

# Pragmatics of adjectives in academic discourse: from qualification to intensification

---

**Matešić, Mihaela; Memišević, Anita**

*Source / Izvornik:* **Jezikoslovlje**, 2016, 17, 179 - 206

**Journal article, Published version**

**Rad u časopisu, Objavljena verzija rada (izdavačev PDF)**

*Permanent link / Trajna poveznica:* <https://um.nsk.hr/um:nbn:hr:186:587762>

*Rights / Prava:* [Attribution 4.0 International](#)/[Imenovanje 4.0 međunarodna](#)

*Download date / Datum preuzimanja:* **2025-03-24**



*Repository / Repozitorij:*

[Repository of the University of Rijeka, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences - FHSSRI Repository](#)





UDC 001.8:81'367.623=111

Original scientific article

Received on 15. 07. 2015

Accepted for publication on 11. 02. 2016

**Mihaela Matešić****Anita Memišević**

University of Rijeka

## Pragmatics of adjectives in academic discourse: from qualification to intensification

Certain communicative and linguistic conventions, that, on the one hand, have been established for the academic discourse type in general, and on the other, for this discourse type in a particular language, are noticeable in academic discourse. Objectivity, which is one of the most prominent features of academic discourse, can be achieved by using various strategies. Such strategies are described in terms of preferred and less preferred/non-preferred means of expression. As a result, the author of a scientific text is constantly faced with the challenge posed by, on the one hand, the (rhetorical) need to persuade the readers/academic community to accept his positions, opinions, methods, results and conclusions, and on the other, the demand for objectivity. One procedure for increasing the level of objectivity that is frequently advised involves a decrease in the use of evaluative adjectives and their modifiers because they directly intensify the claims. A claim made in a scientific text should obtain its “strength” or “weight” in an implicit manner from the results of research and scientific evidence, and not from explicit expressions such as evaluative adjectives (e. g.: **velika** važnost toga istraživanja (‘the great significance of that research’), *dalo je **iznimne** rezultate* (‘has yielded exceptional results’)) and their modifiers (e. g.: *ono što je nama ovdje **posebno zanimljivo*** (‘what is especially significant for us here’), ***posebno neravnopravni*** (‘especially unequal’), ***posebice** je to **važno*** (‘this is particularly significant’), *takvi su prozni poslanički tekstovi **vrlo važni** za oblikovanje* (‘such epistolary texts are very important’), *imao je **iznimno dobru** recepciju* (‘was extremely well received’), *većina prije završenih skulptura **izrazito je statična*** (‘the majority of sculptures finished earlier are extremely static’), *povezuje ih **izrazito samosvojno intelektualno polazište*** (‘are connected by an extremely individual intellectual starting point’). In order to explore the use of evaluative adjectives and their modifiers in scientific texts, the paper focuses on the analysis of



texts from different scientific domains – those of linguistics and medicine. We compare texts in Croatian and English with the aim of proving or disproving the assumption that these two languages employ different strategies. The rules for writing scientific texts in English prescribe, among other things, an extremely limited use of qualifying expressions in general, and this includes evaluative adjectives. The comparison of the frequency of use of evaluative adjectives and of the nature of adjectives that appear in scientific texts in Croatian and English allows us to gain insight into the practices characteristic of these two languages. Our results indicate, that contrary to our expectations, the analysed scientific texts in English contain a greater number of evaluative adjectives than the Croatian ones and that, in general, these texts exhibit a greater diversity with respect to the evaluative adjectives used when compared to the analysed scientific texts in Croatian.

**Key words:** pragmatics; evaluative adjectives; scientific text; academic discourse; intensification.

## 1. Introduction

Academic discourse, like any other type of discourse, has its conventions. This type of discourse aims at being as objective as possible and avoiding subjectivity at any cost. This makes evaluative adjectives in academic discourse a particularly interesting phenomenon, because at first glance there is no room for such devices, the primary function of which is to give a subjective evaluation, in a type of discourse which is dedicated to being objective. However, such adjectives do appear in academic discourse, as has been proven by numerous studies, especially those on the use of such adjectives in academic discourse in English (e.g. Koutsantoni 2004; Nishina 2010; Giannoni 2011). In Croatian no such studies have been conducted, and we were interested to see how the use of evaluative adjectives in academic discourse in Croatian compares to their use in English academic discourse. In this section we will present the background information by comparing English and Croatian. Since the issue at hand has been studied extensively in English, in this section English is used as a standard of comparison to which Croatian is compared.

### 1.1. *Adjectives: English vs. Croatian*

In English, the adjective can appear in three different positions in a noun phrase: a) attributive – the adjective precedes the noun (e.g. *tall man*), b) postposition – the adjective follows the noun immediately (e.g. *house opposite*) and c) predicative –



the adjective functions as a subject or an object complement<sup>1</sup> (e.g. *He is tall*). Some adjectives can appear only in the attributive, and some only in the postposition.<sup>2</sup> It should be pointed out, that in the case of those adjectives that can appear in either of these two positions the positioning of the adjective in relation to the noun can affect the meaning (*responsible minister* vs. *minister responsible*<sup>3</sup>). As Radden and Dirven (2007) point out, the adjectives that appear in the prenominal (attributive) position typically describe permanent and characteristic properties, while those that appear in the postnominal (postposition or predicative) position typically describe temporary or occasional properties. In other words, if an adjective that typically occurs in the attributive position is used in a predicative position then the meaning conveyed is that of temporariness. Adjectives that appear in the attributive and the predicative position can be premodified by adverbs. The adverbs used to premodify the adjective can be subdivided into two major categories: amplifiers (intensifiers) and downtoners (Quirk et al., 1994: 445).

In Croatian, the adjectives can appear in the same positions as in English, although the prototypical ones are the attributive (e.g. *visok/visoki čovjek* ‘tall man’, *čovjek visok rastom*<sup>4</sup> lit. ‘man tall in growth’, i.e. ‘tall man’) and the predicative (e.g. *čovjek je visok* ‘man is tall’). In Croatian, the adjectives can also be premodified. But, in contemporary grammar books of Croatian, these premodifiers are termed ‘particles’ (Silić and Pranjković 2005: 255, 272). For all intents and purposes these are functionally equal to the adverbs in English.

Some English grammar books comment on the use of adjectives in scientific texts/academic discourse. Thus, Biber et al. (1999) state that when adjectives are used attributively they intensify the meaning of the noun, and that when they are used predicatively they express evaluation, i.e. predicative adjectives often include

<sup>1</sup> Such a structure calls for a copular verb, the most typical representatives of which in English are *be* and *seem*.

<sup>2</sup> For more details on the positions in which particular adjectives can appear see e.g. Quirk et al. (1994).

<sup>3</sup> *Responsible minister* means ‘a minister who is also a responsible person’, while *minister responsible* means ‘a minister who is in charge (of a particular task)’.

<sup>4</sup> These examples are listed just to demonstrate that in the adjectival phrase in Croatian, the adjective can either precede the noun or appear after it (postposition). The most prototypical type of an adjectival phrase in Croatian is the one in which the adjective appears bare (Marković 2010: 194). In adjectival phrases which contain a bare adjective the adjective precedes the noun (*visok/visoki čovjek* ‘tall man’), and in those in which the adjective is complemented it appears in postposition: *čovjek sklon piću*, *čovjek visok preko dva metra* (‘man prone to drinking’, ‘man over two meters tall’).



emotion, attitude or judgement (Biber et al. 1999: 515). Emotion, attitude and judgement are among those things that should be avoided in academic discourse, and according to the authors this is the reason why attributive adjectives tend to be used more frequently than predicative adjectives in academic texts. On the other hand, Carter and McCarthy (2006) stress that attributive adjectives tend to occur frequently in ‘hard’ sciences (e.g. mathematics, medicine, etc.), while predicative adjectives tend to occur more frequently in ‘soft’ sciences (humanities, social sciences) and are often pre-modified by degree adverbs.

Both languages have gradable adjectives, i.e. adjectives that can undergo the process of comparison. Comparative forms of adjectives in scientific writing should come as no surprise – one of the goals of any scientific paper is to compare the obtained results to previously published studies. On the other hand, due to the demand for objectivity, superlatives should appear only rarely in scientific writing since ‘superlative forms of adjectives signal uniqueness in that they select extreme instances’ (Radden and Dirven 2007: 104).

With respect to the situation in Croatian, there is no mention of the use of adjectives in scientific texts/academic discourse in Croatian grammar books. In Croatian the meaning conveyed by the adjective does not depend on whether it appears in the attributive or the predicative position. According to Marković (2010: 126–127), the restrictions that apply with respect to the position of the adjective – attributive or predicative – are almost nonexistent. If any restrictions do apply to a particular situation, they are then primarily related to the lexico-semantic and pragmatic aspects of the utterance, and only to a lesser degree to the grammatical ones.<sup>5</sup> The same meaning, for example, that of qualification, can be expressed by an adjective in the attributive and by an adjective in a predicative position. Whether this is a consequence of the fact that Croatian has a relatively free word order and is quite a peculiar language in syntactic terms (see e.g. Van Valin 2001, 2005) is an issue that

---

<sup>5</sup> It is usually pointed out that in the standard Croatian language a definite adjective cannot appear in the predicative position, while both definite and indefinite adjectives can appear in the attributive position. Of course, some adjectives cannot appear in the predicative position at all (*puka slučajnost* – ?*Slučajnost je puka* ‘mere coincidence’ \*‘the coincidence is mere’; *potpuni luđak* – ?*Luđak je potpun* ‘a complete lunatic’ \*‘the lunatic is complete’) or their meaning differs depending on the position (e.g. *odgovorna osoba* – *Osoba je odgovorna* ‘responsible person’ – ‘the person is responsible’) (Marković 2010: 54). We believe that it should also be pointed out that this difference in the distribution of the two types of adjectives is based on the semantics of the definite and indefinite adjectives: the predicative position is primarily used to express a qualitative meaning and therefore an indefinite adjective is employed (*On je velik*. ‘He is big’), and less frequently to express identification (*Taj je pravi*. ‘That’s the real one’).



should be further explored. In addition to this, it should be pointed out that the attributive position carries a greater semantic potential in the English than in the contemporary Croatian language. In English, the attributive position implies establishing a relationship with the article (regardless of whether we are talking about a zero article or an indefinite or definite article) which makes a contribution to the semantics of the phrase which cannot be realized if the adjective is used in the predicative position. Thus, the choice between the attributive and the predicative position has a significant impact on the communicative effect, i.e. on the meaning conveyed (cf. Footnote 2). Although Croatian normative grammar books traditionally list and describe the morphological, accentual and semantic differences between the definite and indefinite adjectives (where definite adjectives serve as identifiers and indefinite as qualifiers), more recent sources admit that the actual use of an adjective in the attributive position has undergone certain changes (Kalogjera 2009; Matešić 2014). These changes are three-fold. The first change is the loss of morphological distinctions of the definite and indefinite adjectives – the paradigm is being reduced to the one typical of the definite adjectives. The second change, which is closely tied to the first, is the loss of accentual distinctions between the two categories. This is further enhanced by the loss of post-accentual length in everyday use. The third change, which is the most important for us, is the following: formal equalization of the two categories of adjectives has also resulted in semantic changes. In other words, when confronted with the example *u kuhanome krumpiru bilo je premalo začina* ('there weren't enough spices in the cooked potatoes') a contemporary speaker of Croatian will rely on context (linguistic or, more frequently, extralinguistic, since in quite a number of cases the listener cannot be certain in which sense the speaker has used the adjective) to determine whether the information conveyed relates to **what** potatoes or **which** potatoes do not contain enough spices. Although the grammar books of the contemporary standard Croatian language (e.g.: Babić et al. 1991; Barić et al. 1997; Raguž 1997; Silić and Pranjković 2005) are still trying to teach the speakers that they should understand that, since in this example the form for the L sg. of the definite adjective *kuhanom* is used, the intended meaning is **which** (because if the intended meaning were **what** the speaker would have to use the L sg. of the indefinite adjective *kuhanu*), the speakers do not rely on this. Thus, they have to rely on a more 'complicated' way of grasping the intended meaning – context. In some cases, they do not even perceive the category of definite/indefinite as a relevant one.



## ***1.2. Adjectives in academic discourse: from sources on how to write a scientific paper to studies on scientific papers***

There is a wealth of literature on how to write scientific articles in English available both on-line and in printed form. Since our goal is not to offer a detailed overview of such literature we will here focus on the general advice that tends to be given in such literature related to the use of adjectives – which could be summed up as ‘try to avoid evaluative adjectives at all costs’. For example, Wallwark (2011) includes the following advice: one should use simple language; one should avoid the use of the impersonal ‘it’ as the subject of a clause/sentence; an adjective should come in front of the noun; when using an adjective or adverb one should always ask oneself if the adjective or the adverb is really necessary. He stresses that adjectives and/or adverbs may be used when one wishes to signal that an important point is being made, but that such adjectives should be used sparingly – strong adjectives may be used once or twice; if they are used more, they lose the intended effect or give the impression that the author is arrogant. He also points out that strong adjectives can be downtoned with the help of adverbs and advises authors to avoid the use of subjective adjectives. However, he does state that the discussion section of a paper needs to be dynamic and lists the use of emotional adjectives as one of the means by which this may be achieved. At the same time he stresses that such adjectives should be used rarely and with great care. On the other hand, Wilkenson (1991) explicitly states that evaluative adjectives should be avoided because they are “too weak and too imprecise for use in scientific writing” (1991: 451).

In a rare paper on the values that evaluative expressions encode in academic discourse in general, Giannoni (2011) lists that the most frequent categories of values expressed in scientific writing include those that refer to relevance, size, goodness and novelty. Nishina (2010) stresses that, compared to other parts of speech, adjectives are more likely to express value judgements, and that the identification of the elements that the writer considers to be important is a ‘basic and fundamental requirement of academic argumentation’ (Ibid: 133). Tutin (2010), who analysed French academic writing, found that evaluative adjectives are ‘especially numerous in introductions (and in conclusions in economics), where they are used mainly to justify and promote the author’s work’ (Tutin, 2010: 238). Koutsantoni (2004) states that evaluative adjectives are most frequently used as attitude markers – their purpose is to emphasise the originality of research, to justify the purpose of the research (when used with positive values) and to evaluate previous research (positively or negatively).



When it comes to positive and negative evaluation of previous research, Wallwark (2011) advises that criticism should always be expressed in a constructive way, i.e. not by underlying the inadequacy of previous studies and their findings, but by building upon them. He advises stating that previous findings are open to alternative interpretations. Other authors give similar advice. From this it may be inferred that negative evaluative adjectives should be avoided as much as possible in scientific writing.

As far as Croatian is concerned, there is no wealth of literature on how to write scientific papers. The most prominent authors (Zelenika 1998; Gačić 2002; Oraić-Tolić 2011) do not find it necessary to deal with the issue of the use of evaluative adjectives, and do not even touch upon the topic of strong and evaluative expressions and devices. The fact that these issues are not discussed in Croatian handbooks does not mean that the consequences of the use of strong expressions have gone unnoticed. Their status is defined by the postulate which is always emphasised when the basic characteristics of academic discourse are discussed – that the academic discourse is objective. This means that the author is expected to implement all the procedures and devices that contribute to the objectivity of the text, and avoid all those that might compromise it.

## 2. The current study

Conventions dictate that strong expressions of any kind should be avoided in academic discourse. This includes evaluative/qualifying adjectives. The implication of this is that the scientist is torn between the need to persuade the audience that his attitudes, results, conclusions, etc. are valid and correct and the ‘rules’ that tell him/her that strong and evaluative expressions should be avoided at all costs.

Since there is a wealth of handbooks and other resources on writing scientific texts in English which prescribe what should and should not be used in such texts, and no such literature in Croatian, we expect that this fact will be reflected in the scientific papers written in these two languages. Since no previous research on the use of evaluative adjectives in Croatian scientific papers exists, we defined our domain of interest rather broadly and did not limit our study to narrowly defined sub-disciplines. Instead, we chose to focus on the use of evaluative adjectives in scientific papers in Croatian and English in two domains of science – linguistics (representative of the ‘soft’ sciences) and medicine (representative of the ‘hard’ sciences).

Our primary interest are adjectives that the author consciously uses in an attempt





to influence the reader's opinion, attitude and stance, i.e. evaluative adjectives in a narrower sense.

On the basis of previous research we expect that the English papers on linguistics will contain more predicative adjectives, while the English papers on medicine will contain more attributive adjectives with a negligible percentage of predicative adjectives.

### 3. Research questions and expectations

In order to determine if any differences with respect to the use of evaluative adjectives in papers written in Croatian and English actually exist, we posed several questions:

- 1) Is there a difference in the number of evaluative adjectives used in papers written in Croatian and in English?

Based on the fact that numerous resources on how to write a scientific paper exist in English, and none in Croatian, we expect to see a greater number of evaluative adjectives in Croatian texts. In addition to this, our medical papers corpora comprised both review and general papers. Since the rules for writing these two types of papers somewhat differ, we expect to see a difference in the use of evaluative adjectives, with review papers containing a greater number of evaluative adjectives than the general ones.

- 2) Is there a difference in the number of attributive and predicative adjectives used (especially in English)?

Since all the resources on writing scientific papers in English stress that adjectives in the predicative position should be avoided because they express value judgements, we expect to find that the great majority of adjectives in English texts will be used in the attributive position. In particular, we expect to find a negligible number of predicative adjectives in English medical papers.

- 3) How frequently do the authors use comparatives and superlatives?

Since one of the main tasks of any scientific writing is to investigate and compare phenomena, we expect to find examples of comparatives. On the other hand, since scientific writing is supposed to be objective, we do not expect to find any significant number of superlatives which convey very strong value judgements.

- 4) In which sections of papers are adjectives most frequently used?



We expect to find the greatest number of evaluative adjectives in the Introduction and Discussion sections, since these two sections serve the purpose of presenting and evaluating previous research and comparing the current study to the previously obtained results respectively. We do not expect to find evaluative adjectives in the sections of the paper pertaining to the experiment.

- 5) Is there a difference in the number of positive and negative evaluative adjectives used in particular types of papers?

One of the main tasks of an author of a scientific paper is to present the results of his research in a positive light while at the same time avoiding unnecessary harsh criticism of previous research. For this reason we expect to find a greater number of positive evaluative adjectives. We should stress here that the classification of an adjective as a positive or a negative one here greatly depends on the context in which a particular adjective is used. In case of some adjectives, the classification is straightforward due to the semantics of the adjective itself – e.g. ‘good’ or ‘excellent’ are clearly positive, while ‘flawed’ or ‘negative’ are clearly negative adjectives. However, the meaning of an adjective such as ‘complex’ greatly depends on the context of the sentence (i.e. depending on the context, it can either be positive or negative). In the case of such adjectives sentence context was used to disambiguate their status and classify them as positive or negative.

- 6) How frequently do authors modify their adjectives and do they use intensifiers or downtoners more frequently?

As has been pointed out, resources on writing scientific papers in English stress that if the author decides to use evaluative adjectives it is a good idea to downtown them, especially if they are strong. In accordance with this, we expect to find a greater number of downtoners than intensifiers in the analysed texts.

#### 4. Methods

Our corpus consisted of a total of 160 scientific papers: 40 papers on linguistics written in Croatian, 40 papers on linguistics written in English, 40 papers on medicine written in Croatian and 40 papers on medicine written in English (link to complete list of papers: <http://www.ffri.hr/~mmatesic/>). The choice of articles was dictated by the availability of on-line journals. In the case of papers in English we had a wide range of journals to choose from, so the sample was pseudo-random (i.e. a topic would be entered and the first paper published in a reputable journal that was accessible would be included in the corpus). In the case of papers in Croatian, our



sample was limited due to the fact that the number of reputable journals published and available on-line is limited. This is especially true of the field of medicine where the majority of papers published in Croatian journals are in fact published in the English language. Hence the papers included in the Croatian corpora represent a convenience sample. All the journals from which the papers were chosen have style-sheets. Their editing policies vary, but are comparable across the two languages. In the case of journals in which the Croatian linguistics papers included in the corpus were published, only one journal reserves the right to edit the language, while the remaining ones state that the authors must proof-read their papers. The situation is the same in journals published in English – again, only one journal reserves the right to make editorial changes to enhance the clarity, concision or style. In addition to this, the journals published in English advise authors whose first language is not English to have their papers proof-read by an English native speaker prior to submission. With respect to the field of medicine, one Croatian journal reserves the right to edit language, while the remaining ones again state that it is the authors' responsibility to proof-read their papers. One English medical journal states that they carry out language editing, one offers the services of language editing and one reserves the right to edit language. The remaining ones include the caveat that if the authors are not native speakers of English they should have their paper proof-read by a native speaker prior to publication.

The papers published in English are treated as representatives of English as a Lingua Franca, since it is impossible to tell whether the authors of a particular article are (all) native speakers of English (i.e. no safe conclusions about the author's first language can be drawn on the basis of his/her name). However, since only papers published in reputable journals (i.e. those referenced in the most influential databases) were included, the language used in them did not contain any errors and sounded natural.

We tried to include papers that deal with various sub-disciplines in the two domains of science that we focused on, because our primary goal was to try and obtain a broad picture of the use of evaluative adjectives. One sub-discipline, neuro-linguistics, was excluded. Since it is a hybrid between linguistics and medicine it would actually be very interesting to include it in our study, but the corpus of papers on this sub-discipline written in Croatian is so small that it would be impossible to draw any valid conclusions.

The corpus was examined manually in order to identify, as precisely as possible, the cases in which the adjectives are used to express evaluation. We stress that in the papers which present statistical data the adjective *significant* and its Croatian



counterpart *značajan* were not treated as evaluative adjectives when they were combined with the adverb *statistically/statistički* since in this case the two words form a collocation which does not imply a personal stance/emotion or a positive/negative evaluation.

Since our focus is primarily on evaluative adjectives the aim of which is to influence the stance/opinion of the readers (evaluative adjectives in a narrower sense), the classification of adjectives into this category is somewhat subjective and depends on the researcher. In order to increase the level of objectivity we used a modified Crompton's test<sup>6</sup> (Crompton, 1997: 282), i.e. when trying to determine whether an adjective belongs to the category defined above we asked the following question: 'Can the author's attitude be expressed in an alternative way that would not bring any change to the content, but would increase the level of objectivity?' That is, when encountering a potentially evaluative adjective, the researchers would ask: 'Would the meaning stay the same if the adjective were left out, and would the text influence the reader's stance/opinion to a lesser extent?' If the answer to this question was 'yes' then the adjective was classified as evaluative.

## 5. Results

The analysis of corpora with respect to the presence of evaluative adjectives in papers has revealed that the minimum number of evaluative adjectives per linguistics paper in Croatian was 0 (14 papers) and the maximum number was 19, while in English the minimum number of evaluative adjectives per linguistics paper was 1, and the maximum 85. In the case of medical papers in Croatian the minimum number of evaluative adjectives per paper was 0 (12 papers) and the maximum was 15, while in English the minimum was 0 (3 papers) and the maximum was 17. When we focused on the type of medical paper, the results revealed greater differences between the languages: the minimum number of evaluative adjectives in a review paper in Croatian was 0 (6 papers) and the maximum was 3, while in English review papers the minimum number was 2 and the maximum 17; the minimum num-

---

<sup>6</sup> Writing about hedging in academic discourse, Crompton faced the problem of determining which lexical elements function as expressions that could be classified as hedges in a particular context. His method consists of a simple test in the form of a question which serves to determine to which extent the presence or absence of a particular element influences the level of the observed value conveyed by the text. More specifically, in his case the test served to test the level of firmness of attitude that the author was ready to express when talking about a particular topic. Since we are also focusing on the level of the observed value, Crompton's test served as an inspiration for our modified test.



ber of evaluative adjectives in a general paper in Croatian was 0 (6 papers) and the maximum was 15, while in English general papers the minimum number was 0 (3 papers) and the maximum 17. From this we can notice that, compared to papers in English, a greater number of papers in Croatian does not contain any evaluative adjectives. Table 1 contains the general data for the papers on linguistics.

Table 1: Distribution of adjectives per 1,000 words in linguistics papers

Language	n. of words	n. of adjectives	adj. per 1000 words
Croatian	212,617	126	0.593
English	474,168	576	1.539

As can be noticed, the number of evaluative adjectives per 1,000 words is three times greater in English papers compared to that found in Croatian papers. If we compare this with the results for medical papers laid out in Table 2, we see that the papers from the two domains of science seem to differ significantly when it comes to the use of evaluative adjectives, because the number of evaluative adjectives used per 1,000 words in medical papers is almost the same in the two languages under scrutiny.

Table 2: Distribution of adjectives per 1,000 words in medical papers

Language	n. of words	n. of adjectives	adj. per 1000 words
Croatian	155,473	106	0.682
English	219,499	145	0.661

However, as was pointed out in the ‘Research questions and expectations’ section, since two types of medical papers, i.e. review and general papers, were included in our corpus, we expected to see some differences across paper types. As the results laid out in Table 3 demonstrate, our expectations were confirmed – in the case of review papers, the number of evaluative adjectives used in English papers is four times greater compared to the number of evaluative adjectives used in Croatian, and in the case of general papers the difference is 1.5 times in favour of English papers.



Table 3: Distribution of adjectives per 1,000 words in medical papers across paper type

Language	Type of paper	n. of words	n. of adjectives	adj. per 1000 words
Croatian	Review	47,778	19	0.398
English	Review	30,191	49	1.623
Croatian	General	107,659	87	0.808
English	General	189,308	96	0.507

Let us now turn our attention to the position of the adjective in a noun phrase. For clarity reasons, the results are laid out in two tables, Table 4 displaying the results for linguistics papers and Table 5 for medical papers.

Table 4: Position of the adjective in the NP in linguistics papers

Language	Position	n.	Per cent
Croatian	attributive	101	80.158%
English	attributive	364	63.1944%
Croatian	postposition	0	0
English	postposition	6	1.04167%
Croatian	predicative	25	19.84%
English	predicative	206	35.76389%

Table 5: Position of the adjective in the NP in medical papers

Language	Position	n.	Per cent
Croatian	attributive	84	79.245%
English	attributive	92	66.2%
Croatian	postposition	0	0
English	postposition	2	1.3793%
Croatian	predicative	22	20.7547%
English	predicative	47	32.41379%

The interesting finding about the position of the adjective relates primarily to the papers in English – we can notice that the linguistics papers (Table 4) actually contain almost double (1.77 times) the number of evaluative adjectives in the attributive position when compared to those in the predicative position. On the other hand, the medical papers (Table 5) contain a significant percentage of evaluative adjectives in the predicative position.

To see whether the observed differences with respect to the position of adjectives across paper types are statistically significant we conducted a one-way ANOVA for the attributive and for the predicative position. The ANOVA for the attributive position revealed significant differences between paper types ( $F(3,156)=12.1842$ ;  $p=0.0000$ ). Post hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test indicated that the English Linguistics differs significantly from the Croatian Linguistics, Croatian Medicine and English Medicine at the  $p<.01$  level. The ANOVA for the predicative position revealed significant differences between paper types ( $F(3,156)=50.8962$ ;  $p=0.002$ ). Post hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test indicated that the English Linguistics differs from the Croatian Linguistics, Croatian Medicine and English Medicine at the  $p<.01$  level.

The predicative position is also interesting in another respect. The breakdown of evaluative adjectives in the predicative position in English is presented in Table 6.

Table 6: Breakdown of evaluative adjectives in predicative position in English

Domain	Subject complement		It-subject		Pseudo-cleft clause		If clause	
	n.	%	n.	%	n.	%	n.	%
Linguistics	182	31.597%	19	3.298%	5	0.868%	0	0
Medicine	41	28.2758%	4	2.759%	1	0.6896%	1	0.6896%

Table 7 presents the data on evaluative adjectives used in the superlative and the comparative form.

Table 7: Superlatives and comparatives

CROATIAN			ENGLISH		
Linguistics:			Linguistics:		
Degree	n.	percent	Degree	n.	percent
superlative	4	3.175%	superlative	25	4.34%
comparative	1	0.79	comparative	43	7.465%
Medicine:			Medicine:		
Degree	n.	percent	Degree	n.	percent
superlative	10	9.43396%	superlative	11	7.586%
comparative	1	0.943396%	comparative	6	4.1479%

In papers in Croatian superlatives are more frequent than comparatives in both domains. When it comes to papers in English, the medical papers use superlatives more frequently than comparatives, while the situation is reversed in the linguistics



papers. As far as the modification of comparatives is concerned, in Croatian it appeared only in the case of a medical paper (*puno* ‘much’), while in English it appeared both in linguistics (2 x *much*, 2 x *even*, 8 x *less*) and in medical (2 x *much*) papers.

In order to see whether the observed differences in the number of superlatives and comparatives used in different paper types are statistically significant we conducted a one-way ANOVA across paper types. The ANOVA for superlatives revealed significant differences between paper types ( $F(3,156)=5.2506$ ;  $p=0.0018$ ). Post hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test indicated that the English Linguistics differs significantly from the Croatian Linguistics at the  $p<.01$  level, and from the Croatian Medicine at the  $p<.05$  level. The ANOVA for comparatives revealed significant differences between paper types ( $F(3,156)=28.8971$ ;  $p=0.001$ ). Post hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test indicated that the English Linguistics differs from the Croatian Linguistics, Croatian Medicine and English Medicine at the  $p<.01$  level. The distribution of evaluative adjectives by sections of the paper is presented in Table 8.

Table 8: Distribution of evaluative adjectives by the sections of the paper

CROATIAN			ENGLISH		
Linguistics:			Linguistics:		
Part of paper	n.	percent	Part of paper	n.	percent
abstract	2	1.587%	abstract	22	3.8194%
introduction	8	6.349%	introduction	128	22.23%
experiment	0	0	experiment	45	7.8125%
discussion	92	73.02%	discussion	333	57.8125%
conclusion	24	19.05%	conclusion	48	8.34%
Medicine:			Medicine:		
abstract	3	2.83%	abstract	12	8.2758%
introduction	49	46.226%	introduction	29	20%
experiment	0	0	experiment: (methods)	7 (2)	4.82758% (1.3793%)
			(results)	(5)	(3.44827)
discussion	37	34.91%	discussion	77	53.1%
conclusion	17	16.0377%	conclusion	18	12.41379%
future research	0	0	future research	2	1.3793%

If we compare the linguistics papers in Croatian and in English we can notice that the ones in Croatian contain a greater percentage of the total number of evalua-





tive adjectives in the discussion and the conclusion, while the ones in English contain a greater percentage of the total number of evaluative adjectives in the abstract and the introduction. We should note that while no Croatian papers contain evaluative adjectives in the experiment section of paper, the percentage of total evaluative adjectives in English linguistics papers that appear in this section is not negligible (7.8%). If we compare medical papers in Croatian and English we can notice that the ones in Croatian contain a greater percentage of the total number of evaluative adjectives in the introduction and the conclusion, while the ones in English contain a greater percentage of the total number of evaluative adjectives in the abstract and the discussion. While medical papers in Croatian do not contain any evaluative adjectives in sections titled 'Experiment' and 'Future research', the ones in English do. It should be noted that these appear in the 'Experiment' section – both in the 'Methods' and the 'Results' section. When the linguistics and medical papers are compared it can be noticed that the ones on linguistics use the greatest number of the total evaluative adjectives in the discussion segment in both languages (with the percentage of the total being significantly higher in Croatian than in English). The situation in medical texts is somewhat different – the Croatian texts use the greatest number of the total evaluative adjectives in the introduction (46.2% of the total number of evaluative adjectives), while the ones in English use the greatest number of the total evaluative adjectives in the conclusion (53.1% of the total number of evaluative adjectives).

In order to check the statistical significance of the observed results we conducted a one-way ANOVA for each section of the paper, except for the 'future research' section which can only be found in medical papers. In case of this section we conducted a t-test. The analysis for 'Abstract' has revealed significant difference between the paper types at the  $p < .01$  level ( $F(3,156)=6.4817$ ;  $p = 0.004$ ). Post hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test indicated that the English Linguistics differed significantly from the Croatian Linguistics and the Croatian Medicine at the  $p < .01$  level. The analysis for 'Introduction' has revealed significant differences between the paper types at the  $p < .01$  level ( $F(3,156)=20.1776$ ;  $p=0.0001$ ). Post hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test indicated that all four types of papers significantly differed from each other at the  $p < .01$  level. The analysis for 'Experiment' has revealed significant differences between the paper types at the  $p < .01$  level ( $F(3,156)=12.5939$ ;  $p=0.0000$ ). Post hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test indicated that the English Linguistics differed significantly from the Croatian Linguistics, Croatian Medicine and English Medicine at the  $p < .01$  level. The analysis for 'Discussion' has revealed significant differences between the paper types at the  $p < .01$  level ( $F(3,156)=31.4229$ ;  $p=0.0001$ ). Post hoc comparisons using the Tukey



HSD test indicated that the Croatian Linguistics differed significantly from the English Linguistics and the Croatian Medicine and that the English Linguistics differed significantly from the English Medicine at the  $p < .01$  level. The analysis for 'Conclusion' has revealed significant differences between the paper types at the  $p < .05$  level ( $F(3,156)=3.4381$ ;  $p=0,0184$ ). Post hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test indicated that the English Linguistics differed significantly from the Croatian Medicine and the English Medicine at the  $p < .05$  level. The t-test for 'Future Research' did not reveal any statistically significant difference between the medical papers in Croatian and English.

Table 9: Distribution of positive and negative adjectives

CROATIAN			ENGLISH		
Linguistics:			Linguistics:		
Type	n.	percent	Type	n.	percent
positive	118	93.65%	positive	464	80.56%
negative	8	6.349%	negative	112	19.44%
Medicine:			Medicine:		
Type	n.	percent	Type	n.	percent
positive	85	80.1887%	positive	134	92.41%
negative	21	19.8113%	negative	11	7.59%

As can be seen from Table 9, the English linguistics papers and the Croatian medical papers contain a greater percentage of negative adjectives when compared to the remaining two types of texts.

In order to see whether the observed differences in the number of positive and negative evaluative adjectives used in different paper types are statistically significant we conducted a one-way ANOVA across paper types. The ANOVA for positive adjectives revealed significant differences between paper types ( $F(3,156)=37.8647$ ;  $p=0.0002$ ). Post hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test indicated that the English Linguistics differed significantly from the Croatian Linguistics, Croatian Medicine and English Medicine at the  $p < .01$  level. The ANOVA for negative adjectives revealed significant differences between paper types ( $F(3,156)=8.7963$ ;  $p=0.000$ ). Post hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test indicated that the English Linguistics differed significantly from the Croatian Linguistics, Croatian Medicine and English Medicine at the  $p < .01$  level.

The most frequent positive adjectives in Croatian linguistics texts are: *bitan* (12) ('important'), *zanimljiv* (11) ('interesting'), *važan* (7) ('important'), *velik* (7) ('great/big'), *znatan* (4) ('significant'); and in Croatian medical texts: *važan* (22)

(‘important’), *značajan* (10) (‘significant’), *velik* (5) (‘great/big’), *bitan* (5) (‘important’). That is, the most frequent adjectives in both domains are the same. The most frequent positive adjectives in English linguistics texts are: *important* (46), *substantial* (16), *clear* (14), *considerable* (13), *crucial* (12), *striking* (11), *surprising* (11), *rich* (7), *strong* (7), *plausible* (6), *serious* (6); and in English medical texts: *important* (22), *dramatic* (5), *strong* (5). As can be noticed, the variety of the most frequent positive adjectives in English linguistics texts is greater than in the medical ones. It is also greater than the one found in both types of texts in Croatian.

As far as negative adjectives are concerned their number is lower than that of positive. The negative adjectives used in Croatian linguistics texts are: *ambivalentan* (‘ambivalent’), *nepotpun* (‘incomplete’), *zahtjevan* (‘demanding’), *nezapažen* (‘unnoticed’), *složen* (2) (‘complex’), *težak* (2) (‘difficult’). The negative adjectives used in Croatian medical texts are: *težak* (8) (‘difficult’), *drastičan* (2) (‘drastic’), *opasan* (2) (‘dangerous’), *kompleksan* (2) (‘complex’), *neadekvatan* (‘inadequate’), *nedovoljan* (‘insufficient’), *negativan* (‘negative’), *nepoželjan* (‘undesirable’), *nezamisliv* (‘unthinkable’), *oskudan* (‘scant/meagre’), *složen* (‘complex’). From this, it can be noticed that the ones used in the medical texts are stronger than the ones used in the linguistics texts. The situation in English is reverse. The most frequent negative adjectives used in English linguistics papers are: *difficult* (15), *complicated* (10), *controversial* (9), *problematic* (8), *limited* (6), *trivial* (5). There are too many negative adjectives used in linguistics papers in English to list them all, but some of the strongest are: *god-forsaken*, *gory*, *mundane*, *naïve*, *nebulous*, *radical*, *sceptical*, *severe*, *spurious*, *ungrounded*, *vexing*, *weak* (2), *wrong* (3). The negative adjectives used in medical papers in English include: *challenging*, *disappointing*, *excessive*, *notorious*, *substandard*, *problematic*, *devastating*, *questionable*, *poor*, *flawed*, *inadequate*. Although these are strong too, they are still less so than the ones singled out in the case of linguistics papers in English.

The results concerning the modification of adjectives by adverbs laid out in Table 10 reveal that Croatian is more prone to modification. In English, regardless of the domain, the percentage of total evaluative adjectives that are modified by adverbs is slightly lower than 21%. In Croatian the percentage of total adjectives modified by adverbs in linguistics articles is 37%, and in medical articles 62% (almost three times as high as either type in English). The nature of modification used in the two languages is also revealing. In Croatian, the modification is exclusively of the intensification type, while in English there is also downtoning in both linguistics and medicine (e.g. ‘*slightly*’), and some neutral modification in linguistics (e.g. ‘*potentially*’).



Table 10: Modification of adjectives by adverbs

CROATIAN			ENGLISH		
Linguistics:			Linguistics:		
No.	percentage		No.	percentage	
48	37.3%		120	20.8333%	
Type of modification	n.	percentage	Type of modification	n.	percentage
intensification	48	37.3%	intensification	80	13.89%
downtoning	0	0	downtoning	36	6.25%
neutral	0	0	neutral	4	0.6944%
Medicine:			Medicine:		
n.	percentage		n.	percentage	
66	62.264%		30	20.689%	
Type of modification	n.	percentage	Type of modification	n.	percentage
intensification	66	62.264%	intensification	19	13.1%
downtoning	0	0	downtoning	11	7.586%

## 6. Discussion

When we set out to conduct this study, we expected that the papers in Croatian would contain a higher number of evaluative adjectives, since no sources explicitly warn against their usage, and we expected to encounter relatively few evaluative adjectives in scientific papers in English, especially in the ones from the domain of medicine. We were quite surprised to discover that in fact, English papers on linguistics contain more evaluative adjectives than the ones in Croatian (English linguistics texts contain 3 times more evaluative adjectives per 1,000 words than the ones in Croatian). The fact that all the linguistics papers in English contain evaluative adjectives, while out of 40 linguistics papers in Croatian 14 do not contain them, is also revealing. In this regard, our initial expectations were wrong – the results we obtained for linguistics papers were opposite to what we predicted. As far as medical papers are concerned, if we look at the general data for all the papers there are no significant differences between the two languages. However, if we look at review papers, we notice that all such papers in English contain evaluative adjectives, while half of review papers (that is, six papers) in Croatian contain no evaluative adjectives. With respect to general medical papers, the situation is somewhat different. Although there are papers in both languages that do not con-



tain evaluative adjectives, the number of such papers is double in Croatian. But, if we compare the number of evaluative adjectives per 1,000 words in general medical papers, we discover that the Croatian ones contain 1.5 times more evaluative adjectives per 1,000 words. It would thus seem that our initial assumption that the medical papers in Croatian would contain more evaluative adjectives than the ones in English was correct.

So, in this segment of our research, we obtained somewhat contradictory results, in the sense that the use of evaluative adjectives in medical papers was in line with what we expected to find, while the use of such adjectives in linguistics papers was exactly the opposite. Despite the fact that there are many handbooks on how to write scientific papers in English and that all of them advise authors to avoid the use of evaluative adjectives, it would seem that linguists who write in English interpret this advice rather loosely. On the other hand, linguists who write in Croatian, despite the lack of handbooks which explicitly deal with the issue of evaluative adjectives, seem to use them more sparingly.

Our second main expectation was related to the use of attributive and predicative adjectives in texts in English – based on the literature we reviewed we expected to find that the texts dealing with linguistics use mostly predicative evaluative adjectives, and the ones dealing with medicine mostly attributive evaluative adjectives. Our findings reveal that there is actually no significant difference between the two text types when it comes to the position of the adjectives. In both text types the majority of evaluative adjectives appear in the attributive position (63.2% in linguistics and 66% in medical texts). Thus, in our corpus, there is no significant difference between the representatives of the ‘soft’ and the ‘hard’ sciences with respect to the position of the evaluative adjectives. This would seem to indicate that the authors of English medical papers are not immune to using evaluative adjectives in the predicative position (in which they express emotion, attitude and judgement to a greater degree compared to the attributive position), while the authors of linguistics papers tend to choose attributive adjectives which intensify the meaning of the noun more frequently than would be expected based on the information presented in the literature. We can only speculate about the reasons that lie behind such a distribution of attributive and predicative adjectives in these two types of papers, but the most likely candidates seem to be the wish to refute previous findings and prove that their research is state of the art (and as a result resorting to the use of predicative adjectives) in the case of the authors of medical papers, and the wish to sound ‘as scientific as possible’ and thus distance themselves from the label of ‘soft sciences’ (and as a result trying to use attributive adjectives more frequently than the predicative ones) in the case of the authors of linguistics papers.



The only significant difference that could be found when the differences between paper types were analysed using ANOVA was that English Linguistics papers contain a significantly greater number of evaluative adjectives both in the attributive and the predicative position compared to the other three paper types, but this was to be expected since this paper type contains the greatest overall number of evaluative adjectives. Hence, although we expected that the number of predicative adjectives in English medical texts would be negligible, that was not the case. In addition to this, despite the fact that handbooks advise against using the prop subject '*it*' to introduce predicative subjects, authors do use it, although not extensively (3.3% of total adjectives in linguistics texts, 2.8% of total adjectives in medical texts).

Since the comparative and superlative forms of adjectives are inherently stronger than the positive form of the adjective, we decided to also take a look at them. One would expect to see superlatives in academic discourse only very rarely. On the other hand, one would expect to see comparatives in academic discourse more commonly since one of the main tasks of scientific work is to compare phenomena. Contrary to this, our findings revealed that superlatives are more frequent than comparatives in all text types, except for linguistics texts in English. In addition to this, the authors of medical texts in both languages are more prone to the use of superlatives than the authors of linguistics texts. This would seem to indicate that the authors of medical texts tend to qualify phenomena, procedures, etc. in more absolute terms, which is probably the consequence of the fact that they are expected to come up with the best possible quantifiable solution (e.g. the most efficient procedure, the cheapest treatment, the least invasive procedure, etc.). The ANOVA analysis of paper types revealed that there are no significant differences in the number of superlatives per paper in English, regardless of whether they are papers on linguistics or medicine, while in the case of comparatives statistically significant differences were found between the English Linguistics papers, on the one hand, and all the other paper types, on the other. Hence, once again our expectations were not confirmed. The only type of papers that seem to behave at least partially in line with what would be expected are English linguistics papers which contain a greater number of comparatives than superlatives, but even they contain a number of superlatives that is not negligible.

The analysis of the distribution of evaluative adjectives by parts of paper has revealed that in all the text types, except in the Croatian medical texts, the greatest percentage of them, as was expected, can be found in the Discussion part. The next segment in which they are most frequent is the Introduction. In Croatian medical texts the situation is reversed – the greatest number of evaluative adjectives appears in the Introduction, followed by the Discussion. The Introduction and the Discus-

sion part of the paper are the parts in which one would expect to see evaluative adjectives, because the Introduction usually consists of an overview of previous research, which always calls for evaluation of other people's work, and the purpose of the Discussion is to convince the reader that the researcher's findings are valid. The only surprising finding with respect to this is that some authors of texts in English (both in the domain of linguistics and in the domain of medicine) seem to use evaluative adjectives even in the section titled 'Experiment', both in the Methods and the Results subsections. This section of the paper is supposed to be devoid of any evaluative expressions and we did not expect to find any evaluative adjectives in it. It would seem that some authors feel the need to justify their choice of certain procedures or methods and emphasise certain findings using the means that are commonly used in the Discussion section of the paper. Examples of the use of evaluative adjectives in this section include: *results hold the greatest promise, treatment had a drastic effect, still more controversial, the degree of similarity was striking*. As may be noticed, the adjectives the authors chose to use are quite strong, and the structures in which they are used employ verbs which express a great degree of certainty (almost absolute certainty in all the listed cases). Therefore, our expectations with respect to the distribution of evaluative adjectives by parts of paper were partially confirmed – the greatest number of such adjectives appeared in the parts of paper where one would expect to find them. However, we also found examples of such adjectives in the sections pertaining to the experiment, where one would not expect to find them.

As far as the nature of evaluative adjectives used in the papers included in our corpora is concerned, positive adjectives are dominant in all four types of texts. The variety of positive adjectives in English linguistics texts is greater than in the other three types of texts. However, it would seem that the authors of medical papers in Croatian and linguistics papers in English tend to be somewhat more critical of other scientists' work since papers that belong to these two types contain more negative adjectives (almost 20 percent of the total number of adjectives used in these papers is negative). It is also interesting to note that the negative adjectives used in linguistics papers written in English tend to be strong and sometimes surprising (e.g. *god-forsaken, gory, naïve*, etc.). Although the finding that English linguistics texts contain more negative adjectives compared to English medical texts comes as no great surprise since it is expected that linguistics texts would use more evaluative adjectives and use them more freely, it is somewhat surprising that the situation is reverse in Croatian. That is, it would seem that the authors of medical texts (i.e. texts which belong to 'hard' science) are more openly critical towards other researchers and their work than the authors of linguistics texts (i.e. texts which be-



long to 'soft' science). This might again be related to the fact that some authors of such papers feel the need to justify their choice of particular procedures and methods and present their findings in a strong positive light and believe that the best way to achieve this is to openly criticise previous approaches and findings. This is further compounded by the fact that no explicit rules for scientific writing in Croatian exist and the fact that the majority of Croatian scientists working in the field of medicine publish in English, which means that the number of medical papers in Croatian that the authors can use as templates/role-models is relatively limited.

In conclusion, our expectations with respect to the use of positive and negative adjectives were partially confirmed. The number of positive evaluative adjectives was greater than that of negative. However the negative evaluative adjectives used were quite strong, which is not in line with the recommendations for the use of evaluative adjectives in scientific writing outlined in the Introduction.

Finally, since it contributes to the evaluative quality of adjectives, we also looked at the premodification of adjectives by adverbs (or, intensifying particles, as they are termed in contemporary grammars of the Croatian language, as already mentioned in the Introduction). Since adverbs are one of the most prominent and economical linguistic means of modifying adjectives we focused on instances in which they intensify, or downtone, the meaning of the adjective. In general, premodification by adverbs was more common in texts in Croatian, particularly in medical texts. All the examples of premodification by adverbs in texts in Croatian were of the intensification type, while texts in English also contained downtoners. This distribution of results is somewhat surprising in the sense that the handbooks on writing scientific papers in English usually advise that if one chooses to use an evaluative adjective it is recommended that such an adjective be modified by a downtoner, which was, more often than not, not the case with the papers included in our English corpora. Equally surprising was the finding that no examples of downtoners were found in any of the Croatian texts. This pattern of use could be the result of a variety of reasons such as: pragmatics (politeness strategies), size of the scientific community, example set by papers that are used as role-models, the age and the experience of the author(s), etc. The extent to which the listed reasons (as well as those that might be identified by future detailed research) might influence the use of adverbs with adjectives could be an interesting topic for further research.





## 7. Conclusions

Our research of the corpora of scientific texts in Croatian and English from the domains of medicine and linguistics was conducted with the goal of determining the tendencies in the use of evaluative adjectives in: a) two languages and b) two domains of science, one of which is representative of the ‘hard’ sciences, and the other of the ‘soft’ sciences. We decided to focus on adjectives for several reasons. First of all, this is a word category that is listed among the most prominent ones when the linguistic means for expression of evaluation in English are discussed. Next, their use in academic discourse in English has been explicitly described in all the relevant handbooks, while in Croatian literature, which in general does not have an abundance of handbooks on style, adjectives are completely neglected. And finally, in both languages adjectives in most cases occupy the same positions in a clause/sentence – the attributive and the predicative – and are premodified, i.e. intensified and downtoned, by the same linguistic means.

On the basis of descriptions and prescriptions found in the handbooks on scientific discourse in the English language we expected that evaluative adjectives would be relatively infrequent in scientific texts in English. At the same time, we expected to observe a more frequent use of such adjectives in the texts in Croatian since the handbooks on style in Croatian do not consider them to be a category that deserves attention when discussing what is acceptable in academic discourse.

However, our results reveal that the texts in English contain more evaluative adjectives than the ones in Croatian, which becomes especially obvious when we compare the texts from the domain of linguistics: the tendency towards the use of evaluative adjectives in linguistics texts in Croatian is significantly lower than in the texts in English.

Our corpora in English do not exhibit any significant differences in the percentage of adjectives used in the attributive and the predicative position, although, based on previous studies, we expected to find a greater percentage of attributive adjectives in medical texts and a greater percentage of predicative adjectives in linguistics texts. We should point out that that the difference in the position of the adjective was considered to be important only in the case of English language. In English the position of the adjective has a distinct semantic impact on the utterance. On the other hand, the difference in the position seems to have no significant consequences for the meaning of the utterance in Croatian.

In all corpora the superlatives are more frequent than the comparatives. They seem to be more frequent in medical texts due to the fact that the research in this



domain is usually carried out with the goal of finding the best possible solution which is quantifiable in terms of efficiency.

The greatest percentage of evaluative adjectives can be found in the Discussion and Introduction sections of the papers. It would seem that they are primarily used to refer to the results of one's own research (Discussion) or to the state of the art in one's domain of research (Introduction).

In all our corpora the use of positive evaluative adjectives is dominant over the use of negative ones. It should be noted that the linguistic texts in English show the greatest diversity with respect to the nature of positive adjectives used. When it comes to the negative evaluative adjectives it may be concluded that the linguistic texts in English and the medical texts in Croatian seem to show a greater tendency towards criticising previous research and the current state of affairs in their respective domains.

Premodification of adjectives by adverbs is more frequent in Croatian, especially in the texts from the domain of medicine, and is exclusively of the intensification type, while texts in English also contain some downtoners.

Finally, it may be concluded that medical texts in both languages seem to follow the rules on the use of evaluative adjectives (as prescribed for English) more stringently. The texts in Croatian show a greater tendency towards premodification. Contrary to our expectations regarding the texts in English, it seems that the authors of linguistics texts use a greater number of attributive evaluative adjectives than the predicative ones, while the percentage of predicative adjectives in medical texts is not negligible. In general, it seems that the authors predominantly use positive evaluative adjectives, and the authors of the texts in English seem to employ more diversified selection of adjectives compared to the authors of the texts in Croatian.

## References:

- Babić, Stjepan, & Brozović, Dalibor, & Moguš, Milan, & Pavešić, Slavko, & Škarić, Ivo, & Težak, Stjepko. 1991. *Povijesni pregled, glasovi i oblici hrvatskoga književnog jezika – Nacrti za gramatiku*. Zagreb: HAZU and Nakladni zavod Globus.
- Barić, Eugenija, & Lončarić, Mijo, & Malić, Dragica, & Pavešić, Slavko, & Peti, Mirko, & Zečević, Vesna, & Znika, Marija. 1997. *Hrvatska gramatika*. Zagreb: Školska knjiga.
- Biber, Douglas, & Johnsson, Stig, & Leech, Geoffrey, & Conrad, Susan, & Finegan, Edward. 1999. *Longman grammar of spoken and written English*. Harlow: Pearson



Education.

- Carter, Ronald, & McCarthy, Michael. 2006. *Cambridge grammar of English: A comprehensive guide*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Crompton, Peter. 1997. Hedging in academic writing: Some theoretical problems. *English for Specific Purposes* 16(4). 271–287.
- Gačić, Milica. 2002. *Pisanje i objavljivanje znanstvenih i stručnih radova*. Zagreb: Ministarstvo unutarnjih poslova Republike Hrvatske.
- Giannoni, Davide Simone. 2011. From ‘our methods apply equally well’ to ‘the model does a very poor job’: A corpus based study of academic value-marking. In *Proceedings of the Corpus Linguistics Conference CL 2011*. Birmingham, 20-22 July 2011. <http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/documents/college-artslaw/corpus/conference-archives/2011/Paper-196.pdf>.
- Kalogjera, Damir. 2009. Iz diglosijske perspektive. In Granić, Jagoda (ed.), *Jezična politika i jezična stvarnost/Language policy and language reality*, 551–558. Zagreb: Hrvatsko društvo za primijenjenu lingvistiku.
- Koutsantoni, Dimitra. 2004. Attitude, certainty and allusions to common knowledge in scientific research articles. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes* 3. 163–182.
- Marković, Ivan. 2010. *Uvod u pridjev*. Zagreb: Disput.
- Matešić, Mihaela. 2014. Pisani akademski diskurs i tradicionalna normativnost. In Stojić, Aneta, & Brala-Vukanović, Marija, & Matešić, Mihaela (eds.), *Priručnik za prevoditelje: prilog teoriji i praksi*, 339–354. Rijeka: Filozofski fakultet, Sveučilište u Rijeci.
- Oraić-Tolić, Dubravka. 2011. *Akademsko pismo*. Zagreb: Naklada Ljevak.
- Raguž, Dragutin. 1997. *Praktična hrvatska gramatika*. Zagreb: Medicinska naklada.
- Nishina, Yasunori. 2010. *Evaluative meanings and disciplinary values: A corpus-based study of adjective patterns in research articles in applied linguistics and business studies*. University of Birmingham: PhD Thesis.
- Quirk, Randolph, & Greenbaum, Sidney, & Leech, Geoffrey, & Svartvik, Jan. 1994. *A comprehensive grammar of the English language*. London: Longman.
- Silić, Josip, & Pranjković, Ivo. 2005. *Gramatika hrvatskoga jezika*. Zagreb: Školska knjiga.
- Radden, Günther, & Dirven, Rene. 2007. *Cognitive English grammar*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Tutin, Agnes. 2010. Evaluative adjectives in academic writing in the humanities and social sciences. In Lores-Sanz, Rosa, & Mur-Duenas, Pilar, & Lafuente-Millan, Enrique (eds.), *Constructing interpersonal: Multiple perspectives on written academic genres*, 219–242. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Van Valin, Robert D. 2001. *An introduction to syntax*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.



- Van Valin, Robert D. 2005. *Exploring the syntax-semantics interface*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Wallwark, Adrian 2011. *English for writing research papers*. New York: Springer.
- Wilkenson, Antoinette M. 1991. *The scientist's handbook for writing papers and dissertations*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.
- Zelenika, Ratko. 1998. *Metodologija i tehnologija izrade znanstvenog djela*. Rijeka: Ekonomski fakultet u Rijeci.

## Appendix:

Link to the list of papers included in corpora: <http://www.ffri.hr/~mmatesic/>

## Authors' addresses:

Mihaela Matešić  
Filozofski fakultet  
Sveučilišna avenija 4  
HR-51000 Rijeka  
E-mail: [mmatesic@ffri.hr](mailto:mmatesic@ffri.hr)

Anita Memišević  
Filozofski fakultet  
Sveučilišna avenija 4  
HR-51000 Rijeka  
E-mail: [amemisevic@ffri.hr](mailto:amemisevic@ffri.hr)

## PRAGMATIKA PRIDJEVA U AKADEMSKOME DISKURSU: OD KVALIFIKACIJE DO INTENZIFIKACIJE

U akademskome diskursu zamjetne su određene komunikacijske i jezične konvencije koje su utvrđene, s jedne strane, za taj diskursni tip uopće, a s druge strane, za taj diskursni tip u okviru pojedinoga jezika. Među spomenutim konvencijama jedna je od najnaglašenijih ona koja akademskome diskursu postavlja kao cilj objektivnost izraza. U postizanju toga cilja mogu se primijeniti različite strategije, a opisuju se u obliku poželjnih načina izražavanja (koji pridonose objektivnosti) i onih manje poželjnih/nepoželjnih (koji odmažu postizanju objektivnosti). Autor se znanstvenoga teksta tako neprestano nalazi pred izazovom koji pred njega stavlja, s jedne strane, (retorička) potreba za uvjeravanjem čitatelja/akademske zajednice u njegove stavove, mišljenje, metode, rezultate istraživanja i zaključke, a s druge zahtjev za objektivnošću izraza kao bitnoga obilježja diskursnoga tipa kojem njegov tekst treba pripadati. Među zahvatima u tekstu pomoću kojih će se povećati stupanj objektivnos-



ti izražavanja nerijetko se savjetuje smanjivanje uporabe evaluativnih pridjeva i njihovih modifikatora jer oni izravno utječu na izrazno pojačavanje tvrdnje. Naime, „jačinu“ ili „težinu“ tvrdnji u znanstvenome tekstu trebaju implicitno davati rezultati istraživanja i znanstveni dokazi, a ne eksplicitni izrazi poput onih koji sadrže upravo evaluativne pridjeve (naprimjer: *velika važnost toga istraživanja, dalo je iznimne rezultate*) ili i njihove modifikatore (naprimjer: *ono što je nama ovdje posebno zanimljivo, posebno neravnopravni, posebice je to važno, takvi su prozni poslanički tekstovi vrlo važni za oblikovanje, imao je iznimno dobru recepciju, većina prije završenih skulptura izrazito je statična, povezuje ih izrazito samosvojno intelektualno polazište*). Kako bi se istražila uporaba evaluativnih pridjeva i njihovih modifikatora u znanstvenim tekstovima, u radu se analiziraju tekstovi iz različitih znanstvenih područja. Uspoređuju se pritom tekstovi na hrvatskome i na engleskome jeziku kako bi se potvrdila ili opovrgnula pretpostavka o različitim praksama u tim dvama jezicima. Naime pravila o pisanju znanstvenih radova na engleskome jeziku propisuju, između ostaloga, iznimno ograničenu uporabu evaluativnih izraza općenito, pa tako i evaluativnih pridjeva. Usporedba učestalosti uporabe evaluativnih pridjeva te prirode pridjeva koji se javljaju u znanstvenim radovima na hrvatskome jeziku s onima na engleskome jeziku daje uvid u različitosti dviju praksa. Rezultati ovoga istraživanja pokazuju da, suprotno našim očekivanjima, analizirani znanstveni tekstovi na engleskome jeziku sadrže veći broj evaluativnih pridjeva negoli istovrsni tekstovi na hrvatskom te da je, općenito, inventar takvih pridjeva u tekstovima na engleskom raznovrsniji.

**Ključne riječi:** pragmatika; evaluativni pridjev; znanstveni tekst; akademski diskurs; intenzifikacija.