

PERSUASIVE HEDGING STRATEGIES BETWEEN NATIVE AND NON-NATIVE AUTHORS OF ENGLISH JOURNAL ARTICLES

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Abstract: Writing journal articles is the most scientific way to publish new research to public. Authors' strategies to convince the readers are important to show their stance and viewpoint on the research. This study compares the strategies chosen by native and non-native English authors of journal articles in hedging their stances. The data were hedging strategies written in 50 randomly selected international journal articles, 25 of which were written by native English authors and 25 others by the non-natives. The result shows some differences in the use of hedges. Native authors show higher frequency in the use of writer-oriented hedges whereas non-native authors had higher frequency in reader-oriented hedges. This study also finds authors' styles to persuade the readers.

Keywords: journal article, native, strategies, hedges

INTRODUCTION

The developments of new sciences or knowledge from around the world are published to public by using papers, theses or journal articles. Papers or journal articles which were written and published contained reports of new science from the results of research. Meadows (1979) states that a scientific journal is a periodical publication intended to further the progress of science, usually by reporting new research.

Each author uses different ways to convince readers. The ways they reveal and explain their research result are implemented in the research findings and discussions their research reports or journal articles. Hedges are numbers of chosen words which represent the intention of the writer in the way he or she convince the reader. In this case, it is applied in persuasive utterances. In his *Modern Linguist Dictionary*, Crystal (1997) defines it as a number of words showing uncertainty or limitation. Meanwhile in his *English Pragmatic Structure*, Yule (1996) defines it as cautious, annotative expression of words. While Hyland (1998, 2-3) states

that a hedge is "any linguistic means used to indicate either a lack of complete commitment to the truth of a proposition or a desire not to express that commitment categorically".

It is important to conduct this research because it is rare to analyze hedges in written objects. Especially this study analyzed international journal articles and compare between native and non-native English authors in writing the articles. The use of sentences and the diction of each author is different. It can show the readers about the authors' character and style. The authors' intention in convincing the reader can also be seen by the use of hedging strategies.

LITERARY REVIEWS

Dealing with hedging strategies topic, there are some similar researches that have been conducted. Sundquist (2013) has analyzed *The Use of Hedges in the Speech of ESL Learners*. He investigated the use of hedges (mitigating expressions like *he think* or sort of it) in the speech of learners of English at multiple proficiency levels as well as of native speakers. The results

are discussed in terms of their importance for comparing data from different task types and discourse types.

Meanwhile Pellby (2013) studied *Hedging in Political Discourse: An Analysis of Hedging in an American City Council*. His thesis seeks to investigate the usage of hedges in political discourse in the Tampa City Council for the purpose of examining whether or not women hedge more than men in this area. The results illustrated how political discourse is still an area dominated by men in the sense that men had significantly more speech time than women during this meeting.

writer expected this research can expand the knowledge and develop the previous studies.

UNDERLYING THEORIES

The concept of hedges was firstly put forward by Lakoff (1972, 485) in his paper *Hedges: a Study in Meaning Criteria and the Logic off Fuzzy Concept*, in which hedges was defined as “words whose job is to make things fuzzier or less fuzzy”. However, different scholars made different definitions. Crystal (1997) defines it as a number of words showing uncertainty or limitation. On the other hand, Yule

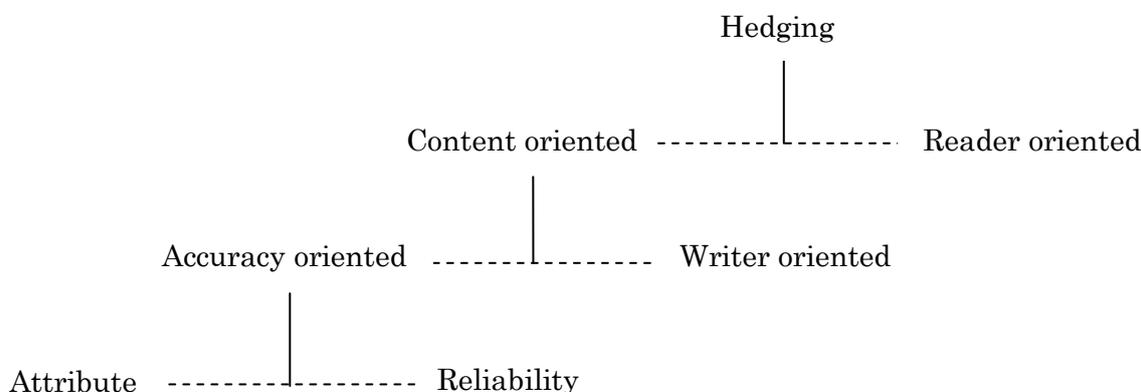


Figure: Hyland's (1998) Model of Hedging in Scientific Research

Yue and Wang (2014) studied *Hedges Used in Business Emails: A Corpus Study on the Language-Strategy of International Business Communication Online*. Based on a corpus of 296 authentic business emails produced in computer-mediated business communication from 7 Chinese international trade enterprises, this research addressed the language strategy applied in CMC (computer-mediated communication) by examining the use of hedges.

Based on the previous researches, all of the researchers studied about hedges and most of them analyzed spoken or communication objects, while the writer here analyzes and compares the use of hedging strategies by native and non-native English authors of interbnational journal articles. The

(1996) defined hedge as cautious, annotative expression of words. While by Hyland hedge is defined as “any linguistic means used to indicate either a lack of complete commitment to the truth of a proposition or a desire not to express that commitment categorically” (Hyland 1998, 2-3).

In his book, Hyland (1998, 162) states:

Content-oriented hedges serve to mitigate the relationship between propositional content and a non-linguistic mental representation of reality; they hedge the correspondence between what the writer says about the world and what the world is thought to be like.

He classify the motivation for content hedges falls into two overlapping categories, concerning the

writer's interest in (1) starting propositional accord with reality, or (2) seeking self protection from the negative consequences of poor judgment. He also referred to these two forms of motivation as accuracy and writer-oriented hedges.

Accuracy-oriented hedges refer to the writer's desire to express propositions with greater precision in areas often characterized by television and reinterpretation. Hedging here is an important means of accurately stating variable results or uncertain claims with appropriate indications of reality (Rounds & Skelton in Hyland, 1998, 162). Almost all academic discourse is a balance of fact and evaluation, as writer to present information as fully, accurately and objectively as possible. Accuracy-oriented hedges are running contribution to the evaluation of the weight of statements in truth-seeking talk. There are two types of accuracy-oriented hedges; they are attribute hedges and reliability hedges.

Attribute hedges is the ability of words to represent an objective domain of non-linguistic facts, however, it is mediated and organized by cognitive processing and crucially dependent on relevant background knowledge (Hyland 1998, 163). Some words and phrases which used as marks in attribute hedges are: normal, generally, essentially, quite, more or less, almost, barely, approximately, in a strict case, and point of view.

On the other hand, reliability hedges acknowledge writer's uncertain knowledge and indicate the confidence he or she is willing to invest in the validity of a claim. Reliability hedges thus express simple subjective uncertainly in a proposition and are motivated by the writer's desire to explicitly convey the extent to which, and in which, it corresponds to his or her understanding of 'truth' (Hyland, 1998, 166). Some words and phrases which used as marks in reliability

hedges are: however, possible, might be, suspect, could, may, probably, presumably, likely, intuitively, apparently, at least, implies, and alternatively.

Meanwhile, writer-oriented hedges creates a clear pragmatic contrast with other content hedges: Accuracy-oriented hedges are proposition-focused and seek to increase precision by referring to the exact state of knowledge or to how the proposition is to be understood; writer-oriented hedges are writer-focused and aim to shield the writer from the possible consequences of negotiability by limiting personal commitment (Hyland 1998, 170). Some words and phrases which used as marks in writer-oriented hedges are: although, assumed, indicate, suggest, we propose, believe.

Lastly, reader-oriented hedges address the various dimensions of the social relationship between writer and reader in this genre (Hyland 1998, 177). Some words and phrases which used as marks in attribute hedges are: only, in spite, we conclude, result, our analysis, our/her investigation.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study is a descriptive-qualitative study. The data were persuasive utterances in international journal articles. The data sources were international journal articles from 25 native and 25 non-native English authors.

The written definition of a native speaker was the first provided by Bloomfield (in Mauko 2014, 7) who states: "the first language of human being learns to speak is his native language; he is a native speaker of this language". Then after a long argument and discussion about how to determine a native speaker, Davies (in Mauko, 2014, 7.) argues that anyone can be a native speaker of more than one language, provided that they adequately exposed to the languages before a critical age (usually agreed to be around age 9).

Based on those arguments, the writer concludes that the concept of English native speaker is influenced by the use English as mother tongue of first language. That's why the writer takes the native English authors' data from the original English language countries, namely England, USA, and Australia while the non-native authors data were taken from Asia and other countries outside of those three countries. In choosing the data, the writer selected the data which had its' author background identities in the end of the journal. The journals selected as data sources were the journals or researches that study about languages. It could be linguistic, literature or language education journals.

To collect the data, the researcher used documentation method by using content analysis techniques. Content analysis has been defined as a systematic, replicable technique for compressing many words of text into fewer content categories based on explicit rules of coding (Berelson 1952, GAO 1996, Krippendorff 1980, and Weber 1990 in Stemler 2001). Content analysis enables researchers to sift through large volumes of data with relative ease in a systematic fashion (GAO in Stemler 2001). Content analysis technique can be a useful for allowing researcher to discover and describe the focus of individual, group, institutional or social attention.

In selecting the data, the writer divided the data into two categories *native* and *non-native*. The way the researcher determined which native and non native data were the first, by the name of the author. Some of non-native data were from Asian countries so the name could be used as the marker. Second, they were identified from the universities or countries where the journals or articles published. Third, the data were classified by authors' educational backgrounds. Fourth, it was done by looking for the author's personal records in the last

page of the article or even by searching it on the internet.

The data were analyzed through several steps. First, the writer identified the persuasive utterances in each article. Second, he listed the hedging strategies applied in each utterances. After that, the researcher described and classified the hedging strategies by using Hyland's theory.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Hedging Strategies of Native English Authors

The hedging strategies are classified into four parts in this study, they are attribute hedges and reliability hedges which are included in accuracy-oriented hedges, then writer-oriented hedges which were included in content-oriented with accuracy-oriented hedges, and the last is reader-oriented hedges.

Attribute hedges

The ability of words to represent an objective domain of non-linguistic facts, however, it is mediated and organized by cognitive processing and crucially dependent on relevant background knowledge (Hyland 1998, 163). Some words and phrases included in attribute hedges are: *normal, generally, essentially, quite, more or less, almost, barely, approximately, in a strict case, and point of view*. According to the analysis of the data, found 62 hedges (7,72%). The application of attribute hedges in native English data is shown by the following excerpt:

We argue that our experimental results provide evidence to support the view that mock impoliteness is **essentially** a sensitive pragmatic phenomenon that is always prone to be potentially understood as impolite behavior.

The word 'essentially' denotes a deviation from an idealized conception of particular process.

Reliability hedges

These hedges acknowledge writer's uncertain knowledge and indicate the

confidence he or she is willing to invest in the validity of a claim. Some words and phrases which included in reliability hedges are: *however, possible, might be, suspect, could, may, probably, presumably, likely, intuitively, apparently, at least, implies, and alternatively*. According to the analysis of the data, found 463 hedges (57,66%). The application of Reliability hedges in native English data is shown by the following excerpt:

In this paper we have argued that what learners themselves notice about pragmatic behavior in their new context can provide crucial insights into the content and activities that **might be** relevant to that context.

In this example the writer make clear that they have reservations concerning whether the stated situations actually obtain.

Writer-oriented hedges

Writer-oriented hedges are writer-focused and aim to shield the writer from the possible consequences of negotiability by limiting personal commitment (Hyland 1998, 170).

Some words and phrases included in writer-oriented hedges are: *although, assumed, indicate, suggest, we propose, believe*. According to the analysis of the data, found 149 hedges (18,56%). The application of writer-oriented hedge in native English data is shown by the construction of 'abstract rhetor' by minimalising a personal projection, suggest that the situation described is independent of human agency. The uses of these hedges are shown in the following example:

These results **indicate** Sri Lankans have an individuated collection of feelings, cognitions, ...

Reader-oriented hedges

The core examples of reader-oriented hedges thus address the various dimensions of the social relationship between writer and reader in this genre (Hyland 1998, 177). Some words and phrases which included in

attribute hedges are: *only, in spite, we conclude, result, our analysis, our/her investigation*. According to the analysis of the data, found 129 hedges (16,06%).

By specifying a personal source however, the writer shifts the interpretive frame, drawing attention to the relation of the work to the investigator, and signaling that the claim is left open the reader's judgment.

In **our analysis** we found that face-threat witnesses have three similar response options: to corroborate, to deny, or to react to the face attack.

Hedging Strategies of Non-native English Authors

Attribute hedges

The application of Attribute hedges in non-native English data is shown by the following excerpt:

This study reveals that **almost** 40 corpora of Malay and Chinese alike consist of both of the moves (95% to 100%) refer to Table 4.

The use of 'almost' in this sample is one form of 'ideal' correlation which realize the greatest effect almost negate the force of the term modified.

Reliability hedges

The application of reliability hedges in non-native English data is shown by the following excerpt:

However, it could be understood as a form of "hyper-sensitivity"; these learners were more proficient in listening, and thus, more sensitive to their poor performance in dictation.

Writer-oriented hedges

The application of writer-oriented hedges in non-native English data is shown by the following excerpt:

JLE have developed universal pragmatic knowledge to express refusal strategies in the target language **although** they were often inhibited by limited pragmalinguistic resources.

Reader-oriented hedges

The analysis of data is illustrated in the following example:

Her investigation involves three types of argumentative non-standard questions: expository questions, rhetorical questions and echo questions.

Comparison of Hedging Strategies between Natives and Non-natives

The comparison of hedging strategies between native and non-native authors is summarized in the *Table*. It shows the frequencies of hedging strategies used by native and non-native English authors in writing English journal articles.

Based on the *Table*, it can be seen

between writer and reader through their writing.

In the previous study done by Sundquist (2013), the result showed that learners generally underuse hedges in comparison with native speakers, although learners at the highest proficiency level use hedges at a rate comparable to that of native speakers. Pellby (2013) illustrated how political discourse is still an area dominated by men in the sense that men had significantly more speech time than women during the meeting. Yue

Table: Comparison of Hedging Strategies

Type of Strategy	Native		Non-native	
	Freq.	Perc.	Freq.	Perc.
Attribute hedges	62	7,72%	46	6,54%
Reliability hedges	463	57,66%	411	58,46%
Writer-oriented hedges	149	18,56%	113	16,07%
Reader-oriented hedges	129	16,06%	133	18,92%
Total	803	100%	703	100%

that there are similarities and differences in the use of hedging strategies. The similarities in the use of hedging strategies by native and nonnative English authors shown by the low frequency in the use of attribute hedges and high frequency in the use of Reliability hedges. It means that both native and non-native English authors has uncertain knowledge and indicate the lack of confidence he or she is willing to invest in the validity of a claim.

Meanwhile the differences in the use of hedging strategies are indicated by the high frequency of writer-oriented Hedges by native authors and high frequency of reader-oriented hedges by nonnative authors. It means that native English authors are writer-focused and aims to shield the writer from possible consequences of negotiability by limiting personal commitment in their writing. And nonnative English authors are tried to make social relationship

and Wang (2014) result demonstrates the flexibility of business communication with the help of IT technology. On the other hand, the current study compares the use of hedging strategies and the styles of the native and non-native English authors in writing journal articles.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, both native and non-native authors showed clear differences in the use of hedges. The applications of hedging strategies by both native and non-native authors show low frequency in attribute hedges and high frequency in the usage of reliability hedges. It means that both native and native authors had uncertain knowledge and indicated lacking confidence, He/she was willing to invest in the validity of a claim.

However, native data show higher frequency in the use of writer-oriented hedges, and non-native data got higher frequency in reader-oriented hedges.

Both data applied the same common hedges markers, such as: *however*, *could*, *may*, *although*, *indicate*, *only*, and *result*. It means that native authors were writer-focused and had high confidence in proposing their statement, while non-native authors are tried to make social relationship with their readers through their writings. Based on these analysis results we can see the differences between native and non-native English author styles to persuade readers through journal articles.

It is important for the authors of journal articles to give clear images about their stances and points of view as researchers. The way they persuade and convince the reader is one of crucial points to show that their research matter.

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