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Título	The use of modal verbs in English by languages undergraduate students: a cross-sectional study
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Upon entering college, proficiency in writing becomes essential as it constitutes a core aspect of academic endeavors (HYLAND, 2009). The challenge of academic English composition for Brazilian university students emerges as they grapple with the growing demand to consume and produce scholarly knowledge in this language (GARDNER, 2012). Modal verbs present unique difficulties due to their multifaceted nature of forms, meanings, and functions (SHAN, 2021). To the best of our knowledge, very few studies have been conducted regarding the use of modals by Brazilian undergraduate students (VIANA, 2008; TENUTA; OLIVEIRA; ORFANÓ, 2015). This corpus-based investigation aims to examine the development of the use of modal verbs among undergraduate Language students across consecutive semesters. The corpus comprises responses to an IELTS Writing Task 1 prompt from English undergraduates at a Brazilian university from different study years in order to control the task variable and guarantee participants answer the same prompt. To operationalize the research objective, the corpus was divided into two subcorpora: the first encompassing 80 texts (8926 tokens) written by students from English I to English IV, and the second including 79 texts (11635 tokens) produced by students from English V to VIII. The #LancsBox 6.0 software (BREZINA; WEILL-TESSIER; McENERY, 2021) was used to analyze the frequencies of each modal verb and to provide the concordance lines for the interpretation of the meanings of each modal verb according to Biber et al.'s (2022). The results indicate a statistically significant increase in the use of modal verbs between the two groups of students. There is an increase in the use of the modal verb "could" across the groups, as well as variations in meanings. A similar pattern is observed in the use of "may" and "need to", whose meanings also vary when the two groups of students are compared. This study contributes to understanding the trajectory of modal verb usage in the linguistic development of Brazilian university students, shedding light on how these students adapt to academic discourse in English.