

# Report on our trip to China and scientific discussion with Christian Matthiessen

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Vincenzo and Jessica Dheskali

[vincenzo.dheskali@s2015.tu-chemnitz.de](mailto:vincenzo.dheskali@s2015.tu-chemnitz.de)

[jessica.dheskali@phil.tu-chemnitz.de](mailto:jessica.dheskali@phil.tu-chemnitz.de)







## Department of English Academic Staff





# Key Concepts of my Study

clause complex  
(hypotactic/paratactic)  
mood system: modality

*certainly*  
emphasizers

*completely, totally*  
intensifiers

*definitely, surely*  
**boosters**

declarative  
*We are working.*

interrogative  
*Are you working?*

positive polarity  
modality  
negative polarity

or Adjuncts  
+ Metaphorical Extensions?

**modalization**  
(probability/usuality)

modality

**modulation**  
(obligation/proposals)

clustering/  
prosody of  
modality

positioning,  
orientation,  
manifestation

author  
commitment

high  
medium  
low

Explicit Projection

**hedges**  
*possibly, may*

Sayer  
Verbal group

**plausibility shields**  
*I think*

**attribution shields**  
*according to*

**impersonal shields**  
*it is suggested*

**shields**  
*I believe*

**approximators**  
*approximately*

**adaptors**  
*sort of*

**rounders**  
*circa*

direct  
*possibly not*

transferred  
*not possibly*

Circumstantial

**degree**  
*quite, almost+adj.*

**limitation**  
*partly, almost+verb*

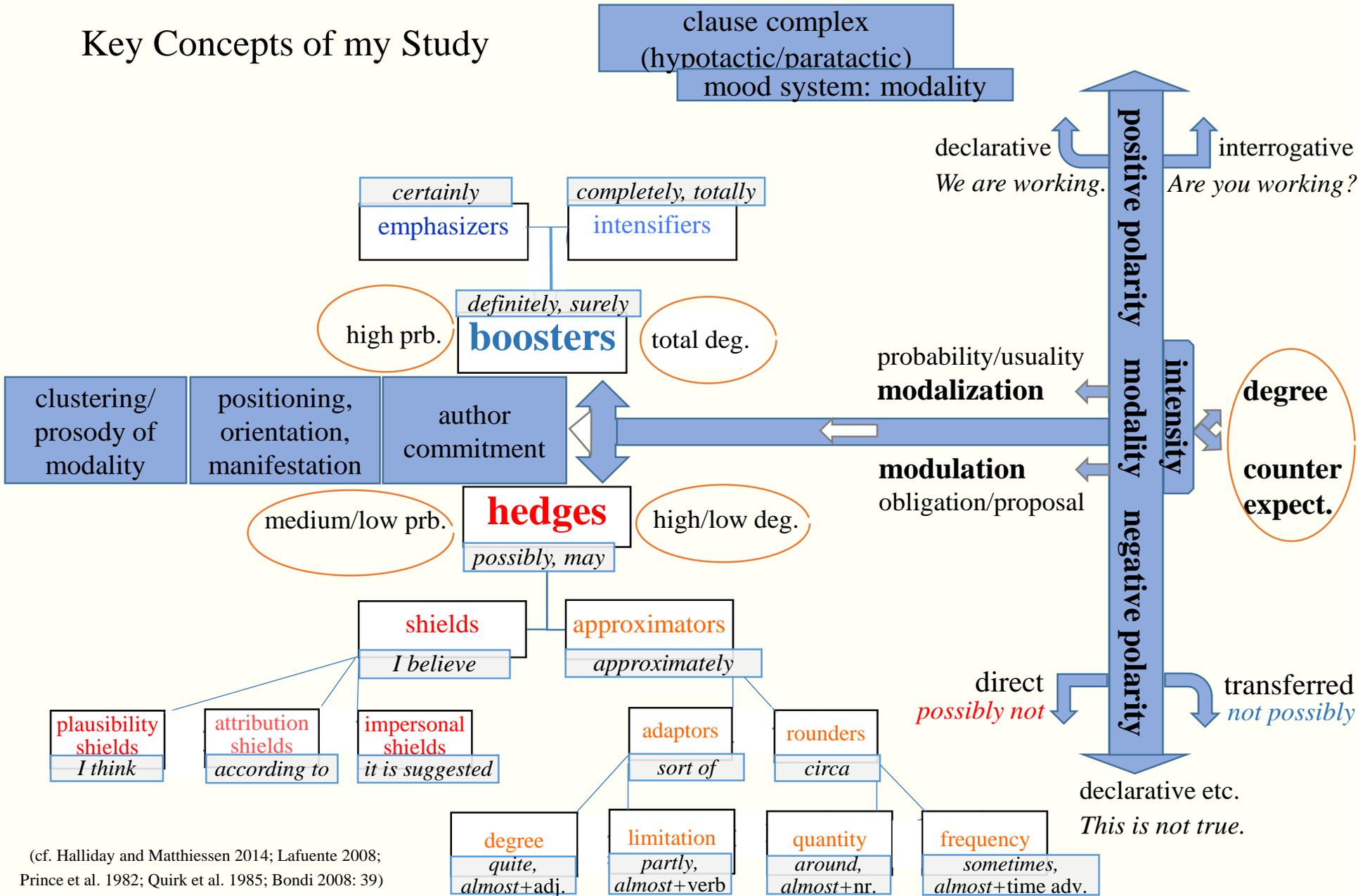
**quantity**  
*around, almost+nr.*

**frequency**  
*sometimes, almost+time adv.*

declarative etc.  
*This is not true.*

Experiential

# Key Concepts of my Study



(cf. Halliday and Matthiessen 2014; Lafuente 2008; Prince et al. 1982; Quirk et al. 1985; Bondi 2008: 39)

Matthiessen: Modality, the most highly grammaticalized system of the English language

Modal auxiliaries, the most highly grammaticalized category

It is different in other languages, e.g. in relation to evidentiality.

Usuality is not realized explicitly in terms of manifestation.

It is necessary to study similar aspects in tertiary education.

Dheskali: Can modulation and modalization overlap within the same lexeme (e.g. *suggest*), depending on the context? Is there a similar overlap between ideational and interpersonal meaning as well?

Modulation? (+ideational?) proposing/recommending to mention an idea, possible plan, or recommend an action (COD, QEP, FGJSSH)

*It is suggested to the teachers that these habits should be avoided in the classroom and proper use of nonverbal communication be used in order to have great impact on the teaching learning process. (CARE15MML\_7)*

Modalization? (+interpersonal?) communicating an idea or feeling without stating it directly or giving proof (COD)

*"This would perhaps suggest that, for example, that 'Derived VC' is actually an extreme form of 'Net VC' [...]" (Woodhall, 2003: 15).*

*R2 = 0.801972 sugjeron fuqi të lartë shpjeguese e modelit. (CAR14MPE\_19)*

*R2 = 0.801972 suggests a high explanatory power of the model. (my translation)*

## The evolvement of English

Matthiessen: Forms which included the basic idea of “**I** tell **you**” evolved within relational clauses as hedges and boosters (Halliday 1975).

The interpersonal level co-opts ideational elements such as *I think* (originally a verbal ‘**mental**’ clause), *prove* and *I suggest to* extend its realization area.

Dheskali: My results showed that within uncertainty and negotiation, modalization and modulation can overlap within the same lexeme.

Matthiessen: Christie and Derewianka (2008) investigated the Australian scholarly context to find that such a linguistic behavior (interaction, hedging, boosting) started in the secondary school when pupils start to argue and interpret.

Dheskali: Is it possible that manifestation changes according to the syntactic position of the adjunct? Could, for instance, objective implicit adverbs such as *certainly* turn into objective explicit if they are placed in a thematic, final or parenthetical position?

*Obviously, the effect of surface atoms becomes relevant (i.e. appreciable at the macroscopic level) only when the number of surface atoms is not negligible compared to that of the bulk atoms.* (CARE12MPL\_33)

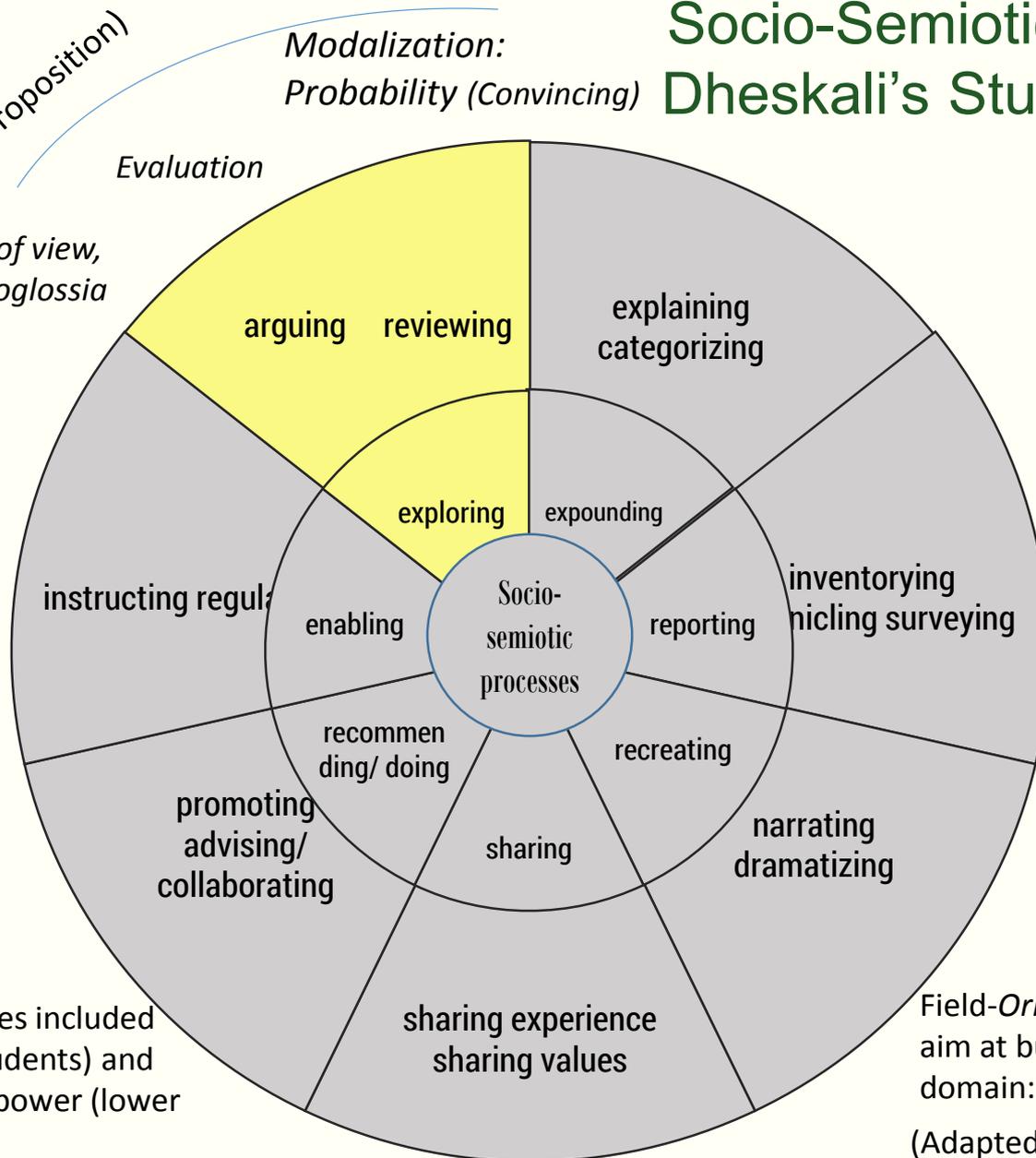
*Whereas in the rum-issue episode comedy is nullified and disintegrated by tragedy, here the two elements coexist, resulting in a definitely estranging effect.* (CIAOE06FML 87)

Matthiessen: Lexemes such as *obviously* and *certainly* have historically developed different uses. Their placement at the beginning of a clause may be interpersonal, but it may also simply be cohesive. Intensity adjuncts, for instance, occur less as clause complex themes.

Lexemes such as *of course* and *indeed* developed from being simply experiential to being interpersonal or even textual. (cf. Halliday and Matthiessen 2014)

# Socio-Semiotic Processes: Dheskali's Study's Purpose

Field(Tenor)-Oriented  
 Tenor-Oriented (Theses)  
 Relationship in Terms of  
 Modality: Persuasion (Proposition)



\*used in my study  
 \*not used in my study

Tenor-Influenced-processes included are institutional roles (students) and vertical distance roles of power (lower status)

Field-Oriented-processes (theses) aim at building field (experiential domain: subject matter, topic)  
 (Adapted from Matthiessen 2010)

Dheskali:

Tenor-Influenced    BTP   BA   MTP   MA   PhD   Field-Oriented

Figure: A 'general' indication of different degrees of contextual aspects in the used corpora of student academic writing.

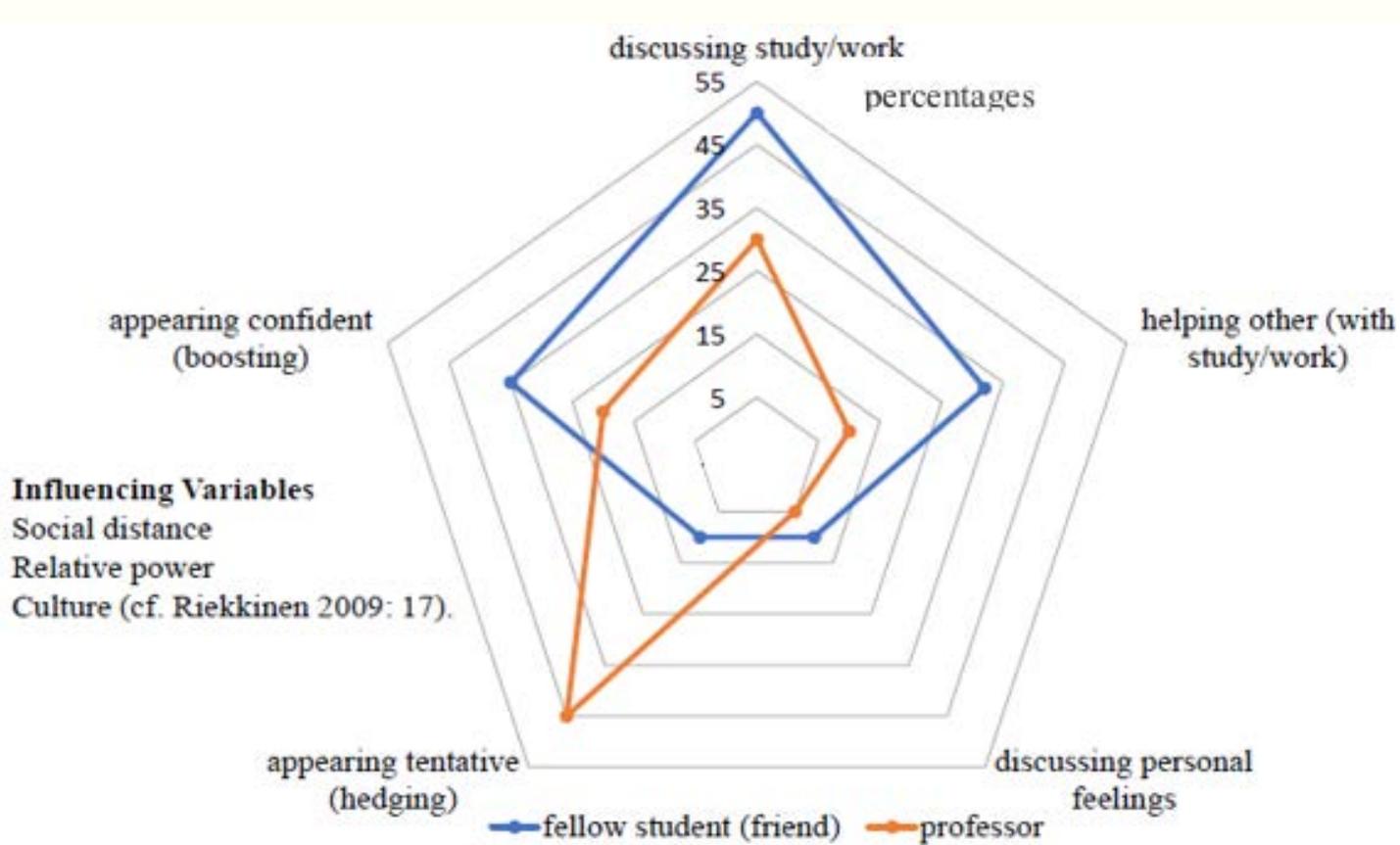


Figure #: A model of tenor relations in the academia and its influence on various (linguistic) activities of students (cf. Argyle and Henderson 1984; Matthiessen 2010; Pulcini & Furiassi 2004; Riekkinen 2009)

## Main Question

Matthiessen: To what extent can your results on modality and intensity help interpreting the language system from a wider perspective?

## Additional Questions

Dheskali: What is the relation of modalization to modulation and even to degree?

What is the relation between interpersonal and ideational meanings concerning different lexemes?

How does the tenor (vertical) roles influence language production (e.g. in the Academia)? What about the degree of orientation/influence by tenor and field in different academic writing genres?

Presenting our department, the REAL Volumes 8 and 12 and the contributions by Schmied, Ya, and Dheskali on the Systemic Functional **Theory** (+“the language family”)



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