

# EEI2310

Academic Writing for Teachers of English

## Academic Characteristics

- Formality
- Objectivity
- Evidence
- Precision
- **Hedging**
- Analytical writing



Assistant Professor Dr Sasiporn Phongploenpis  
Faculty of Education | SSRU



# Hedging



argument

generalising

certainty

exceptions

When presenting your stance or \_\_\_\_\_, you should aim to avoid over \_\_\_\_\_ . With evidence you present there may be varying degrees of \_\_\_\_\_ in relation to the evidence. The language used throughout your work and at the end should reflect this. Your writing should reflect that nothing is ever completely certain and that there may be \_\_\_\_\_ /differences due to circumstances.

**(Newcastle University, 2026)**

# Hedging Language



Hedging language refers to how a writer expresses **certainty** or **uncertainty**. Often in academic writing, a writer may not be sure of the claims that are being made in their subject area, or perhaps the ideas are good but the evidence is not very strong. It is common, therefore, to use language of caution or uncertainty (known as hedging language).

(University of Bristol, Centre for Academic Language and Development, 2025)



# Hedging



strength

certainty

dismissal

credibility

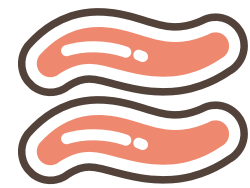
Hedging is the use of cautious language in academic writing to manage the \_\_\_\_\_ of a claim. It allows writers to show appropriate levels of \_\_\_\_\_, protect their arguments from easy \_\_\_\_\_, and reflect the limits of evidence or support. Used well, hedging helps position claims carefully within a discipline, balancing precision with academic \_\_\_\_\_.

(Oxford Lifelong Learning at the Department for Continuing Education, University of Oxford, 2025)

# Hedging Language



Academic writer can hedge in two different ways, utilising:



- **Aproximators**, words or phrases, indicates **lack of precision or clarity**



- **Shields**, words or phrases, indicates **lack of commitment.**

(Oxford Lifelong Learning at the Department for Continuing Education, University of Oxford, 2025).

# Hedging Language: Approximators



**Noun**

**verb**

**adverb**

**adjective**

A. tendency, estimate, approximation

B. tend, estimate, approximate

C. roughly, approximately, largely, for the most part, partially, as a whole,  
generally, to a certain extent, usually, typically, in general

D. rough, approximate, partial, general, usual, typical, estimated, preliminary

(Oxford Lifelong Learning at the Department for Continuing Education, University of Oxford, 2025).

# Hedging Language: Shields



**Noun**

**verb**

**adverb**

**adjective**

A. doubt, indication, likelihood, possibility, probability, suggestion, suspicion

B. could, may, might, should, appear, claim, indicate, seem, suggest, suspect

C. conceivably, perhaps, possibly, probably, presumably, seemingly

D. conceivable, doubtful, likely, possible, probable, questionable, unclear, unlikely

(Oxford Lifelong Learning at the Department for Continuing Education, University of Oxford, 2025).



# Hedging Grammar Patterns

**it + link verb + adjective + that/whether**

## **it is unlikely that**

- In the absence of spatial analysis, it is unlikely that similar insights or advances could have been achieved.

## **it is unclear whether**

- In this study it is unclear whether marital violence, family upheaval, or homelessness accounts for the observed deficits in children's social competence.

(Oxford Lifelong Learning at the Department for Continuing Education, University of Oxford, 2025)



# Hedging Grammar Patterns

## it + link verb + adjective + to + infinitive

### it is possible to ascertain

- It is possible to ascertain the drop in insect numbers by measuring the weight of the catch

## it + passive verb + that

### it is thought/believed that

- It is believed that climate change is primarily caused by human activities.

(Oxford Lifelong Learning at the Department for Continuing Education, University of Oxford, 2025).

# Hedging Grammar Patterns



**the/a + noun+ be + that**

**the probability/likelihood is that**

- Given the historical data, the probability is that the newly implemented method will increase efficiency by 15%.
- The strong likelihood is that an English baccalaureate will be launched during the next parliament

(Oxford Lifelong Learning at the Department for Continuing Education, University of Oxford, 2025).

# Hedging Grammar Patterns



**there + be + the/a + noun + that**

**there is a suspicion/assumption that**

- There is a suspicion that this new technology is not as safe as the company claims.
- There is an assumption that if pupils could learn to behave well, they would learn more.

(Oxford Lifelong Learning at the Department for Continuing Education, University of Oxford, 2025).

# Hedging Grammar Patterns



**it + link verb + that**

**it seems that**

It **seems (appears) that** the scope of the native speaker in Korea is narrow and limited in the sense that the Americans are believed to be an absolute image of a native speaker.

(Oxford Lifelong Learning at the Department for Continuing Education, University of Oxford, 2025).

# *Hedging verbs (seem and appear)*

*For example,*

There **appears to** be a correlation between social class and likelihood of getting to university

It **seems to be** the case that non-native speakers of English rely more on their mother tongue.



# Hedging Grammar Patterns



## this + noun

this possibility

- This possibility requires further investigation to determine its validity.

## the/a + noun+ that

the suggestion that

- The suggestion that colleges drop the SAT ignores two realities

(Oxford Lifelong Learning at the Department for Continuing Education, University of Oxford, 2025).

## *More Hedging Language*

It is common, therefore, to use the language of **caution** or **uncertainty**

- *Modal verbs*
- *That clauses*
- *Adverbs*



# More Hedging Language

## *Modal verbs (may, might, could, can)*

*For example,*

In the 1950s, the American Government put forward a positive image of nuclear power as a new source of cheap and endless energy that **could help** reduce the dependence on imported oils.



# More Hedging Language

## *That clauses*

*For example,*

It is clear that ...

It is apparent that ...

It may be perceived that ...

It has been suggested/argued/claimed that ...

It seems evident that ...



*(University of Bristol, Centre for Academic Language and Development, 2025)*

# More Hedging Language

## *Adverbs*

*For example,*

There are always a number of issues which could **potentially** get onto the agenda.



