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Hedges in academic writing

In academic settings, writers need to be cautious and critical about the claims they make. With the help of the special language, called "hedges", writers can soften their statements to avoid criticism for being radical or overconfident. Consider this example: Children living in poverty do poorly in school. Do all children living in poverty do poorly in school? Definitely not, and no research can collect the data about every child in the world. Also, a socio-economic situation is only one of the factors that can determine children's performance in school. As we can see, the original argument can be easily refuted, and as a result readers might question the writer's credibility. To avoid this situation, the sentence could be modified as: Children living in poverty tend to do poorly in school. Due to adding the verb tend, a writer acknowledges that this is just a tendency and that there are still poor children who are successful in school. Some of the ways to soften claims include the use of: Category Example a) Verbs appear, seem, tend Although the results seem to support previous findings,... b) Modal auxiliaries can, could, may, might This discrepancy could be attributed to... c) Adjectives Expressing probability likely, unlikely, probable, possible It is likely that the experimental group... Expressing quantity some, many, much (also expression one of) Inflation is one of the causes of... d) Adverbs Expressing probability perhaps, possibly, probably, apparently, evidently, presumably, relatively The number of patients will probably increase... Expressing frequency occasionally, sometimes, generally, usually, often, seldom Acceptance rates are generally high... e) Expressions showing writer's distance Based on the limited data..., according to this preliminary study..., in the view of many scholars..., according to some earlier studies... In the view of many applied linguists, phrasal verbs are difficult for language learners to master. The opposite of hedges is "boosters", the language used to emphasize or strengthen points. Boosters are less common in academic writing, but they are used to strengthen the position when writers are absolutely committed to their statements. Some examples of boosters include definitely, absolutely, certainly, and I firmly believe. Practice Underline words and phrases that are used to hedge and boost claims. There are a number of explanations for why musicians have superior cognitive abilities to non-musician controls. First, it is possible that only the more intellectually rigorous people continue with music training once they have been exposed to it. Practicing a musical instrument takes a tremendous amount of discipline. Individuals who are willing to work that hard may also work hard in academic settings, thus improving their cognitive abilities. Secondly, socio-economic class could be playing a role. In a study comparing scholastic aptitude among musicians and non-musicians, Phillips found a difference in the two groups, but once socio-economic class was taken into account the difference nearly disappeared (Phillips, 1976). It is possible that the differences between musicians and non-musicians is actually innate or caused by something not musically related in the environment. Information and practice adapted from Swales, J. M., & Feak, C. B. (2004). Academic writing for graduate students: Essential tasks and skills. Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan Press. – pp.156-164 Extra Resources For more examples of hedges and boosters, see the sections of Manchester Academic Phrasebank: "Being Cautious" – "Describing Trends" – Last updated 10/17/2020 1 In academic writing, it is prudent to be cautious in one's statements so as to distinguish between facts and claims. This is commonly known as "hedging." Hedging is the use of linguistic devices to express hesitation or uncertainty as well as to demonstrate politeness and indirectness. People use hedged language for several different purposes but perhaps the most fundamental are the following: to minimize the possibility of another academic opposing the claims that are being made to conform to the currently accepted style of academic writing to enable the author to devise a politeness strategy where they are able to acknowledge that there may be flaws in their claims Following are a few hedging words and phrases that can be used to achieve this. Introductory verbs – seem, tend, look like, appear to be, think, believe, doubt, be sure, indicate, suggest Certain lexical verbs – believe, assume, suggest Modal Adverbs – possibly, perhaps, conceivably That clauses – It could be the case that..., it might be suggested that..., there is every hope that... Consider the following hedging language examples: It may be said that the commitment to some of the social and economic concepts was less strong than it is now. The lives they chose may seem overly ascetic and self-denying to most women today. In the first statement, the commitment to some of the social and economic concepts was less strong than it is now while in the second one, the lives they chose seem overly ascetic and self-denying to most women today. Related: Need instant academic writing tips on your cell phone? Download the Enago Academy mobile app now! A crucial advantage in academia is that studies are often interpreted from multiple perspectives. This inherent openness leaves room for improvement and development in most fields of study. Think you know what is hedging in academic writing and how to use it? Find out by attempting the exercise here: . By ieltsetc on December 17, 2020 0 This site uses Akismet to reduce spam. Learn how your comment data is processed. Volume 197, 25 July 2015, Pages 600-607 MALÁŠKOVÁ, Martina. Hedges in Academic Writing: Is There a Difference Between Linguistics and Literary Theory Research Articles? Coherence and Cohesion in Spoken and Written Discourse, Third Brno Conference on Linguistics Studies in English, Book of Abstracts. In Coherence and Cohesion in Spoken and Written Discourse, Third Brno Conference on Linguistics Studies in English, Book of Abstracts. 2008. ISBN 978-80-210-4692-4. Další formáty: BibTeX LaTeX RIS @proceedings{816711, author = {Malášková, Martina}, booktitle = {Coherence and Cohesion in Spoken and Written Discourse, Third Brno Conference on Linguistics Studies in English, Book of Abstracts}, keywords = {hedges - linguistics - literary science - evaluative coherence - academic writing}, isbn = {978-80-210-4692-4}, title = {Hedges in Academic Writing: Is There a Difference Between Linguistics and Literary Theory Research Articles? Coherence and Cohesion in Spoken and Written Discourse, Third Brno Conference on Linguistics Studies in English, Book of Abstracts}, year = {2008}} TY - CONFID - 816711AU - Malášková, MartinaPY - 2008TI - Hedges in Academic Writing: Is There a Difference Between Linguistics and Literary Theory Research Articles? Coherence and Cohesion in Spoken and Written Discourse, Third Brno Conference on Linguistics Studies in English, Book of Abstracts.SN - 9788021046924KW - hedges - linguistics - literary science - evaluative coherence - academic writingN2 - This paper introduces the results of the preliminary research carried out as a part of my dissertation thesis and focuses on the description of existing formal and semantic classifications of hedges, examined materials and methods.ER - MALÁŠKOVÁ, Martina. Hedges in Academic Writing: Is There a Difference Between Linguistics and Literary Theory Research Articles? Coherence and Cohesion in Spoken and Written Discourse, Third Brno Conference on Linguistics Studies in English, Book of Abstracts. In Textit[Coherence and Cohesion in Spoken and Written Discourse, Third Brno Conference on Linguistics Studies in English, Book of Abstracts.]. 2008. ISBN–978-80-210-4692-4. Základní údaje Originální název Hedges in Academic Writing: Is There a Difference Between Linguistics and Literary Theory Research Articles? Coherence and Cohesion in Spoken and Written Discourse, Third Brno Conference on Linguistics Studies in English, Book of Abstracts. Název český Vyjadřování nejistoty v akademickém textu: Existuje rozdíl mezi lingvistickými a literárně vědními odbornými články? Koherence a koheze v mluveném a psaném diskurzu. Třetí brněnská konference lingvistických studií v angličtině, Kniha abstraktů Autoři MALÁŠKOVÁ, Martina. Vydání Coherence and Cohesion in Spoken and Written Discourse, Third Brno Conference on Linguistics Studies in English, Book of Abstracts. 2008. Další údaje Typ výsledku Konferenční abstrakt Utajení není předmětem státního či obchodního tajemství Organizační jednotka Pedagogická fakulta ISBN 978-80-210-4692-4 Klíčová slova anglicky hedges - linguistics - literary science - evaluative coherence - academic writing Změnil Změnila: Mgr. Martina Malášková, Ph.D., uče 67390. Změněno: 31. 12. 2010 16:52. Anotace This paper introduces the results of the preliminary research carried out as a part of my dissertation thesis and focuses on the description of existing formal and semantic classifications of hedges, examined materials and methods. Anotace český Abstrakt představuje výsledky předběžného výzkumu, který byl proveden v rámci přípravy na vypracování disertační práce. Zaměřuje se na popis existujících formálních a sémantických klasifikací výrazů vyjadřujících nejistotu v akademickém diskursu a na materiály a metody použité při výzkumu. Návaznosti GA405/08/0866, projekt VaV Název: Koherence a koheze v anglickém diskurzu Investor: Grantová agentura ČR, Standardní projekty VytisknoutZobrazeno: 20. 6. 2021 02:20 1. Introductory verbs: e.g. seem, tend, look like, appear to be, think, believe, doubt, be sure, indicate, suggest

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