the modal verb *must* implies *very strong* advice in this case).

Judging from the examples presented, it is obvious that epistemic modality can reveal either the speaker's confidence or lack of confidence in the truth-value of a proposition expressed and the speaker's degree of knowledge, belief or likelihood about the proposition expressed.

Within the context of this paper, it should be stated that a variety of discourses employ epistemic modality for fulfilling the interactional function, and the grammatical category related to epistemic modality is modal auxiliaries (Coates, 1983). Thus, one modal auxiliary can be employed in different meanings depending on the situational contexts:

- (11) *You may make arrangements about putting off our meeting with your clients* (epistemic modality: tentativeness of the speaker is expressed).
- (12) *When the choice is between expression and repression, we may need to speak for those who have no voice* (epistemic modality: the speaker's lack of confidence is expressed).

On a practical level, Westney (1986) has surveyed the major forms of expressions employed for the purposes of epistemic modality. Claiming that modals vary in epistemic scalar levels, Westney (1986) concentrates on a relatively small set of high-frequency items, such as *I know, I think, may, might, must, should, will, would, perhaps, probably, certainly, possible, likely, certain, sure*. Further, he proposes to value epistemic modals at three levels (Westney 1986, 315):

- A) **Strong value epistemic modals**, such as *I know, I'm sure/certain, it's certain, must, will* and *should/would* as 'conditional' items; e.g.:
- (13) A: *It's certain; you must have had someone to rely on.*  
B: *Well, I'm not sure, actually.*
  - (14) A: *The climate in Latvia must be astonishing in winter.*  
B: *Yeah, it must be completely invariable, too.*

B) **Intermediate value epistemic modals**, such as *I think, probably, likely, presumably*; e.g.:

- (15) “*For the year, corn and soy-bean meal increases are likely to approach \$ 600 million*”, said President and CEO Richard Bond.
- (16) *This down-and-diaper-pail-dirty celebration of motherhood probably would not suit the ‘saccharine sentiments’ of Mother’s Day.*

C) **Weak value epistemic modals**, such as *possible that, perhaps, may, might*; e.g.:

- (17) *Angry firefighters from the partnership countries say indecision and delay by superiors may have cost the asylum seekers their lives in the fire on the streets of the town.*
- (18) *A professor at the Bremen Center of Justice said that poll workers might ask for unrequired ID and that some citizens might mistakenly think they perhaps could not vote.*

In addition, Hinkel’s research (1995) on the use of epistemic modality in various communicative discourses by native and non-native speakers of English discovered that the use of modality depends on the cultural and contextual constraints of interactants. Thus, when studying the use of the modal auxiliaries *must, have to, should* and *need*, Hinkel (1995) found out that native speakers prioritize *need* to convey an intrinsically imposed responsibility or necessity. In the same situations, non-native speakers of English employ the modal auxiliary *must*. As a result, it can be presupposed that the divergence in the use of epistemic modality may lie in both the native speakers’ and non-native speakers’ culturally-bound understanding of the nature of obligation and in the adherence to the socio-cultural norms and codes being fundamental to Anglo-American and other cultures, for instance, the Latvian culture. Besides, epistemic modality plays a significant role in mediating interpersonal meaning. It fulfils the following interactional functions: a) it reduces the force of an utterance and, thus, protects the interactants’ face where the topic is sensitive, or where the topic of interaction/transaction focuses on controversial issues, b) it conveys the interactant’s attitude to the proposition being expressed.

In sum, epistemic modality can be characterized as the use of linguistic means to reveal the speaker’s/writer’s assumptions or assessment of possibilities. In most cases, it indicates the speaker’s/writer’s ideas relating to doubt, potentiality, judgment, confidence or lack of confidence in the truth of the proposition expressed. Lyons argues that ‘epistemic modality is concerned with opinion rather than fact’ (Lyons 1977, 14). In the English language, epistemic modality can be indicated grammatically through: a) the modal auxiliaries that express possibility, permission, necessity and obligation, such as *may, might, must, can, could*; b) adverbs, such as *quite, necessarily, possibly, probably*; c) adjectives, such as *necessary, possible, probable*, d) linguistic forms, such as: a) *I think, I know, I suppose, I presume*, which function to express a speaker’s/ writer’s subjective confidence, uncertainty, e) *tag questions*, which qualify the truth of a proposition by making it relative to a speaker’s/ writer’s level of uncertainty, f) lexical units, such as *sort of, kind of, so called, so to speak*, which encode a speaker’s/writer’s lack of confidence in the perception of the word or phrase.

### 3. Research methodology design

Due to a limited volume of this paper, further analysis is concerned with the examination of only selected instances of epistemic modality use that fulfills the interpersonal language function in the banking discourse. As the theoretical background of the paper was designed considering Systemic functional linguistics' perspective, the empirical part of the paper is narrowed, and it employs Simpson's (2005) modalization and modulation dichotomy in the analysis of the discourse, specifically focusing on the role of modalization in communication.

Annual reports drawn by several national banks within the period from 2001 to 2011, such as the Bank of Latvia (BL), the European Central Bank (ECB), and the Bank of France (BF) have been selected as the corpus for analysis. The research corpus contains approximately 5000 words. Besides, it should be marked that the contextual factuality and the informative neutrality were viewed as the underlying features that characterise the discourse of annual report. Thus, the Hallidayan dichotomy served as a valuable source for interpreting and understanding the communicative effect created by information senders to information recipients.

### 4. Research findings: epistemic modality and interpersonal language function in the banking discourse

As it was stated above, to analyse the cases of modality in the banking discourse, the study considers the functional use of modality from the perspective of modalization. The use of modalization is viewed via the language function of proposition. Besides, it should be stated that only the instances with the most frequent occurrences of the uses of *propositions expressed as probability* in the reports have been considered.

The research results of the empirical data show that *high level probability propositions* being manifested through the modal auxiliary verb *must* are expressed in an exceptionally few instances. In the majority of cases, it is used when strong, wide-ranging and far-reaching recommendations to the sector, society or community are put forward, e.g.:

- (19) *Turning to fiscal challenges, Latvia certainly must bring its budget deficit below the 3% reference value by 2012 in the line with the EDP commitments and fulfil the commitments agreed in the context of the financial assistance programme led by the EU and the IMF (ECB 2010, 115).*

However, it should be admitted that the modal auxiliary *must* being applied to *denote high level obligation proposals* are commonly and conventionally used in the discourse. Further, *median level probability propositions* being displayed by the modal auxiliary verb *will* exhibit comparatively frequent occurrence instances. In the majority of instances, it was observed when the prediction for habitual, constant or typically characteristic banking area related cases was made, e.g.:

- (20) *With the normalization of global and financial market conditions, reaching and maintaining a sustainable long-term external position will depend on implementation of the appropriate domestic economic policies (ECB 2010, 95).*

- (21) *Those probably are the developing countries that will be presenting surpluses in current accounts as an instrument of growth strategy and the policies to sustain them (BF 2010, 88).*
- (22) *Making room for an autonomous policy therefore, implies introducing controls on at least short-term capital movements that will help with avoiding floating exchange rates (BF 2010, 91).*
- (23) *In 2010, the Bank of Latvia earned 23. 8 million lats in profit; 15.4 million lats will be transferred to the state budget (BL 2010, 67).*
- (24) *It could be predicted that the drafters of the budget will run out of time after the parliament elections in autumn and, in the absence of timely preparation we will not run out of time and we will not face economically beneficial and well-thought cuts in expenditure (BL 2010, 6).*
- (25) *The still high budget deficit will mean a growing public debt, which will inevitably amount to about 270-300 million lats (BL 2010, 6).*

Besides, the research data reveal that *low level probability propositions* being manifested through the modal auxiliary verb *may* appear to be commonly used in the instances when predictable prospects, chances of banking and finance-related events, situations and/or circumstances happening or being true are presented; in some instances, the foreseen financial risks are presented via the use of the modal auxiliary verb *may*, e.g.:

- (26) *Four thousand banks and the economic area comprising 490 million inhabitants may suffer financial losses (BL 2010, 49).*
- (27) *While high current account deficits may be partly associated with the catching-up process of an economy like Estonia's, deficits of such magnitude have raised concerns about their sustainability (ECB 2010, 95).*
- (28) *Raising savings-investment imbalances in surplus countries may be driven primarily by fluctuating incomes rather than by decreased investment (BF 2010, 75).*

So far, the analysis has demonstrated that the specialist-language discourse (e.g. annual reports in banking) mostly reveal the positive polarity of the implicit subjectivity proposition. It is revealed via the application of the degrees of the modal auxiliary verbs *must*, *will*, *may* in the relevant situational contexts. Thus, in the majority of cases, positive subjective implicit propositions have been conventionally manifested using the modal auxiliaries *must*, *will*, *may*, and a limited number of the negative polarity of the implicit subjectivity was manifested through the use of the modal auxiliary *will not*.

Further, the study has identified a limited number of cases when positive objective explicit propositions were manifested via the use of *it is likely* (or *with a likelihood of*) in the reports under analysis, e.g.:

- (29) *A drop in unemployment rate and improving consumer confidence suggest, however, that private consumption is likely to strengthen (BL 2010, 12).*
- (30) *The buoyant economic growth was also driven by ever growing lending to households and stronger market activity which was likely to give rise to the risk of surging inflation (BL *ibid.*).*



- (31) *The base rates of many major world central banks were at their lows, with a limited likelihood of further lowering (ECB 2010, 13).*
- (32) *The economic activity is likely to be held down by massive fiscal consolidation in the near future as well (BF 2010, 15).*
- (33) *As market lending conditions are improving and economic recovery is on an upward trend, the employment of quantitative easing measures is likely to be limited further (BL 2010, 13).*

To sum up the discussion held so far, it should be stated that the cases under analysis have demonstrated that in the banking discourse,

- a) interactants are supposed to use inferencing as a cognitive process to create their understanding of the specialist discourse-related meaning established in the context;
- b) epistemic modality should be treated as a linguistic tool of communication.

## Conclusions

The present study was approached from the *functional* perspective of language use, and it focused on the examination of selected aspects of modality used in specialist discourse. In particular, it examined selected instances of how the interpersonal language function was fulfilled for the purpose of creating appropriate banking discourse. Further, the study attempted to reveal how factual information flow, such as financial data, the analysis of activities and events, is characterised through the interpersonal language function and how modality as a linguistic instrument is employed for this purpose.

As a result of the above discussion, the paper has drawn several conclusions.

In specialist discourse, such as banking discourse, modality is employed as a representation of expressing the meaning of probability or usability, and modality functions as a linguistic instrument to indicate the interactants' opinion expressed within a range of a positive and negative polarity.

The use of modalization (known also as epistemic modality), which concerns the *probability* and *usuality* distinctions, characterises how modalization as a subtype of modality contributes to fulfilling the interpersonal language function in the specialist discourse-related communication. In the communicative event, modalization is used to carry out the *explicit* (i.e. stated very clearly and directly) subjective orientation.

Modalization being communicated by the language function of proposition is expressed via the meaning area of probability in the discourse under analysis. The meaning area of probability is communicated through a positive and negative polarity.

Consequently, it can be confirmed that the discourse of banking represents a well-established model of written communication. It includes the following components:

- a) factual information (message);
- b) the discourse-relevant communication means (the language used for instrumental purposes);
- c) situational context;
- d) communicative effect created to achieve the communicative goal.

## Sources for texts: corpus data journals

1. Bank of France. 2011. *Annual Report 2010*. Paris: Banque de France.
2. Bank of Latvia. 2011. *Annual Report 2010*. Riga: Latvijas Banka.
3. Bank of Latvia. 2006. *Annual Report 2005*. Riga: Latvijas Banka.
4. European Central Bank. 2002. *Annual Report 2002*. Frankfurt am Main: European Central Bank.
5. Bank of Latvia. 2001. *Annual Report 2001*. Riga: Latvijas Banka.
6. European Central Bank. 2011. *Annual Report 2010*. Frankfurt am Main: European Central Bank.
7. European Central Bank. 2007. *Annual Report 2006*. Frankfurt am Main: European Central Bank.

## References

1. Biber, Douglas, Conrad, Susan, Leech, Geoffrey. 1999. *Longman grammar of spoken and written English*. London: Longman.
2. Coates, Jennifer. 1983. *The semantics of modal auxiliaries*. London: Croom Helm.
3. Coates, Jennifer. 1992. The expression of root and epistemic possibility in English. *Modality in grammar and discourse*. Bybee, Joan, Fleischman, Suzanne (eds). Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing House, 55–66.
4. Halliday, Michael A. K. 1970. Functional diversity in language as seen from a consideration of modality and mood in English. *Foundations of language*. 6, 327–351.
5. Halliday, Michael A. K. 1978. *Language as a social semiotics: The social interpretation of language and meaning*. London and Boston: Edward Arnold.
6. Halliday, Michael A. K. 1985. *An introduction to functional grammar*. London: Arnold.
7. Halliday, Michael A. K., Matthiessen, Christian. 2004. *An introduction to functional grammar*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. London: Hodder Arnold.
8. Heine, Barbara. 1992. Agent oriented vs. epistemic modality: some observations on German modals. *Modality in grammar and discourse*. Bybee, Joan, Fleischmann, Suzanne (eds). Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing House, 17–53.
9. Hinkel, Eli. 1995. The use of modal verbs as reflection of cultural values. *TESOL Quarterly*. 29 (2), 325–341.
10. Jewitt, Carey, Bezmer, Jeff, O'Halloran, Kay. 2016. *Introducing multimodality*. London and New York: Routledge
11. Lyons, John. 1977. *Semantics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
12. Palmer, Frank. 1986 (1987). *Mood and modality*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
13. Palmer, Frank. 1990. *Modality and the English modals*. London: Longman.
14. Palmer, Frank. 2003. Modality in English: theoretical, descriptive and typological issues. *Modality in contemporary English*. Facchinetti, Roberta, Krug, Manfred, Plamer, Frank (eds). Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 1–20.
15. Simpson, Paul. 1990. Modality in literary-critical discourse. *The writing scholar: studies in academic discourse*. Nash, Walter (ed.). Newbury Park: Sage, 63–94.
16. Simpson, Paul. 2005. *Language, ideology and point of view*. London: Longman.

17. Stubbs, Michael. 1986. A Matter of prolonged field work: notes toward a modal grammar of English. *Applied Linguistics*. 7(1), 1–25.
18. Swanson, Edward. 2008. Modality in language. *Philosophy compass*. 3(6), 1193–1207.
19. Westney, Paul. 1986. How to be more or less certain in English: scalarity in epistemic modality. *International Review of Applied Linguistics*. 24 (4), 311–32.

## Kopsavilkums

Pētījumā iztirzāts epistēmiskās modalitātes lietojums profesionālajā saziņā. Tā teorētiskais pamatojums veidots, ņemot vērā Maikla A. K. Halideja (*Michael A. K. Halliday*) sistēmiski funkcionālās teorijas pamatnostādnes valodniecībā. Pētījums akcentē valodas lietojumu sociālajā kontekstā. Pētījumā analizēti vairāki modalitātes aspekti un apskatīts valodas funkciju lietojums profesionālajā saziņā. Raksta empīriskā daļa ir veltīta modalitātes lietojuma analīzei profesionālās saziņas diskursā banku jomā. Pētījumā izvēlēta metodoloģija balstās uz valodniecības kvalitatīvā pētījuma pamatnostādnēm. Pētījums apstiprina to, ka epistēmiskās modalitātes lietojums banku jomā tiek izmantots, lai raksturotu komunikācijā iesaistīto speciālistu viedokļu un to nostādņu pozitīvos un negatīvos aspektus. Tādējādi tiek secināts, ka banku jomas diskursus ir precīzi izveidots rakstiskās saziņas modelis, kuru raksturo: a) faktu materiāla izklāsts, b) profesionālam diskursam atbilstošu valodas līdzekļu lietojums, c) situācijas konteksts, d) izvirzītā komunikatīvā mērķa sasniegšana.