Abstract

The law-making environment of the European Union is a very specific language contact setting in which English has been used as the main drafting language since the 2004 round of enlargement. This situation has produced a specific variety of legislative English, namely English Eurolect. Although its most striking characteristic is the presence of specific EU-related vocabulary, there are also notable morpho-syntactic and textual traits, such as differences in modal usage. The English section of the Eurolect Observatory Multilingual Corpus (EOMC) includes an A corpus of EU directives, a B corpus of matching UK national transposition measures and a recently added C corpus of UK domestic legislation that is unrelated to the EU setting. The comparison between A and B has already highlighted significant differences in relation to obligation, permission and prohibition modals (Sandrelli 2018). The present study, based on a mixture of quantitative data (obtained via Wordsmith Tools 6.0) and qualitative observations, aims to obtain a more fine-grained view of such differences by adding the analysis of the C corpus of domestic legislation.