

**On deontic modality, directivity, and mood:
The case of Dutch *mogen* and *moeten***

Abstract:

The aim of the talk is to achieve a better understanding of the nature of deontic modality, and of its relationship with the imperative mood, through a corpus-based analysis of the Dutch modals *mogen* ‘may’ and *moeten* ‘must’. It is argued (i) that one should distinguish between ‘deontic’ and ‘directive’ uses of the(se) modals, (ii) that deontic modality should be defined, not in the traditional terms of permission and obligation, but in terms of the notions of (degrees of) moral acceptability or necessity; and (iii) that the ‘directive uses’ of the modals (permission and obligation) do not belong under the label of deontic modality, but should be analyzed in speech act terms. The analysis of *mogen* and *moeten* also shows that there is a division of labor between the directive use of the modals and the imperative mood, the choice between them being predominantly a matter of the performativity vs. descriptivity of the directive.