

PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS OF HEDGING IN THE DISCUSSIONS OF MEDICAL RESEARCH DISCOURSE

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ABSTRACT

Academic discourse is written to cater for a particular audience and like any other text contains the author's interpretation of his discourse. The author negotiates and persuades the reader to accept his interpretation of the text in discussion. One of the strategies used to convey messages in academic writing is the use of hedging. Hedging is used as a rhetoric strategy to modify the definiteness of an utterance, or to modify the commitment of the author to the propositions he puts in a text. The use of hedges has the interpersonal aspect in that they are used to indicate that the speaker does not want to impose upon the hearer's desires or beliefs. The present study investigates the types of hedging used in the discussion of medical research discourse. It also establishes the functions hedges perform in these discussions and the frequencies of particular hedges. The study which is quantitative in nature established that hedging is used frequently in the discussions of medical research findings and that it has various functions as the authors present their claims with caution, precision and humility. The study has a pedagogical implication and concludes that hedging is an essential writing feature in medical genres that needs to be given attention when teaching communicative skills to medical students.

KEYWORDS: Hedging, Pedagogical, Research Discussions