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### **Language variation in American journalism: A corpus-based study**

The present paper is a corpus-based study of the use, frequency and distribution of a wide array of linguistic features in present-day American English of newspaper language. The investigation is based on a corpus of American newspaper texts (8,000,000 words) from *New York Times* and *USA Today* and the linguistic features are based on a functional framework (Biber, 1988; Halliday, 1994) tailored specifically to newspaper objectives. By analyzing a large set of linguistic features relating to the ideational, processing, textual, and personal linguistic functions, the study adopts a descriptive and functional approach. This approach involves two types of stylistic comparison: across newspaper types (quality vs. popular) and newspaper genres (sub-registers of news reportage vs. editorials).

Results of the study indicate similarity as well as variability across the two focal newspapers and their text types in the average length of sentence, average length of words, type-token ratio, pre- and post noun phrase modification, passive constructions, personal pronouns, stance adverbials and speech act verbs. The prestige daily *NYT* consistently exceeds the popular *USA Today* in all the measures of lexical specificity and style difficulty while *USA Today* exceeds in the use of personal pronouns and stance adverbials. Across text types in both newspapers, editorials generally have less speech act verbs, more personal pronouns and more stance adverbials. The paper will also discuss the effect of the communicative situations of the two papers and their text types on the linguistic realization of the selected linguistic features.

Biber, D. (1988). *Variation across speech and writing*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Halliday, M. A. K. (1994). *A short introduction to functional grammar*. 2nd edition. London: Edward Arnold.