

Hedging and Boosters in Conversations and Academic Texts

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Abstract: Hedges and boosters are essential linguistic devices that can be used in oral and written discourses. Hedges are important in conversing politely and cautiously, expressing the speaker's or writer's uncertainty, and convincing others of their statements. Boosters demonstrate the speaker's or writer's confidence, reinforce statements, and persuade others of their statements.

This article studies linguistic devices: "Hedges" and "boosters" in communications and academic writings.

Keywords: Hedges, boosters, communication, academic writing, cautious or careful language.

Introduction: The concept of "Hedge" was first introduced by American cognitive linguist Lakoff in 1972. According to Lakoff, hedges are words and expressions used to make things fuzzier or less fuzzy. He regarded hedges as lexical items that can only exist in context. He considered that hedges are used to make things weaker or stronger. [1:458-508] For example, Marc is sort of lazy. (weaker statement). He is very, very smart. I really admire him. (Stronger statements)

Later, Lewin criticized Lakoff's ideas and he argued that "Natural language has boundaries and fuzzy edges... and consequently, natural language sentences will very often be neither true nor false, but rather true to a certain extent and false to a certain extent." [2:90]

So, nowadays hedges are linguistic devices such as words, phrases, clauses, etc. that are used to express opinions indirectly and politely by softening the speech and expressing uncertainty. For example: 1. Perhaps, you could try doing the way I asked you to. 2. You sound rude.

In academic writing, hedges are used to reduce the writer's commitment to the truthfulness of a statement. Eg. Many types of fruit can be pickled. [3:430]

And also, hedges are used to show uncertainty. Eg. The temperature in this city in summer something between

35 and 45 degrees Celsius.

According to Swales, in Anglo-American formal written text, hedges are used extensively with the general goal of projecting "honesty, modesty, proper caution, and diplomacy". [4:174]

For example: Archaeologists suspect that pickling and preserving food has been around for thousands of years. [3:430]

Hedges are also called "Cautious or Careful language". Because they are used to convey claims cautiously in order not to be blamed for making mistakes on giving inaccurate information.

The term "Boosters" was introduced by Janice Holmes in academic writing in 1982, and he used boosters to strengthen the statements and show a strong conviction for a statement. In 1989, Myers defined boosters as a positive politeness device in scientific articles.

Later, in 1998, Hyland used boosters as communicative strategies that increase the force of statements and show writers' commitment.

Eg. 1. It is definitely true that every citizen can get support from the government. 2. It is an undeniable fact that dogs can be trained easier compared to other animals. 3. I am sure that you can participate actively in the training. Obviously, they have got support from the

government.

Table 1. List of hedges in Hyland's study [5]

About	deduce	(it is)known	possibly	reportedly	tendency
Almost	doubt	likely	prediction	seems	theoretically
Approximately	estimate	may	predominantly	seemingly	(we)
think					
Argue	expect	maybe	presumably	(can be) seen	uncertain
Around	formally	might	presume	seldom	unclear
Assume	frequently	more or less	probability	(general) sense	unlikely
Assumption	given that	(not) necessarily	probable	sometimes	unsure
My/our belief	guess	occasionally	probably	somewhat	usually
I believe	however	often	propose	speculate	virtually
Certain extent	hypothesize	ostensibly	provided (that)	suggest	would
Claim	hypothetically	partially	(open to) question	superficially	would
not					
(to be) clear	ideally	partly	questionable	suppose	
Conjecture	imply	plausible	rare	suspect	
Contention	infer	possibility	rarely	technically	
Could	interpret	possible	relatively	tend	

Table 2. List of boosters in Hyland's study

Actually	conclusive	essentially	incontrovertible	normally	
unambiguously					
Addmitedly	confirm	establish	indeed	obvious	unarguably
Always	consistent with	evidence	indicate	obviously	undeniably
Apparent	convincing(ly)	evident	inevitable	patently	undoubtedly
Apparently	could not	evidently	(we) know	precisely	unequivocal
Appear	of course	the fact (that)	largely	prove	unmistakable
Assuredly	decidedly	we find	mainly		rather
unquestionably					

Basically	definitely	general	manifest(ly)	should	well - known
Certain that	demonstrate	generally	most	show	will
Certainly	determine	however	must	sure	will not
Certainty	discern	impossible	(not) necessarily	surely	wrongly
Clearly	doubtless	improbable	never	true	
Conclude	(is) essential	inconceivable	no/beyond doubt	typically	

According to Hyland, hedging and boosting are essential for expressing scientific statements in a social context; they are not only accuracy-oriented but also writer- and reader-oriented. [5]

Akman E, Karahan P claimed that hedges and boosters can be considered an individual decision a researcher makes based on their personality, preferred writing style, and professional experiences. [6]

Eg. It may be true. Mark may be at work. (Hedges express uncertainty)

It must be true. Mark must be at work. (Boosters express certainty)

So, overall, hedges are a linguistic device that is used to express uncertainty and converse politely by softening the speech. Also, hedges are important to be cautious when communicating with others. Boosters are a linguistic device that is used to express certainty and speakers' or writers' confidence. However, both can be used to convince others of their claims by softening and reinforcing their speeches.

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