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EPISTEMIC AND DEONTIC MODALITY IN ROMANIAN AND SERBIAN SCIENTIFIC DISCOURSE

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Abstract: *Modal verbs expressing epistemic and deontic modality can be used as discourse markers to implicate the authors' attitude to the propositional content (doubt, certainty, hedging). Based on English modality framework, this paper discusses the uses of modals in expressing author's attitude in Romanian and Serbian scientific discourse (social sciences and humanities) and compares these uses in the two languages.*
Key words: *deontic modality, discourse, epistemic modality, Romanian, Serbian*

1. Introduction

Scientific (or academic discourse) is a specific functional style (or register) used for presenting argumentation and results of scientific research. This discourse has its general structural, lexical and socio-pragmatic characteristics, but also varieties related to the socio-cultural characteristics of the participants in this communication, their value systems and typical ways of address. In other words, among other things, varieties differ according to the manner (discourse strategies) in which the authors try to convince their audience and specify their attitude, how much the authors are present in the text and use hedging, categorical statements etc. (Blagojević 2012: 16, 18). Linguistic means used by the authors imply rhetoric strategies, aimed at achieving the persuasive effect on the anticipated academic audience (Blagojević 2012: 19).

In such rhetoric strategies modal verbs can serve as markers used by the speakers/writers to indicate their attitude to what they are discussing. This is particularly true in scientific discourse when author use modals for hedging or boosting of the statements they make. Epistemic and deontic modals are particularly relevant in this use, because they specify the degree of possibility, necessity and obligation of the presented assumptions. Therefore, this paper investigates the uses of epistemic and deontic modals in Romanian and Serbian written scientific discourse (social sciences and humanities) in order to specify the frequency of modals and possible differences in their use in the two languages.

2. Methodology and initial hypotheses

This small-scale research is based on the Romanian and Serbian examples taken from articles recently published in scientific journals. The paper analysed these examples with Romanian and Serbian modal verbs in order to establish the frequency and uses of modals verbs as markers of authors' attitude to the propositional content of their statements, namely epistemic and deontic modals.

Bearing in mind previous research in this field (Blagojević 2012, Novakov 2015), the paper starts from the following initial hypotheses: 1) modals of weaker strength will prevail in the Serbian examples; 2) modals of weaker strength will prevail in the Romanian examples; 3) epistemic modality will prevail over deontic modality in Serbian; 4) epistemic modality will prevail over deontic modality in Romanian; 5) modal uses will be similar in both languages.

3. Theoretical background

3.1. Epistemic and deontic modality in Romanian

Modality in Romanian is in its essence a semantic category, which has been partially grammaticalized (*Gramatica limbii române* II 2005:673). It characterizes the way in which the author places the statement in relation to its validity, possibility, necessity. In other words, modality conveys the reflection of reality in the communication from the point of view of the speaker/writer (Bărbuţă 2005:58).

The central set of Romanian modal verbs consists of three items which are considered to be the most clearly individualized – *a putea (can/be able to)*, *a trebui (must/have to)* and *a părea* (*seem*).

Romanian linguists analyse modal meanings separately, using the general categories of *necessity*, *possibility*, *obligation* etc. Prominent Romanian linguist Zafiu (2008:692-693) classifies modal meanings into *epistemic*, *deontic* and *dynamic*. In this classification, the non-finite form of modals rule out epistemic meanings, and on the other hand the past indicative forms cannot be interpreted as deontic since they have descriptive meaning.

The Romanian language distinguishes two semantic domains indicated by modal verbs: the deontic meaning connected to human behaviour in the sense of obligation, permission, volition, ability, necessity, and the epistemic domain which expresses degrees of probability or truth: possibility, impossibility, un/likelihood, probability, certainty.

In the light of the above mentioned, it can be argued that in the Romanian language as well, modal verbs frequently serve as rhetoric strategies authors use to indicate their attitude towards the subject matter they are discussing.

3.2. Epistemic and deontic modality in Serbian

Modality as a semantic-pragmatic category in Serbian refers to the qualification provided by the speaker/writer about a statement or a situation (Piper et al. 2005: 636), for example that a statement is to be treated as possible, necessary or obligatory. In a scientific discourse, modals indicate the author's standpoint about the factuality of relevant information, reflecting the author's assessment of its validity, likelihood or certainty.

In Serbian (unlike English), the list of modal verbs is not definite and different grammarians provide shorter or longer lists. For instance, Piper et al. (2005: 638) list the following modals as the most important ones: *moći* ('may'), *trebati* ('should') *morati* ('must'), *smeti* ('dare'), *hteti* ('want'), *želeti* ('desire'), *zabranti* ('forbid') and several other expressions. This research focuses on the central modal verbs *moći, trebati, morati* and *smeti,* not on the modal phrases and expressions. Finally, the Serbian modals represent a semantic class (like the English modals), but most of them (unlike the English modals, except *trebati* in some respect) share morpho-syntactic features of other lexical verbs (inflections, complementation).

Modals are usually divided into several groups, depending in the type of modality. Since this research investigates the author's rhetoric patterns in the written scientific disourse, the paper focuses on the epistemic and deontic modality. Epistemic modality specifies the author's standpoint about the possibility of a statement; deontic modality qualifies the situations as obligatory, unavoidable etc. (Piper et al. 2005: 638). Some Serbian modals (like modals, for example, in English) are polysemous when it comes to epistemic and deontic meaning: thus *moći,* depending on the context*,* can indicate both epistemic possibility or deontic permission, while *morati* can denote epistemic necessity of deontic obligation. *Trebati* and *smeti* typically imply deontic obligation or permission.

Finally, the type of modality intersects with the strength of modality (cf. Huddleston & Pullum 2002) providing a grid with weak, medium and strong epistemic and deontic modality.

When it comes to deontic modality, Serbian modal *moći* relates to weak, *trebati* to medium and *morati* to strong modality. As for epistemic modality, *moći* also imples weak epistemic modality, while *morati* denotes strong epistemic modality.

4. Epistemic and deontic modality in Romanian and Serbian written scientific discourse

4.1. Romanian scientific discourse

This part of the paper will analyse the degrees of certainty/confidence/probability assigned to situations expressed by Romanian modals.

The Romanian part of the corpus consists of the sentences with modal verbs extracted from the scientific journal *Limba Română* published by the Institute of Linguistics (Institutul de Lingvistică) „Iorgu Iordan - Al. Rosetti". The journal is ranked as leading national journal. The articles mainly discuss linguistic topics, as well as onomastic, history, literature. The Romanian sample was excerpted from four volumes (LR, LXVIII, nr. 1 – 4.) published in 2019. The Romanian part of the corpus amounted to about 300 000 words or 560 pages. The paper analyses the following Romanian modals: *a putea* (can), *a trebui* (must/have to) and *a voi* (must, may, will).

The next table presents the statistics of the Romanian sample.

No.	Romanian modal	Number	Percent
1	*a putea*	252	50.9%
2	*a trebui*	178	36%
3	*a voi*	65	13.1%
	TOTAL	495	100%

The statistics clearly show the significant dominance of the modal *a putea* (can / cannot). It is predominantly used in the epistemic meaning of possibility. For example:

1) Prin urmare, **se poate** constata că ambele modalităţi prezintă atât trăsături comune cât şi diferenţe. (LXVIII-1 55)

(Therefore, it **can** be argued that both modalities have both common features and differences.)

In the given examples, the modal *poate / can* expresses an epistemic possibility (it is possible that….) which is the result of the author's assessment. This modal is weak and denotes highly measured estimation of the author. The use of reflexive pronoun *se* further renders the statements impersonal.

Similarly, in example 2 and 4 the Romanian modal *a putea* expresses the weak epistemic modal value of probability.

2) **Putem** stabili inclusiv o relaţie între o clasă morfologică (un verb oarecare, de exemplu), şi un câmp semantic. (LXVIII-2 182)

(We **can** also establish a relationship between a morphological class (a certain verb, for example), and a semantic field.)

On the other hand should such weak epistemic modals be negated they become stronger, like in the following examples:

3) Deci **nu se poate** vorbi în mod real de o situaţie de variaţie ierarhizată… (LXVIII-4 470)

(Thus, it **cannot** be argued that a situation of hierarchical variation…)

In the above example, the modal *a putea* is used to express strong epistemic certainty.

Furthermore, the author's confidence in the truth value of his statement is further weakened by the use of the subjunctive (*ar putea*) when combined with the weak epistemic nuance denotes the author's modest suggestion. For example:

4) Prin urmare, socotim că s-**ar putea** propune ca... (LXVIII-2 213)

(Therefore, we consider that it **could** be proposed that…)

On the other hand, the Romanian modal *a putea* in the excerpted examples was used in the deontic sense of permission and prohibition.

5) Valorile cazuale de genitiv şi acuzativ **se pot** exprima şi prin construcţii cu prepoziţii. (LXVIII-2 245)

(The casual values of genitive and accusative **can** also be expressed by prepositional constructions.)

6) Realizarea acestui scop **nu poate** fi amânată. (LXVIII-3 325)

(The achievement of this goal **cannot** be delayed.)

Interestingly enough, the deontic sense of permission in the example 5 is weak, while the deontic value of prohibition in 6 is strong.

In the compiled corpus the modal *a putea* occurs in all its inflected present indicative forms. The most occurrences of *a putea* is in the 3rd person of the present indicative *poate*, followed by *pot* (the 3rd plural of the present indicative,). Furthermore, the corpus identified fewer occurrences in the conditional present, which expresses the weaker epistemic meaning. Interestingly, the modal *a putea* is often used in the 1st person plural of the present indicative: *putem* which turned out to be the most popular instrument of expressing the author's presence in the text. The majority of meanings associated with *putem* are epistemic (82%). Furthermore, a limited number of lexical verbs combine with this modal to form the complex predication, mostly cognitive or communication verbs (*a observa* / *notice, see, observe,* as well as *a afirma* / *to state* or *claim*, also, *a concluziona* / *to conclude*. The preference for the stronger forms (the present indicative) may suggest a more assertive or a more confident attitude of the authors' regarding the content of their claims.

Summing up, it can be argued that the Romanian modal *a putea* expresses four fundamental values: weak epistemic modalities of possibility and probability as well as strong epistemic certainty, on one hand and weak deontic modality of permission and strong deontic modality of prohibition on the other.

The Romanian modal verb *a trebui / must, have to, should* is the second most frequent modal form the corpus. It is a modal of high strength and is typically deontic, no examples of epistemic sense were obtained. In the compiled corpus the modal *a trebui* occurs in the 3rd person present of the indicative (*trebuie*).

The following example illustrates strong interpretation of deontic meaning of obligation expressed by Romanian *a trebui / must*:

7) În viaţă **trebuie** să contăm pe realităţi, nu pe dorinţi! (LXVIII-1 13)

(In life we **must** rely on realities, not desires!)

On the other hand, the next example shows weak deontic value of the Romanian modal *a trebui* denoting author's recommendation which is most often translated into English by modal *should*.

8) **Trebuie** observat că toate aceste valori… (LXVIII-3 376)

(It **should** be noted that all these values…)

However, the modal *a trebui* in the examples 9 changes the author's recommendation to restrained obligation. The use of such modal implies the author's strong belief in the statement he makes. The typical strong deontic sense of strong obligation is most often expressed by this modal, like in the following examples:

9) Separat **trebuie** luată în discuţie expresia cu conţinut religios. (LXVIII-2 271)

(The expression of religious content **must** be discussed separately.)

However, when the modal *a trebui* is negated it acquires a higher strength because and indicates strong conviction about the absence of obligation, like in:

10) Şi **nu trebuie** să dăm vina pe Vestul democratic sau pe Rusia contemporană! (LXVIII-3 300)

(And we **must not** blame the democratic West or contemporary Russia!)

Lastly, the Romanian subjunctive *ar trebui* obtains a weaker value and indicates a deontic suggestion. Like in the following examples:

11) De fapt **ar trebui** să fie precizat că în greaca veche termenul în discuţie avea sensul generic de „sclavă". (LXVIII-2 202)

(In fact, it **should** be noted that in ancient Greek the term in question had the generic meaning of "slave.")

However, when negated the Romanian subjunctive *ar trebui* does not shift its strength, it retains its weak deontic value, as shown in the example 12.

12) **Nu ar trebui** să ne înşele asupra competenţelor u n i c e ale celor care practică diversele profesiuni etc. (LXVIII-2 206)

(We **should not** be confused about the unique skills of those who practice various professions, etc.)

Evaluating the semantic contribution of the Romanian modal *a trebui* one can notice its polysemantic potential determined by the nuance of the basic deontic meanings: necessity and obligation.

The third most frequent Romanian modal is *a voi / must, may (will).* The research for this paper has revealed a very high number of occurrences with strong epistemic meanings. The Romanian modal *a voi* can express both epistemic possibility and epistemic necessity. The examples below demonstrate this fact:

13) **Va fi** ajuns deja. (**Poate** că a ajuns deja.) (LXVIII-4 460)

(He/She **may** have arrived already.)

14) **Va fi** ajuns deja. (**Trebuie** că a ajuns deja.) (LXVIII-4 461)

(She/he **must** have arrived already.)

The dual nature of the epistemic *a voi* can be correlated to the epistemic values discussed in the previous sections about the Romanian modals *a poate* and *a trebui*. The example (13) illustrates weak epistemic value denoting possibility, while in (14) the same modal indicates strong epistemic necessity. The above examples imply that the Romanian epistemic modal *a voi* may be translated into English as either 'may' or 'must'.

In the Romanian corpus, the modal *a voi* can express epistemic values only when expressed in its future form (3rd person singular).

The analysis of the corpus has revealed an interesting phenomenon in Romanian, whereby the force of the epistemic *a voi* may be weakened / strengthened by external modifiers such as 'certainly' or 'maybe'. In other words, the modal force of the Romanian otherwise strong epistemic *a voi* can be modified by external modifiers. The statement indicates author's presumption based on his knowledge and evidence and even deduction.

15) Cineva sună la sonerie, **va fi** livrare de mancare. (LXVIII-2 182)

(Somenone is ringing the door bell, it **must** be the food delivery.)

16) Cineva sună la sonerie, ***sigur*** **va fi** livrare de mancare.

(Somenone is ringing the door bell, it **will *certainly*** be the food delivery.)

17) Cineva sună la sonerie, ***poate*** **va fi** livrare de mancare.

(Somenone is ringing the door bell, ***perhaps*** it **will** be the food delivery.)

In the example 15, the author sends a message of strong belief into his statement. Consequently, expressing a strong epistemic meaning. Further, in 16, the adverb *sigur / certainly* adds an even stronger nuance of the author's belief in the truth of his claim. Finally, by adding the external modifier *poate / perhaps*, the example 17 acquires a weaker nuance and implies author's uncertainty thus having a weak epistemic value.

These examples show that the modal force of the Romanian epistemic *a voi* can indeed be modified. Thus, it can be argued that the strong epistemic value can be weakened by means of external modification in the form of adverbials. This is the case with the English epistemic modal *must:* '*You must probably think...*' or '*She must possibly be musing about...*'

When it comes to deontic modality, the modal *a voi* in the excerpted examples was not used in the deontic sense.

The analysis of the corpus has shown that the authors of the scientific articles analysed frequently used modal verbs to indicate their attitude towards the statements they made. In the Romanian sentences strong epistemic predominates, with a much smaller number of weak epistemic possibility and strong deontic commitment or prohibition.

No.	Modal	Epistemic meaning (%)	Deontic meaning (%)
1	a putea	82%	18%
2	a trebui	0	100%
3	a voi	100%	0

Table 2: Modal meanings and their percentage

4.2. Serbian scientific discourse

The Serbian sample consists of the sentences with modals excerpted from *Godišnjak* (*Annual Review*), the scientific journal (ranked as a leading national journal) published by the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Novi Sad from the articles from social sciences and humanities (e.g. psychology, philosophy, literature, linguistics). The sample was excerpted from three volumes (XLVI-1, XLV-5 and XLV-2) published in 2021 and 2020. Since this journal publishes articles in several languages, only the articles in Serbian were taken into account and they amounted to about 250 000 words or 450 pages. The next table presents the statistics.

No.	Serbian modal	Number	Percent
1	moći	320	72.7%
2	morati	46	10.5%
3	trebati	72	16.4%
4	smeti	2	0.4%
	TOTAL	440	100%

Table 3: Serbian modals in the corpus

The numbers clearly indicate the significant dominance of the weak modal *moći;* it is exclusively used in the epistemić meaning of possibility or necessity. For example:

18) Zbog toga **može**, uprkos vernom prevodu na naš jezik, doći do izvesnog recepcijskog šuma… (XLVI-1 115)

(Therefore, there **may**, in spite of an adequate translation into our language, appear some receptional noise…)

19) Dalje, svako ko je iole tada poznavao povest o Juditi, **mogao je** da uvidi sličnost sa aktuelnom političkom situacijom… (XLVI-1 208)

(Furthermore, then everyone who even basically knew the story of Judith **might** have noticed the resemblance with the current political situation…)

In the compiled corpus the modal *moći* occurs in its inflected present (*mogu, može, možemo*) or past forms (*mogao/moglo je*). In (18-19) the authors used the modal *moći* to achieve a more neutral tone, but also to create a certain distance to the factual content and leave the final assessment to the reader. The tone is made even more neutral with the reflexive construction *mogu se/može se*, which makes the statement impersonal and even weaker because it further tones down the author's commitment; it is quite frequent in the corpus, for instance:

20) Kao što se **može** videti iz Tabele 4… (XLVI-1 126)

(As one **may** see from Table 4…)

Finally in some sentences the author's commitment is further weakened by the use of the Serbian *potencijal* (partial equivalent of the English subjunctive mood). The *potencijal 1* is used

to denote wishes and possibilities, as well as to make a statement less strict (Mrazović and Vukadinović 1990: 127); so *potencijal* combined with the weak modal *moći* reveals the author's standpoint as a modest suggestion. For example:

21) ...ovakvi termini **mogli** bi se smatrati i skrivenim anglicizmima…(XLVI-1 65)

(…these terms **may** be treated as hidden anglicisms…)

The Serbian sample also includes the negated modal *moći*. When the modal *moći* is negated it acquires a stronger value because it implies that the discussed possibility is excluded; in that case it indicates necessity, like in:

22) Filozofske reči –budući filozofske - pre **ne mogu** da ponude značenja o božanskom… (XLVI-1 240)

(Philosophical words – being philosophical – more likely **may not** offer the meanings of the divine…)

The second most frequent modal in the Serbian sample is *trebati*; it is a modal of medium strength and is typically deontic. For example:

23) …veoma je važna i društvena pozicija toga teksta koju on **treba** da zauzme u ciljnoj kulturi… (XLVI-1 109)

(… the social position which that text **should** take in the target culture is ...)

This modal *trebati* in the example (23) shifts the author's standpoint to a stronger position of recommendation to moderate obligation; in the metadiscourse, the author sends a message of strong belief into the propositional content of his statement.

In the Serbian corpus, this modal *trebati* occurred in the present tense (third person singular), once in the past tense, then in *potencijal 1* (example 24) and with negation (example 26). For instance:

24) Što se glumaca tiče, rezultate je **trebalo** vrednovati na osnovu činjenice … (XLV-5 158)

(As for the actors, the results **should** have been evaluated on the basis of the fact that reading withut a pause was desirable for the drama students…)

25) U budućnosti bi **trebalo** sprovesti istraživanja sa većim brojem ispitanika... (XLV-5 197) (In the future, one **should** carry out researches with a larger number of respondents...)

26) Ipak, to ne znači da hram, ili druga dela arhitekture, po Hajdegeru **ne treba** povezati sa ljudskim iskustvom. (XLV-2 209)

(Still, it does not mean that a temple or other pieces of architecture, according to Heidegger **should not** be related to human experience)

Like other discussed modals, *trebati* in *potencijal* acquires a weaker nuance and implies a deontic suggestion, even though still stronger than *moći*. With negation, *trebati* indicates strong convinction about the absence of obligation.

The next modal *morati* denotes a strong deontic meaning, compulsion or obligation, as well as strong epistemic necessity. In the excerpted examples, *morati* dominantly appears in the present tense and in one case in the past tense (third person singular). There is also only one negation and *potencijal*. Typical examples follow:

27) …odnosno da se skulptura kao skulptura **mora** misliti u vezi sa problemom prostora. (XLV-2 215) (… that is the sculpture as sculpture **must** be thought of in relation to the problem of space.)

28) …u stihovima koji bi, po Peri-Lordovoj terminologiji, **morali** biti opisani kao slučaj neperiodskog opkoračenja. (XLV-5 168)

(…in the verses which **must** be, according to Parry-Lord's terminology, described as a case of nonperiodic enclosing.)

29) Ovaj prevod je srpskoj publici svakako **morao** delovati znatno drugačije nego prevodi nekih drugih prevodilaca… (XLVI-1 106)

(This translation **must** have appeared to the Serbian public as quite different than the translations of some other translators…)

30) … različit načini upotrebe jezika **ne moraju** biti u neposrednoj vezi sa kontekstom konkretnog književnog djela. (XLVI-1 150)

(… different ways of the use of language do **not have to** be in the direct relation to the context of the concrete literary work.)

As expected, *morati* is used predominantly in the deontic sense, with the metadiscourse message that the author does not doubt the propositional content and that the reader should consider it seriously. Negated modal (30) or *potencijal* (28) tone down the author's certainty to a more neutral tone, but still with the high level of persuasiveness. Moreover, in one case *morati* denotes epistemic necessity (29); the inanimate subject (*translation*), the stative semantics of the main verb (*delovati*) and the adverbial *svakako* imply the circumstances and the conclusion about the necessity, not to obligation.

Finally, the Serbian sample contains two examples with *smeti*, both of them with negation:

31) **Ne sme** se zanemariti ni činjenica da je nadogradnja spektra značenja.... (XLV-2 155)

(One **must** not also neglect the fact that the upgrading of the spectrum of meanings...)

The relevant semantics of the verb *smeti implies* the deontic permission (to allow somebody to do something); with negation *smeti* shifts to deontic prohibition, excluding the option denoted by the predication which follows.

The sentences and their analysis clearly indicated that the authors of the consulted Serbian scientific articles used modal verbs infrequently (on the average, 1.02 modal per page) to indicate their attitude; in addition, weak epistemic possibility overwhelmingly prevails (almost 73%), with a much smaller number of stronger deontic commitment.

No.	Modal	Epistemic meaning (%)	Deontic meaning (%)
1	moći	100%	0
2	trebati	0	100%
3	morati	2.2%	97.8%
4	smeti	0	100%

Table 4: Modal meanings and their percentage

5. Conclusion

The paper presented the results of a small-scale research about the use of epistemic and deontic modals in the Romanian and Serbian written scientific discourse in order to track down tendencies as well as possible similarities and differences which could be checked on a larger corpus.

Considering the purpose of the analysed scientific articles, the most frequent modal meaning is epistemic, accounting for 64% of all examples. Strong epistemic modality expressed in the examples from the corpus involves a rather high degree of certainty or confidence of the author that his statement is true, while weak epistemic modality entails a low degree of the author's certainty in the truth of his statement. The research conducted for this paper has revealed a very high number of examples with strong epistemic meanings of certainty (*a putea*) and necessity (*a voi*).

On the other hand, the most prominent deontic modal verb in Romanian is *a trebui*, but *a putea* also has deontic values related to permission and obligation. The modal *a trebui / must* is most often used with its strong deontic meaning of obligation which even more stressed when it is negated. Furthermore, this research has shown that the modal strength of the epistemic *a voi* can be altered in the sense that the strong epistemic value of this modal can be weakened by external modification.

Contemplating upon the initial hypotheses, it can be argued that the analysis of Romanian part of the corpus has confirmed the fourth hypothesis having proven that the epistemic modality prevailed over deontic modality in Romanian. On the other hand, this research has refuted the second hypothesis having shown that modals of higher strength prevailed in the excerpted examples in Romanian. This indicates a high degree of author's certainty in the truthfulness of his statement.

As for the Serbian part of the corpus, it was moderately modalized with only one modal per page on the average. Moreover, the authors tended to use weak epistemic modal *moći* to communicate with the readers and to express caution and a lower degree of assertiveness. Medium deontic modal *trebati* and the strong deontic modal *morati* make only about 27% of the modal uses in the Serbian sample. The illocutionary force is further weakened by *potencijal* which authors used to indicate modest suggestion. Finally, negation used wih *moći* made the modality stronger with the exclusion of options alternative to the propositional content; negation with the strong modal *morati* toned down the strength of modality leaving other alternatives open. Therefore, the research confirmed the hypotheses 1 and 3: the analysed Serbian scientific discourse relied significantly more on the epistemic modality of weaker strength. In this respect, the Serbian sample shows some similarities to English written academic discourse when it comes to hedging, that is it implies a relative caution in expressing argumentation and awareness that some of the anticipated readers may not agree with their argumentation (cf. Blagojević 2012: 20).

Finally, this research enabled a comparison between the tendencies in the Roman and Serbian sample as formulated in the hypothesis 5, which states that the tendencies in use of the modals will be similar in both languages. This hypothesis was partly confirmed, because Romanian sample had a slightly higher score when it comes to the use of stronger modals.

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