

Hedging

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706.015 - Introduction to Scientific Working

Hedging

Guidelines of correctly soften the tone

Hedging

What is hedging?

- Scientist like to weaken assessments and avoid clear statements
- “would”, “indicates”, “looks promising”
- Tentativeness, possibility, ...
- Example: “must be linked to” vs. “could be associated with”

Hedging

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Why use hedging?

- Prevent “attacks” from reviewers
- Politeness
- Allow the reader room for own interpretation

Hedging

How prevalent is hedging?

- Hedging words occur about as frequently as every 50th word
- Most common are verbs
 - would, may, indicates, ...
- Adverbials
 - possibly, likely, ...
- Phrases
 - “one cannot rule out”
- IMRaD section with the highest frequency:
 - Discussion, ..., Methods

Hedging

Types of hedging?

- Attribute hedge
 - Unclear of accuracy
- Reliability hedge
 - Writer is unsure of certainty
- Writer-oriented hedge
 - Avoid personal responsibility (conceal viewpoint)
- Reader-oriented hedge
 - Invite reader's involvement

Hedging

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Corpora

- CoNLL 2012 - Shared task on hedging
- Lot of NLP research on detecting hedges

Hedging

Literature

- Hyland, K. (1995). The Author in the Text: Hedging Scientific Writing. Hong Kong papers in linguistics and language teaching, 18, 33-42.
- Ken, H. (1996). Writing without conviction? Hedging in scientific research articles Applied Linguistics. Hyland, Ken. 1996. Writing without conviction? Hedging in scientific research articles. Applied Linguistics, 17(4), 433-454.

Thank You

For your attention!