

Melanie Andresen & Heike Zinsmeister  
[melanie.andresen@uni-hamburg.de](mailto:melanie.andresen@uni-hamburg.de)

---

**STYLISTIC DIFFERENCES BETWEEN  
CLOSELY RELATED DISCIPLINES:  
METATEXT IN LINGUISTICS AND LITERARY  
STUDIES**

# Style in related disciplines

- German Studies = Linguistics + Literary Studies
- But: Scholars perceive the two disciplines as (very!) distinct.
- Students are expected to adapt to writing conventions of both disciplines.
- How do academic texts of Literary Studies and Linguistics differ stylistically?

# Data

- 60 PhD theses, 30 each from Linguistics and Literary Studies
- in German
- plain text
- citations, examples etc. extracted

# N-gram analysis

- data-driven approach
- n-gram = sequence of  $n$  elements, e.g. words

---

*<s> I will go hiking. </s>*

---

unigrams: *<s>, I, will, go, hiking, </s>*

bigrams: *<s> I, I will, will go, go hiking, hiking </s>*

trigrams: *<s> I will, I will go, will go hiking, go hiking </s>*

...

...

---

# N-gram analysis

- data-driven approach
- n-gram = sequence of  $n$  elements, e.g. words
- Which n-grams differ in frequency between the corpora?
- measure for comparison: Log Likelihood (Dunning 1993)

# N-gram analysis

Example: Trigrams that are more frequent in Linguistics:

rank	LLR	German Trigram	English Translation
1	261.46	in Bezug auf	with regard to
2	236.23	der vorliegenden Arbeit	the present text
3	233.30	<s> bei der	<s> At the
4	203.39	in der Regel	generally speaking
5	157.66	in der vorliegenden	in the present
6	156.06	Rahmen der vorliegenden	course of the present
7	155.72	Bezug auf die	regard to the
8	153.20	im Hinblick auf	with regard to
9	150.47	die Ergebnisse der	the results of
10	144.92	<s> bei den	<s> At the

# N-gram analysis

N-grams related to metatext that are more frequent in Linguistics:

size	rank	German n-gram	English translation
2	10	der vorliegenden	the present
2	19	in Kapitel	in chapter
3	2	der vorliegenden Arbeit	the present text
3	27	im Folgenden	in the following
4	1	im Rahmen der vorliegenden	in the present
4	11	<s> zusammenfassend lässt sich	summarizing it can be [...]
5	1	<s> im folgenden werden die	in the following [...] will be

# N-gram analysis

## Text comments

- are more frequent in Linguistics than in Literary Studies.
- emerged as relevant from a data-driven analysis:
- are an important difference between the disciplines.
- are realized in a formulaic way.



# Previous Work

## Typological classification

- Fandrych and Graefen (2002):  
text comments
- Hyland (2005, p. 49):  
interactive metadiscourse > frame markers
- Ädel (2006, p. 20):  
metatext > text-oriented metadiscourse

## Previous Work

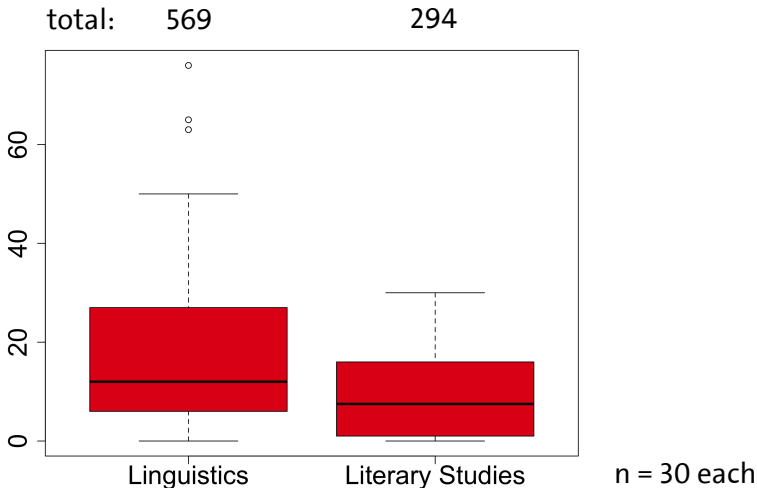
- Afros and Schryer (2009) compare promotional (meta)discourse:
  - more pathos appeals in Literary Studies
  - ‘transcending borders with literary genres’ (ibid., p. 63)
- Hyland (2005, p. 57): ‘the more discursive “soft” fields employed more metadiscourse overall’
  - but no clear tendency for frame markers

# Research Questions

- Are there significant differences between the use of metadiscourse of Literary Studies and Linguistics?
- What additional insights can be gained by inspecting instances in detail?
- selected examples:
  - *(im) Folgenden* (in the following)
  - *zusammenfassend* (summarizing)

im Folgenden (in the following)

## Frequency of *im Folgenden*



## Frequency of *im Folgenden*

	mean	sd
Linguistics	18.97	20.17
Literary Studies	9.80	8.95

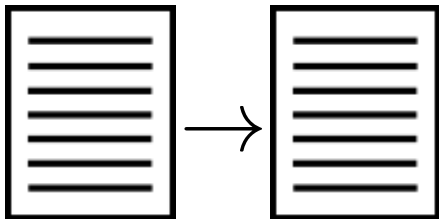
- t-test:  $p = 0.028$
  - Wilcoxon rank-sum test:  $p = 0.080$
  - Cohen's  $d$  (effect size): 0.59
- big difference in means but high variance

# Metatextual vs. intertextual

metatextual



intertextual



(e.g. Ädel 2006, p. 28)

# Metatextual vs. intertextual

## metatextual

In the following, possible reasons for these differences will be addressed.

Im Folgenden wird auf mögliche Gründe für diese Unterschiede eingegangen.

(Lin\_Dui\_13)

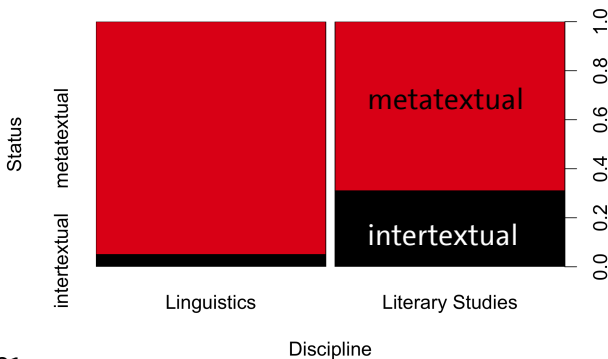
## intertextual

In the following d'Holbach explains [...]

Im Folgenden führt d'Holbach aus, dass [...] (Lit\_Kob\_25)



# Metatextual vs. intertextual



$\chi^2: p < 0.001$

sample, n = 200

## Modal verbs

- frequent in German text comments (in comparison to English, see Fandrych and Graefen 2002, pp. 28-33)
  - most frequent: *sollen*, which ‘indicates that the impetus for an action is external, i. e. an agent is required to carry out the will of another person or an institution.’ (ibid., p. 32)
- hedging strategy

## Modal verbs

### *in the following* without modal verb

In the following, only Shakespeare's *The Tempest* will be picked out.

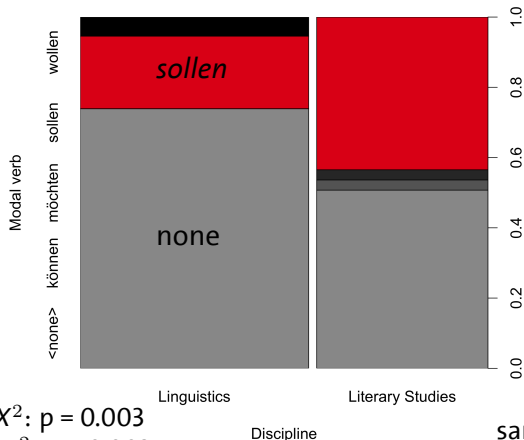
Im Folgenden wird lediglich Shakespeares *The Tempest* herausgegriffen. (Lit\_Jen\_19)

### *in the following* with modal verb

This shall be determined more closely in the following.

Diese **soll** im Folgenden genauer eruiert werden. (Lit\_Kie\_23)

# Modal verbs



none vs. other:  $X^2$ :  $p = 0.003$

*sollen* vs. other:  $X^2$ :  $p = 0.002$

## Most frequent verbs

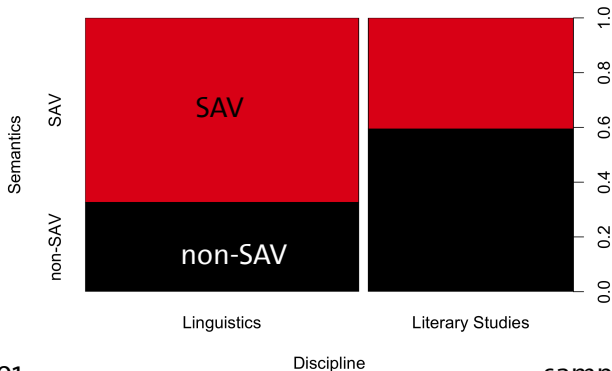
Verb	Translation	Ling.	Lit.
eingehen auf	go into sth.	<b>10</b>	1
untersuchen	investigate	3	<b>10</b>
darstellen	depict	<b>8</b>	3
vorstellen	present	<b>7</b>	2
zeigen	show	6	5
erläutern	explain	5	1
betrachten	consider	4	4

→ hypothesis: more speech act verbs in Linguistics

## Speech act verbs (SAV)

- hypothesis: more speech act verbs in Linguistics
- theoretical argument: clearer distinction between investigation and text in Linguistics
- definition of SAV: listed in either Harras et al. (2007) or GermaNet (Hamp and Feldweg 1997)

# Speech act verbs (SAV)



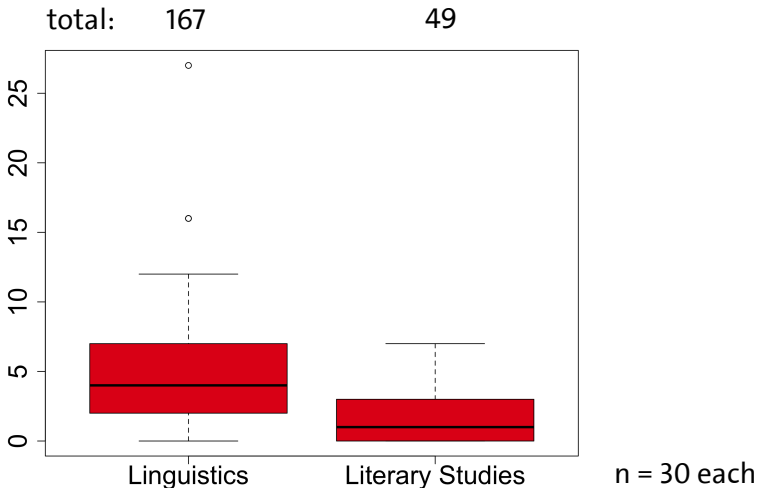
$\chi^2: p = 0.001$

sample, n = 161

zusammenfassend (summarizing)



## Frequency of *zusammenfassend*

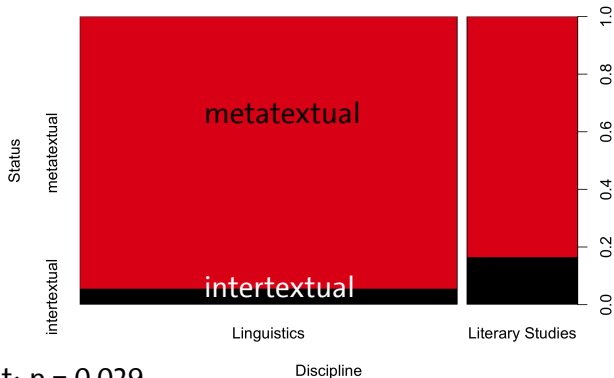


## Frequency of *zusammenfassend*

	mean	sd
Linguistics	5.60	5.80
Literary Studies	1.94	8.95

- t-test:  $p = 0.0011$
  - Wilcoxon rank sum test:  $p = 0.0002$
  - Cohen's  $d$  (effect size): 0.91
- significant difference and large effect size

# Metatextual vs. intertextual



Fisher's test:  $p = 0.029$

$n = 216$

## Most frequent verbs

Verb	Translation	Ling.	Lit.
festhalten	record	56	10
sagen	say	19	11
feststellen	determine	12	2
darstellen	depict	11	1
...	...	...	...
	total	154	41

→ very stable pattern, esp. in Linguistics

# Conclusions

# Summary

- Candidates for metatext can be identified automatically, but should be inspected in detail.
- Linguistics make more use of metatext than Literary Studies.
- Literary Studies use more modal verbs in metatext than Linguistics.
- Linguistics uses more speech act verbs (in metatext).

## Possible Explanations

- different aesthetic demands (see also Afros and Schryer 2009; and results related to article titles by Haggan 2004)
- less analytical research process in Literary Studies
  - less subdividable into distinct steps
  - less universal research steps
- stronger influence of the English writing culture on Linguistics (see discussion in Fandrych and Graefen 2002)

Thank you for your attention!



# References I

- Ädel, Annelie (2006). *Metadiscourse in L1 and L2 English*. Studies in Corpus Linguistics 24. Amsterdam: Benjamins.
- Afros, Elena and Catherine F. Schryer (2009). 'Promotional (Meta)Discourse in Research Articles in Language and Literary Studies'. In: *English for Specific Purposes* 28.1, pp. 58–68. DOI: 10.1016/j.esp.2008.09.001. (Visited on 06/29/2016).
- Dunning, Ted (1993). 'Accurate Methods for the Statistics of Surprise and Coincidence'. In: *Computational Linguistics* 19.1, pp. 61–74.
- Fandrych, Christian and Gabriele Graefen (2002). 'Text Commenting Devices in German and English Academic Articles'. In: *Multilingua - Journal of Cross-Cultural and Interlanguage Communication* 21.1, pp. 17–43. DOI: 10.1515/mult.2002.002.
- Haggan, Madeline (2004). 'Research Paper Titles in Literature, Linguistics and Science: Dimensions of Attraction'. In: *Journal of Pragmatics* 36.2, pp. 293–317. DOI: 10.1016/S0378-2166(03)00090-0. (Visited on 08/17/2016).
- Hamp, Birgit and Helmut Feldweg (1997). 'GermaNet - a Lexical-Semantic Net for German'. In: pp. 9–15. (Visited on 03/14/2017).
- Harras, Gisela, Kristel Proost, and Edeltraud Winkler (2007). *Handbuch deutscher Kommunikationsverben: Lexikalische Strukturen*. Schriften des Instituts für Deutsche Sprache 10.2. Berlin: De Gruyter.

## References II

---

Hyland, Ken (2005). *Metadiscourse: Exploring Interaction in Writing*. Continuum discourse series. London: Continuum.

Melanie Andresen & Heike Zinsmeister  
[melanie.andresen@uni-hamburg.de](mailto:melanie.andresen@uni-hamburg.de)

---

**STYLISTIC DIFFERENCES BETWEEN  
CLOSELY RELATED DISCIPLINES:  
METATEXT IN LINGUISTICS AND LITERARY  
STUDIES**