Expressing obligation in English as a Lingua Franca: the use of deontic modal items.

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Dissertation chapter

Varieties like British and American English are experiencing a gradual decline of the central modal verbs (can, may, must, etc.) and an increase in the use of so-called ‘emerging modals’ (have to/hafta, have got to/gotta, etc.). This shift seems especially significant regarding expressions of deontic modality (i.e. obligation, permission, commanding, offering, etc.), where must has been observed to be losing ground to have to. This study therefore investigates whether ELF (as represented in VOICE) shows a similar trend. By taking a stance for a more extended concept of modality, it will also take further emerging modal items such as might as well, (had) better and Let’s into consideration. The findings are discussed against the backdrop of concepts such as Americanization, democratization and colloquialization as well as the question whether these approaches actually apply to ELF.

References


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