




<https://doi.org/10.22363/2687-0088-30017>

Research article / Научная статья

Functional categories of hedges: A diachronic study of Russian research article abstracts

Olga BOGINSKAYA  

Irkutsk National Research Technical University, Irkutsk, Russia

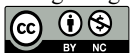
 olgaa_boginskaya@mail.ru

Abstract

The interactional nature of academic discourse has been analyzed in linguistics literature from different perspectives. However, these studies have been predominantly conducted on English materials. Little is known of how interactional metadiscourse elements are used in Russian academic prose and what diachronic changes in metadiscourse have occurred in the last decade. Building on previous research that suggests cross-linguistic, cross-cultural and diachronic differences in the use of hedges in academic prose, this paper explores functional categories of hedges used in Russian research article abstracts from a diachronic perspective. The main focus is on quantitative and qualitative variations in the functional realization of hedging, since it may be expected that it could change over time. The study was conducted on a corpus of 112 linguistics research article abstracts published in four Russian journals in two periods (2008–2014 and 2015–2021). To investigate hedging devices and their functional categories, this study employed quantitative and qualitative analyses. The quantitative analysis indicated that in the first period (2008–2014) hedging was most frequently realized through modals, reporting verbs, and quantifiers. In the second time span (2015–2021), reporting verbs, epistemic verbs, and adjectives of probability were among the most frequent functional categories of hedging. Overall, the distribution of functional categories of hedging changed in the second period when hedging was realized through a variety of lexical means belonging to different functional categories. In terms of the functions of hedging, the difference was also striking. In the first time span, hedges were employed to diminish an authorial presence in the text, while in the second one authors hedged to point toward possible methodological limitations and to signal inaccuracies of research results. Despite some data limitations, this study could be seen as a starting point for future research of metadiscourse in Russian-language academic prose from cross-disciplinary, cross-cultural or diachronic perspective.

Keywords: *academic discourse, research article abstract, hedging, metadiscourse, Russian*

© Olga Boginskaya, 2022




This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License
<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/legalcode>

For citation:

Boginskaya, Olga. 2022. Functional categories of hedges: A diachronic study of Russian-medium research article abstracts. *Russian Journal of Linguistics* 26 (3). 645–667. <https://doi.org/10.22363/2687-0088-30017>

Функциональные категории хеджирования: диахронический анализ русскоязычных аннотаций

О.А. БОГИНСКАЯ  

*Иркутский национальный исследовательский технический университет,
Иркутск, Россия*
 olga_boginskaya@mail.ru

Аннотация

Интеракциональная природа академического дискурса неоднократно становилась объектом лингвистических исследований. Однако анализ преимущественно проводился на материале английского языка. Проблема использования метадискурсивных элементов в русскоязычных научных статьях, в том числе в диахроническом аспекте, остается малоизученной и требует своего решения, что позволит получить новые данные о развитии метадискурсивной компетенции российских исследователей. Объектом исследования является хеджирование как важная метадискурсивная стратегия, которой пользуются авторы научных статей для представления своих концепций и поддержания диалога с читателем. В статье рассматриваются функциональные категории хеджирования в русскоязычных аннотациях с диахронической точки зрения. В фокусе находятся количественные и качественные различия в функциональной реализации хеджирования как метадискурсивной стратегии. Материалом исследования послужили 112 аннотаций статей, опубликованных в четырех высокорейтинговых российских лингвистических журналах в 2008–2021 годах, которые были разделены на два периода: 2008–2014 и 2015–2021. Для целей исследования использовались методы количественного и интерпретативного анализа. Количественный анализ показал, что в первый исследуемый период (2008–2014) хеджирование преимущественно осуществлялось с использованием модальных глаголов, глаголов непрямо́й речи и квантификаторов. Во втором периоде (2015–2021) наиболее частотными средствами хеджирования оказались глаголы непрямо́й речи, эпистемические глаголы и прилагательные со смысловым компонентом вероятности. В целом, во второй период набор функциональных категорий хеджирования изменился за счет расширения арсенала лексических средств. Интерпретативный метод позволил выявить изменения в функционале средств хеджирования. Анализ показал, что если в первый период хеджи использовались для элиминации авторского присутствия с целью защиты от возможной критики, то во второй период их доминирующей функцией было указание на методологические ограничения и возможные неточности результатов исследования. Несмотря на ограниченность корпуса данных небольшим временным промежутком, результаты настоящего исследования могут быть использованы для дальнейшего изучения метадискурсивных маркеров в русскоязычном научном дискурсе.

Ключевые слова: *академический дискурс, аннотация статьи, хеджирование, метадискурс, русский язык*

Для цитирования:

Boginskaya O.A. Functional categories of hedges: A diachronic study of Russian-medium research article abstracts. *Russian Journal of Linguistics*. 2022. V. 26. № 3. P. 645–667. <https://doi.org/10.22363/2687-0088-30017>

1. Introduction

Hedges offer an interesting insight into academic discourse functioning as metadiscourse devices used to present authorial claims with various degrees of caution, to express a perspective on authorial statements, and to enter into a dialogue with the reader (Hyland 1996: 251–252).

Hedging in academic discourse has been examined in a large number of works (Al-Khasawneh 2017, Alonso-Almeida 2014, Alward 2012, Aull & Lancaster 2014, Dontcheva-Navratilova 2016, Haufiku & Kangira 2018, Heng & Tan 2022, Hyland 1998, Kozubikova 2021, Lenardič & Fišer 2021, Petchkij 2019, Vassileva 2001). Varttala (2001) examined the status of hedging in popularized articles as opposed to research articles from three disciplines – economics, medicine, and technology. From the same cross-disciplinary perspective, Takimoto (2015) investigated research articles to measure the frequencies and functions of hedges in humanities, social and natural sciences. Haufiku & Kangira (2018) explored the use of hedges in Master’s theses and concluded that similarities and differences in hedging depend on the data being analyzed, the writer’s level of English language proficiency, and the need to conform to the accepted academic writing style. Aull & Lancaster (2014) adopted a different approach to compare undergraduate research papers and research articles with the aim to reveal stance-taking changes as researchers gain experience in academic writing. The findings revealed distinctions in the use of hedges emerging between novice writers and advanced writers, which indicates a clear developmental trajectory in terms of hedging. Dontcheva-Navratilova (2016) explored cross-cultural variation in the use of lexical hedges and boosters to shed light on ways in which Anglophone and Czech writers express different degrees of commitment in their assertions when striving to persuade their target readership to accept their views and claims. It was revealed that the existing variation reflects differences in the linguacultural and epistemological traditions of the Anglophone and Czech linguistics communities, which favor different rhetorical strategies when approaching writer-reader interaction. These studies conducted on English materials indicate the less intense use of hedges by non-native English writers (Belyakova 2017, Chen & Zhang 2017, Dontcheva-Navratilova 2016, Hu & Cao 2011, Ji 2015, Sládková 2017, Thuy 2018, Vassileva 2001, Yagiz & Demir 2014). At the same time, it has been found that different linguistic cultures use different functional categories to hedge in academic discourse: Vietnamese writers, for example, prefer modal verbs (Thuy 2018), while Iranian researchers often use adverbs, including approximators (Rezanejad 2015).

While these works are valuable, there is still a complementary contribution to be made by a corpus-based study that compares the use of hedging devices in

Russian academic discourse from a diachronic perspective. It is possible that such a comparative analysis can reveal diachronic differences in the functional categories of hedges used in Russian academic prose. Thus, in an attempt to contribute to literature on hedging in academic discourse, the present study focuses on the use of this metadiscourse device in Russian-language research article (RA) abstracts. The research seeks answers to the following questions:

- 1) Are there any differences in the functional categories of hedges in Russian RA abstracts written in 2008–2014 and 2015–2021?
- 2) What is the frequency of occurrence of different functional categories of hedges used in RA abstracts written in two different periods?
- 3) Are there any differences in the functions of hedging devices in two different time periods?

2. Theoretical background

The concept of hedging was coined by Lakoff (1973) who described the communicative value of hedging markers and logical properties of words and phrases, such as *rather*, *largely*, *sort of*, *very* used to make things fuzzier/less fuzzy. Lakoff's definition was used as a starting point by many other researchers. Brown & Levinson (1987: 145) defined hedges as “elements that modify the degree of membership of predicate or a noun phrase in a set” and are used to achieve linguistic vagueness. In the same line, Prince (1982) described hedges as items making things fuzzier, and Channel (1994: 20) defined them as “vague language”, expressions whose meaning can be contrasted with another that “appears to render the same proposition” or expressions whose meanings are stimulated by “intrinsic uncertainty”.

The second group of definitions provided by Crismore & Vande Kopple (1988), Hyland (1996, 1998) and Salager-Meyer (1994) describes hedges as linguistic devices that convey the writer's uncertain attitude towards the respective statement and help avoid responsibility toward the utterance. Crismore & Vande Kopple (1988: 185) defined hedges as elements that “signal a tentative or cautious assessment of the truth of referential information” and allow the author to reduce his/her responsibility toward the information presented. In Myers' (1989) definition, hedges are “rational strategies used for dealing with the social interactions involved in publishing an article”. According to Markkanen & Schröder (1997: 5), “hedges can offer a possibility for textual manipulation in the sense that the reader is left in the dark regarding the truth value of what is being expressed and who is responsible for it.” Martin (2001) claimed that hedges are used to communicate academic knowledge in a way that will enable them to gain community acceptance of their contribution without the risk of Face Threatening Acts. Hyland (1995: 33) argued that hedges allow writers to convey their attitude to the truth of the statements, thereby presenting unproven claims with caution and softening categorical assertions. The writers also hedge to invite the reader to get involved in open discussion about the nature of propositions and to accomplish

closure by reaching consensus on a particular issue (Hyland & Zou 2021). According to Holmes (1997: 32), hedges are used to “create conviviality, facilitate discussion, show politeness and oil the phatic wheels”. Politeness was also emphasized in Hübler’s (1983) definition of hedging devices used to avoid apodictic statements overlooking the readers’ wish to judge for themselves. Salager-Meyer’s (1994: 6) definition “embraces three aspects of hedging, including hedging as a politeness strategy: 1. that of purposive fuzziness and vagueness (threat-minimizing strategy); 2. that which reflects the authors’ modesty for their achievements and avoidance of personal involvement; 3. that related to the impossibility or unwillingness of reaching absolute accuracy and of quantifying all the phenomena under observation. From the same perspective, hedging was treated by Larina & Ponton (2020: 483) who defined it as the discursive style, “by means of which a speaker represents their views as contingent and subjective rather than objectively true, thus mitigating the face threatening potentialities of disagreement and criticism”.

Thus, as can be seen from the definitions provided above, the research tradition on hedging focuses on the three crucial aspects: hedging as vague language, hedging as a way to avoid responsibility toward the utterance, and hedging as a politeness strategy. Hedging has thus been approached as a semantic or pragmatic phenomenon. For the purpose of the current study, Hyland’s (1995) pragmatically-oriented definition of hedges as a multifunctional phenomenon will be used as it seems to be more persuasive. Hedging will be treated as a metadiscourse strategy employed to indicate different degrees of commitment and responsibility towards the propositional content and involve the reader in a dialogue. It is assumed that pragmatic functions of hedging in discourse depend on communication situations.

Judging by a large number of definitions of hedges provided by different scholars, it is logical that there are various taxonomies of hedging devices (Clemen 1997, Crompton 1997, Hyland 1996, Mauranen 1997, Salager & Meyer 1994). They draw on formal, lexical, or grammatical criteria or adopt a hybrid approach. Crompton (1997) divided all hedges based solely on their form: sentences with copulas other than *be*; sentences with epistemic modals; sentences with probability clauses; sentences with probability adverbials; sentences where authors explicitly designate themselves as responsible for the proposition and sentences where authors use an impersonal subject but the agent is intended to be understood as themselves; sentences containing a reported proposition that a hypothesized entity X exists and the author(s) can be taken to be responsible for making the hypothesis. Despite being persuasive and complete, Crompton’s (1997) taxonomy does not take into account the pragmatic situation in which the same forms serve different purposes. In addition to that, Crompton’s taxonomy excludes the possibility of naming certain linguistic devices as hedges, which is also disputable.

Salager-Meyer (1994) proposed a different taxonomy of hedges, which embraces both formal and functional criteria. Here are five categories of hedging in this taxonomy: shields (all modal verbs expressing possibility, semi-auxiliaries,

probability adverbs, and epistemic verbs); approximators (stereotyped adaptors of quantity, degree, frequency and time); authors' personal doubt and direct involvement; emotionally-charged intensifiers; compound hedges comprising the juxtaposition of several hedges. Unfortunately, Salager-Meyer's taxonomy does not comprise all the elements that seem relevant for hedging.

Hyland's (1996, 1998) taxonomy of hedging focuses on the pragmatic functions of this metadiscourse category. The model accounts for the possibility of multiple interpretations of hedging devices. In Hyland's model, the main categories of hedges are *content-oriented hedges* and *reader-oriented hedges*. The first one includes features referring to the ways writers present themselves and convey their opinions and commitments. This group of hedges mitigates the relationship between the propositional content and the representation of reality (Hyland 1996). It includes *accuracy-oriented hedges* and *writer-oriented hedges*. *Accuracy-oriented hedges* specify the extent to which the terms "describe the events and state of affairs referred to" and indicate "limits on certainty by restricting the time, quality or generalizability of the proposition" or express subjective uncertainty in a proposition. *Writer-oriented hedges* refer to the relationship between a claim and a writer rather than to the relationship between "propositional elements". The use of these markers may refer to those cases in which the writer diminishes his/her presence in the text by using impersonal, agentless and passive structures. *Reader-oriented hedges* deal with the relationship between the author and the reader, confirm the attention the writers give to the interactional effects of their statement, and solicit collusion by addressing the reader as an intelligent colleague capable of participating in the discourse with an open mind (Hyland 1996). These hedges attenuate the writer's meaning by increasing the degree of subjectivity of the utterance and transform an assertion into a question, which signals a high degree of indeterminacy and implies the need for confirmation on the part of the reader. They also make readers involved in a dialogue and invite them to judge the proposition.

Hence, the key distinction between reader-oriented hedges and content-oriented hedges is that the latter deal with accuracy in regard to the world whereas the former deal with the relationship with an audience and conventions of the academic discourse community. Although it is sometimes difficult to identify ideal classes of content- or reader-oriented hedges, and a hedge may be referred to any category, Hyland's taxonomy can be used to illustrate the realization of hedging through a variety of functional categories and has been taken as a theoretical basis for the present study.

3. Materials and methodology

3.1. Research design

To address the research questions set in the Introduction section, we collected linguistics RA abstracts. The selection of the discipline of linguistics was motivated by several considerations. First, very few diachronic studies of RA abstracts in

Russian have examined this discipline, leaving an obvious lacuna to fill in. Second, it would be important to focus on a single discipline to leave aside culture-specific and language-determined effects on the distribution of hedges and their functional categories. Third, as a representative of the linguistics discourse community, I have sufficient knowledge of its discourse and metadiscourse practices, which would be advantageous to the present study.

In designing the current study, a methodological framework proposed by Connor and Moreno (2005) was used to reveal similarities and differences in hedging in RA abstracts derived from different time spans. Connor and Moreno's (2005) framework is based on the concept of equivalence, which implies the need for a common basis of comparison (e.g., textual data, metadiscourse markers, functional categories), that allows the researcher to compare quantitative results and draw reliable conclusions about diachronic differences in the use of hedging devices.

3.2. Corpus design

Diachronic variation in the functional categories of hedges was investigated on a specialized corpus consisting of 112 research article abstracts published in four Russian journals in the field of linguistics (*Russian Journal of Linguistics*, *Issues of Cognitive Linguistics*, *Voprosy Jazykoznanija*, and *Tomsk State University Journal of Philology*) in 2008–2021. All the journals have a large readership and high prestige in the field (Q1–Q2 SJR in 2021). The judgements on the origin of the authors were made according to their family names and affiliation. Articles published in the journals cover a wide range of linguistics sub-disciplines such as semantics, cross-cultural studies, translation studies, discourse studies, genre studies, sociolinguistics, etc.

Abstracts are an integral part of RAs published in these journals. The journals impose strict requirements on the quality and structure of abstracts, which is not always the case with other Russian journals. This is the reason why these journals were chosen as a source of abstracts for the present study.

Since the present study examines RA abstracts from a diachronic perspective, they were taken from different volumes of *Russian Journal of Linguistics*, *Issues of Cognitive Linguistics*, *Voprosy Jazykoznanija*, and *Tomsk State University Journal of Philology* starting from 2008 up to 2021, covering 14 years. The corpus was compiled to ensure comparability in terms of genre (RA abstracts), authors' origin (Russia) and field (linguistics).

Russian Journal of Linguistics has been published by the People's Friendship University of Russia since 1997. Its intended readership is most likely to comprise the international linguistics discourse community, as it publishes predominantly English-medium research articles accompanied by Russian-language abstracts. *Tomsk State University Journal of Philology* is published by Tomsk State University. It is a more locally oriented national linguistics journal publishing research articles since 2007. Its intended readership is the Russian linguistics

discourse community, since most of the articles published in this journal are written in Russian. The same is true for *Issues of Cognitive Linguistics* published by the Russian Cognitive Linguists Association since 2003. *Voprosy Jazykoznanija* is the oldest Russian linguistics journal published since 1952 by the Russian Academy of Sciences. It publishes both Russian-medium and English-medium research articles and reviews intended for the Russian and international linguistics discourse communities. It should be noted that the differences in the intended readership of the four journals may not be seen as a reason for variation in the hedging devices employed by writers, since the present study focuses on Russian-language RA abstracts intended for the Russian reader.

The time span under study was divided into two periods: from 2008 to 2014 and from 2015 to 2021. Within each period, eight abstracts from eight randomly selected volumes of each journal with a one-year interval between them were chosen. The result was 56 abstracts per each period, i.e. 112 abstracts altogether. The RA abstracts taken from the issues published between 2008 and 2014 made the first sub-corpus (SC1), and the RA abstracts derived from the 2015–2021 issues were included into the second sub-corpus (SC2).

3.3. Methods

In order to investigate hedging devices and their functional categories, this study adopted corpus-based and computational techniques together with quantitative and qualitative analyses.

Quantitative analysis supplemented with manual contextual analysis was applied to all instances of hedging markers in the two sub-corpora to identify their functions. First, hedges were identified manually in the RA abstracts. Second, the markers found in the corpus were manually analyzed in context. Following Hyland's (1998) taxonomy, the markers were divided into two main groups: content-oriented hedges and reader-oriented hedges. The results were annotated in tables and the frequencies contrasted.

The difference in word-count between SC1 and SC2 was normalized per 1,000 words. The occurrences were processed with AntConc 3.4, an advanced text analysis application, which provides details about the text and can ensure the accuracy of research results. The chi-square test was used to decide on the statistical significance of the results.

Occurrences of hedges in the corpus were identified by drawing on lists suggested by Hyland (2005) and taking into account the categories of lexical items functioning as hedges. The examples discussed are intended to illustrate variation in the functional categories of lexical items used for hedging in the two time spans.

A qualitative analysis was conducted to interpret the findings of the quantitative analysis. A combination of the qualitative and quantitative methods can contribute to more explanatory findings. The quantitative analysis identified the frequency of occurrence of functional categories of lexical items functioning as hedges in the two sub-corpora. The results of the analysis of the frequency of

occurrence of functional categories of hedging markers in the two sub-corpora were used as the basis for a comparative diachronic study of the ways Russian academic writers approach writer-reader interaction and manifest their authorial voice in the two periods.

4. Results

In this section, the data obtained from the study is presented, beginning with the total frequency of hedges found in the two sub-corpora (Table 1). Thereafter, the focus is placed on the frequency of the types of hedges (Table 2) and functional categories most frequently-used to hedge in the two sub-corpora, after which the findings are discussed from a diachronic perspective.

4.1. Frequency of occurrence of hedges in the two sub-corpora

Table 1 summarizes the results of a quantitative analysis of hedges occurring in the two sub-corpora. It is important to emphasize that the research is based on the analysis of RA abstracts from four linguistics journals. It is therefore more objective to interpret the findings as certain trends in the field. The table shows that the use of hedges in linguistics RA abstracts has increased significantly in the second period (31.2 per 1000 words in 2008–2014 vs 15.7 per words in 2015–2021). The RA abstracts written in 2015–2021 appear over-hedged in contrast to the ones written in 2008–2014. Writers tend to speculate more, avoiding categorical assertions to stay cautious and not to make inaccurate statements. In the first period, on the other hand, the writers are more likely to opt for a less dialogic style or employ alternative persuasive devices. An increase in the number of hedges in the second period may be interpreted as a diachronic change reflecting pressure on the Russian academic community, a desire of Russian writers to comply with the international academic writing conventions. In the first period, Russian writers seem to follow the rhetorical conventions of their native academic discourse.

Table 1. Hedges from a diachronic perspective (frequency per 1,000 words)

SC	Hedges
SC1	15.7
SC2	31.2

4.2. Distribution of hedges by type

If we take a look from another angle, that is, from the perspective of the most employed types of hedging in the two sub-corpora, the results are also different (Table 2).

Table 2. Hedging by type (% of the total)

Categories	SC1	SC2
<i>Content-oriented hedges</i>	92	93
- Accuracy-oriented	44	79
- Writer-oriented	51	11
<i>Reader-oriented hedges</i>	8	7

The table shows clear differences in the use of different types of hedging in the two periods. Although content-oriented hedging was generally more frequent than reader-oriented one in both sub-corpora, the distribution of its subtypes differed.

The results of the analysis of distribution of hedges across the functional categories in the two sub-corpora are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Distribution of hedges across the functional categories

Functional categories	SC1		SC2	
	%	Per 1000 words	%	Per 1000 words
<i>Nouns</i>				
Epistemic nouns	5.5	0.86	7.7	2.5
Probability nouns	7.1	1.11	6.9	2.24
Assertive nouns	0	0	0.49	0.97
Conative nouns	1.2	0.19	8.6	2.09
<i>Total</i>	<i>13.8</i>	<i>2.16</i>	<i>23.7</i>	<i>7.71</i>
<i>Adjectives</i>				
Probability adjectives	7.2	1.13	11.1	3.46
Frequency adjectives	1.1	0.17	3.3	1.03
<i>Total</i>	<i>8.8</i>	<i>1.3</i>	<i>14.4</i>	<i>4.49</i>
<i>Verbs</i>				
Epistemic verbs	9.5	1.52	11.42	2.93
Reporting verbs	19.8	3.1	17.3	5.4
Conative verbs	0	0	2.18	0.68
Modal verbs	21	3.3	10	3.7
<i>Total</i>	<i>50.3</i>	<i>5.92</i>	<i>40.8</i>	<i>12.71</i>
<i>Adverbs and adverbial expressions</i>				
Approximative adverbs and adverbial expressions	2	0.31	4.9	1.53
Frequency adverbs	7.1	1.11	4.6	1.44
Probability adverbs	5.2	0.82	4.7	1.47
<i>Total</i>	<i>15.2</i>	<i>2.24</i>	<i>14.2</i>	<i>4.44</i>
<i>Quantifiers</i>	9.7	1.49	4.9	1.53
<i>Total</i>	<i>9.7</i>	<i>1.49</i>	<i>4.9</i>	<i>1.53</i>
<i>Pronouns</i>				
First person plural pronouns	1.9	0.3	1.8	0.56
Possessive pronouns	1.2	0.19	0.1	0.03
<i>Total</i>	<i>3.1</i>	<i>0.49</i>	<i>1.9</i>	<i>0.59</i>
TOTAL	100	15.7	100	31.2

The study revealed that in SC1 hedging was most frequently realized through modal verbs (21%), reporting verbs (19.8%), and quantifiers (9.7%). In SC2, reporting verbs were the most frequently used functional category (17.3%). Epistemic verbs and probability adjectives were also among the frequently used hedging elements (11.42 and 11.1%, respectively). As can be seen, the frequency of occurrence of the functional categories differ significantly in the two sub-corpora. What is interesting is a limited number of lexical means used for hedging in SC1. In SC2, hedging was realized through a variety of the functional categories.

4.3. *Writer-oriented hedging and functional categories*

An analysis revealed that *writer-oriented hedges* as a subtype of content-oriented hedging were used more frequently in the RA abstracts written between 2015 and 2021. Contrary to the international academic writing instruction to avoid passive voice, the Russian writers sought to diminish their presence in the text by using passive structures. In most RA abstracts from SC1 (79%) and SC2 (69%), author's responsibility was reduced through the use of passive voice (1, 2, 3). The constructions of “abstract rhetors”, which are more typical of Anglophone academic writing style, were also used in the corpus but to a lesser extent (14% and 15.6%, respectively) (4, 5).

- (1) *Грамматическая категория **рассматривается** как двустороннее единство содержания и формы.* (The grammatical category **is considered** as a two-sided unity of content and form)¹ (SC2)
- (2) ***Выявлены** новые языковые тенденции (небинарный подход к отражению гендера; изменения в концептуализации расы, обозначении возраста и физического состояния личности) и коммуникативные практики, отвечающие требованиям инклюзивности.* (New language trends (non-binary approach to reflecting gender; changes in the conceptualization of race, designation of age and physical condition of the individual) and communication practices that meet the requirements of inclusiveness **were identified**). (SC2)

Reporting verbs (*исследуются, рассматривается, анализируется, описывается*) in passive structures were the most frequent functional categories of hedging in SC1. In (3), the author uses the epistemic verb with the aim of diminishing his presence in the text. The rate of occurrence of these lexical items was less significant:

- (3) *Отношения между прагматикой и лингвистикой могут быть **интерпретированы** тремя способами.* (The relationship between pragmatics and linguistics can **be interpreted** in three ways). (SC2)

Here are examples of constructions of “abstract rhetors” less frequently used to express writer-oriented hedging in both sub-corpora.

- (4) ***Анализ** когнитивных структурных элементов конфликтного дискурса **показывает**, что конфликтная интеракция возникает в том случае, когда происходит столкновение базовых концептов коммуникантов.* (The **analysis** of the cognitive structural elements of conflict discourse shows that conflict interaction occurs when the basic concepts of communicants collide). (SC1)
- (5) ***Результаты** анализа активности индивидуальных параметров и их групп позволили определить ряд значимых отличий в субдискурсах.* (The **results** of the analysis of the activity of individual parameters and

¹ As far as my aim here is to display the nature of hedging categories in Russian-medium academic texts, the translations provided are literal and may seem unidiomatic.

their groups made it possible to identify a number of significant differences in subdiscourses). (SC2)

By replacing the human subject with the non-human one expressed by the assertive **nouns** (*анализ, результаты*), the writers limited their commitment to the statements. Since the authors are seeking to demonstrate a contribution to scientific knowledge, claims such as in (4, 5) carry a risk, and the hedge is employed as an element of self-protection against possible criticism. By foregrounding *Анализ* ('analysis') and *Результаты* ('results'), the writers present views where data vested with agentivity is attributed with primary responsibility for an interpretation (Hyland 1996).

Table 4 shows the most frequent realizations of writer-oriented hedging in the two sub-corpora by functional categories.

Table 4. Most frequent writer-oriented hedges by functional categories (listed in descending order of frequency)

SC1		SC2	
Verbs Reporting verbs	<i>исследуется</i> 'is studied' <i>рассматривается</i> 'is considered' <i>анализируется</i> 'is analyzed' <i>описывается</i> 'is described'	Verbs Reporting verbs Epistemic verbs	<i>исследуется</i> 'is studied' <i>показывается</i> 'is shown' <i>рассматривается</i> 'is considered' <i>понимается</i> 'is understood' <i>оценивается</i> 'is assessed' <i>интерпретируется</i> 'is interpreted'
Nouns Assertive nouns	<i>анализ</i> 'analysis' <i>результат</i> 'result' <i>исследование</i> 'research' <i>статья</i> 'article'	Nouns Assertive nouns	<i>анализ</i> 'analysis' <i>исследование</i> 'research' <i>статья</i> 'article' <i>модель</i> 'model'

The results indicate that the only functional categories used to modify statements are reporting verbs and assertive nouns in SC1 and reporting and epistemic verbs and assertive nouns in SC2.

4.4. Accuracy-oriented hedging and functional categories

To persuade the reader to continue reading the article, “writers need to demonstrate that they not only have something new and worthwhile to say, but that they also have the professional credibility to address their topic as an insider” (Hyland 2004: 63). This persuasion is achieved with *accuracy-oriented hedges* used to seek precision in statements and indicate the writer’s confidence in the truth of a claim. In contrast to writer-oriented hedges, accuracy-oriented ones can be realized through a greater variety of the functional categories: nouns, adjectives, verbs, adverbs, and quantifiers.

The analysis revealed that in SC2, accuracy-oriented hedges were regularly expressed by **nouns** (see Table 3). In (6), the author uses the hedge expressed by the epistemic noun *гипотеза* ('hypothesis') to indicate that his claim may be inaccurate and is of speculative nature:

- (6) *Гипотеза* исследования заключается в том, что распределение частоты, или активности параметров дискурс-структурирующей категории лингвокреативности может быть использовано для проведения контрастного анализа субдискурсов при установлении степени сопряженности их многомерных векторов лингвокреативности. (The hypothesis of the study is that the distribution of the frequency or activity of the parameters of the discourse-structuring category of linguistic creativity can be used to conduct a contrastive analysis of subdiscourses when establishing the degree of conjugation of their multidimensional vectors of linguistic creativity). (SC2)

One more group of nouns employed to express accuracy-oriented hedging is probability nouns (7), which were regularly used only in the second time span.

- (7) *Акциональное понимание дискурса дает возможность охарактеризовать поведение личности в разных коммуникативных ситуациях, инкорпорированное в систему социального взаимодействия участников общения в соответствии с принятыми в этой системе культурными предписаниями.* (The actional understanding of discourse provides an opportunity to characterize the behavior of the individual in different communicative situations, incorporated into the system of social interaction of participants in communication in accordance with the cultural prescriptions adopted in this system). (SC2)

Conative nouns were also rather frequently employed by Russian authors in the second period (8.6% of all lexical means used for hedging) (8). In SC1, their share was rather low (1.2%).

- (8) *В статье представлена попытка осмыслить становление новых норм употребления обращений в регламентированных сферах общения.* (In the article an attempt to comprehend the development of new norms for using addresses in regulated areas of communication is presented). (SC1)

The least frequently used category of nouns (5% in SC2) was assertive nouns (9). In SC1, no instances of this category were found. In SC2, the rate of assertive nouns was insignificant.

- (9) *Территория порубежья (находящегося между) — место сбора нарушений традиционных норм и материал для прогноза нарождающихся изменений нормы.* (The territory of the frontier (located between) — a collection point for violations of traditional norms and the material for a prediction of emerging changes in the norm). (SC2)

Verbs used for accuracy-oriented hedging were also presented by several categories, such as epistemic verbs, reporting verbs, conative verbs, and modal verbs.

Epistemic verbs were regularly used in both sub-corpora to express subjective uncertainty in a proposition (10).

- (10) Семантика новой конструкции ‘ни разу не N’ **предполагает** экспрессивное отрицание принадлежности к категории, выраженной объектом с определенными свойствами. (The semantics of the new construction *never N* **means** an expressive negation of belonging to a category expressed by an object with certain properties.) (SC2)

In the above example, the writer uses the epistemic verb *предполагает* ‘implies’ functioning as a hedge to carry uncertainty.

Accuracy-oriented hedges expressed by reporting verbs were employed to show the adoption of a more tentative stance (11).

- (11) В частности, применительно к анализируемому роману авторы статьи **рассматривают** хронотоп в виде частной когнитивной матрицы ПРОСТРАНСТВЕННО-ВРЕМЕННОЙ КОТИНУУМ. (In particular, in relation to the analyzed novel, the authors of the article **consider** the chronotope as a particular cognitive matrix SPACE-TIME CONTINUUM). (SC2)

Conative verbs were found only in SC2 (12). Their share was insignificant as compared to other functional categories of hedging verbs (see Table 3).

- (12) Автор статьи **пытается**, в частности, оценить такие общественные инициативы, касающиеся русского языка, как «тотальный диктант» и «слово года». (The author of the article **tries**, in particular, to evaluate public initiatives regarding the Russian language such as “total dictation” and “word of the year”). (SC1)

Both in SC1 and SC2, accuracy-oriented hedging was regularly realized through the modal verb *мочь*, which deals with the epistemically possible. This hedge “suggests the writer’s reservations concerning whether the situation actually obtains, keeping interpretations close to findings, where claims may be less tenuous” (Hyland 1996: 12) and helps distinguish between information as a fact and information as an opinion (13).

- (13) Положения, разработанные в ходе исследования, и полученные результаты анализа **могут** быть в дальнейшем применены при моделировании механизмов противостояния и противодействия террористической суггестии в киберпространстве и медийной среде. (The provisions developed in the study and the results of the analysis **can** be further applied in modeling the mechanisms of confrontation and counteraction to the terrorist suggestion in cyberspace and the media environment). (SC2)

The author seems to be cautious in making claims about the results of his research and their further application. The accuracy-oriented hedge *могут* is used to convey the author’s uncertainty about what he is claiming.

Among the *adjectives* used for accuracy-oriented hedging, probability adjectives were the most frequent in the second period (14, 15). As can be seen in

Table 3, in the first period, this category of adjectives was used to a lesser extent (1.13 vs 3.46 per 1000 words in SC1 and SC2, respectively).

- (14) *В статье представлено исследование четырех англоязычных учебных словарей для изучающих английский язык как неродной в странах Расширяющегося круга с позиции **возможного** отражения ими положений контактной вариантологии английского языка.* (The article presents a study of four English-language educational dictionaries for learners of English as non-native language in the Expanding Circle countries in terms of their **possible** reflection of the provisions of the contact variantology of the English language). (SC2)
- (15) *Автор приходит к выводу о существовании **очевидных** жанровых различиях между богатырской сказкой и героическим эпосом.* (The author comes to the conclusion that there are **obvious** genre differences between the heroic fairy tale and the heroic epos). (SC2)

The next category of adjectives used to hedge is frequency adjectives (16). They were found in both sub-corpora, but their share was smaller than that of probability adjectives (0.17 vs. 1.03 per 1000 words in SC1 and SC2, respectively).

- (16) *В статье выявляются причины **частого** употребления уменьшительно-ласкательных суффиксов в национальных вариантах испанского языка Перу и Боливии.* (In the article reasons for the **frequent** use of diminutive suffixes in the national variants of Spanish in Peru and Bolivia are identified). (SC1)

Adverbs and adverbial expressions were often used by Russian authors to express probability, frequency of occurrence, or uncertainty. The example below seems to be largely concerned with probability.

- (17) *При высокой степени условности разделения параллельных текстов все же **возможно** выделение существенных для перевода одинаковых параметров.* (With a high degree of conventional division of parallel texts, it is still **possible** to identify identical parameters essential for translation). (SC2)

One more category of adverbs and adverbial expressions employed to express hedging is approximative adverbs and adverbial expressions, which were frequently used in SC2, while in SC1 their rate was less significant (18, 19).

- (18) *К 2011 г. «академическая репутация» предстает как неустойчивое понятие, отсылки к академической репутации создают **главным образом** эмоциональную привлекательность для продвижения образовательных услуг.* (By 2011 “academic reputation” appears to be an unsustainable concept, references to academic reputation **mainly** create emotional appeal for promoting educational services). (SC1)
- (19) *Отмечен **достаточно** низкий уровень функционирования авторских (оказиональных) афоризмов в региональных языках.* (A **rather** low level of functioning of author's (occasional) aphorisms in regional languages was observed). (SC2)

This group scales down the intensity of adjectives, reducing the affective impact of statements.

One more group of adverbs and adverbial expressions employed to mark reliability is adverbs of frequency (20, 21), which were regularly used in both sub-corpora.

- (20) *Как правило, развертывание и включение предполагают алогичность.* (As a rule, deployment and inclusion suggest illogicality). (SC2)
- (21) *В статье раскрываются лингвопрагматические особенности реализации речевого акта Приглашение в американской коммуникативной культуре, которые часто являются причиной коммуникативных неудач в межкультурном общении.* (In the article the linguopragmatic features of the speech act Invitation in American communicative culture, which are often the cause of communicative failures in intercultural communication, are described). (SC1)

The hedges are used to moderate the assertive statements, impart vagueness and generality to the propositions.

One more functional category — **quantifiers** — was quite often used by Russian authors in both periods (22, 23). The frequency of occurrence of this functional category was rather high as compared to other categories used for hedging.

- (22) *При этом данная система вызывает много трудностей как при изучении родного языка, так и иностранного.* (At the same time, this system causes many difficulties both in the study of native and foreign language). (SC1)
- (23) *Также выявляются некоторые зависимости в реализации данных лингвистических показателей и способов графического маркирования салиентности.* (Some dependencies in the implementation of these linguistic indicators and methods of graphic marking of salience are also revealed). (SC2)

Table 5 shows the most frequent realizations of accuracy-oriented hedging in the two sub-corpora by functional categories.

Table 5. Most frequent accuracy-oriented hedges by functional categories (listed in descending order of frequency)

SC1		SC2	
Verbs		Verbs	
Epistemic verbs	<i>считать</i> 'consider'	Epistemic verbs	<i>предполагать</i> 'imply' <i>считать</i> 'consider'
Reporting verbs	<i>рассматривать</i> 'consider'	Reporting verbs	<i>рассматривать</i> 'consider' <i>описывать</i> 'describe'
Modal verbs	<i>анализировать</i> 'analyze' <i>мочь</i> 'can'	Conative verbs	<i>пытаться</i> 'try'
		Modal verbs	<i>мочь</i> 'can'

SC1		SC2	
<i>Nouns</i> Epistemic nouns Probability nouns Conative nouns	<i>Гипотеза</i> 'hypothesis' <i>возможность</i> 'possibility' <i>вероятность</i> 'probability' <i>попытка</i> 'attempt'	<i>Nouns</i> Epistemic nouns Probability nouns Assertive nouns Conative nouns	<i>гипотеза</i> 'hypothesis' <i>оценка</i> 'assessment' <i>интерпретация</i> 'interpretation' <i>возможность</i> 'possibility' <i>вероятность</i> 'probability' <i>потенциал</i> 'potential' <i>тенденция</i> 'trend' <i>прогноз</i> 'prediction' <i>попытка</i> 'attempt'
<i>Adjectives</i> Probability adjectives Frequency adjectives	<i>возможный</i> 'possible' <i>сомнительный</i> 'doubtful' <i>спорный</i> 'disputable' <i>регулярный</i> 'recurrent'	<i>Adjectives</i> Probability adjectives Frequency adjectives	<i>очевидный</i> 'obvious' <i>возможный</i> 'possible' <i>вероятный</i> 'probable' <i>гипотетический</i> 'hypothetical' <i>явный</i> 'evident' <i>частый</i> 'frequent' <i>регулярный</i> 'regular'
<i>Adverbs and adverbial expressions</i> Approximative adverbs and adverbial expressions Frequency adverbs Probability adverbs	<i>главным образом</i> 'mainly' <i>достаточно</i> 'rather' <i>в целом</i> 'in general' <i>часто</i> 'often' <i>обычно</i> 'usually' <i>иногда</i> 'sometimes' <i>возможно</i> 'possible' <i>очевидно</i> 'obvious'	<i>Adverbs and adverbial expressions</i> Approximative adverbs and adverbial expressions Frequency adverbs Probability adverbs	<i>прежде всего</i> 'first of all' <i>почти</i> 'almost' <i>более</i> 'more' <i>как правило</i> 'as a rule' <i>часто</i> 'often' <i>регулярно</i> 'regularly' <i>вероятно</i> 'probably' <i>возможно</i> 'possibly' <i>предположительно</i> 'presumably'
<i>Quantifiers</i>	<i>много</i> 'many', 'much'	<i>Quantifiers</i>	<i>некоторые</i> 'some' <i>несколько</i> 'several' <i>часть</i> 'part'

4.5. Reader-oriented hedging and functional categories

In the corpus, hedges were used not only as a strategy to convince the reader to continue reading the article by demonstrating that the author has the professional credibility to address the topic, but also to invite the audience to get involved in a discussion about the writers' views. This function is realized through the use of *reader-oriented hedges*. In contrast to content-oriented hedging devices, this group

accounts for only 8% and 7% in SC1 and SC2, respectively. Here are examples from the corpus.

- (24) *Мы рассматриваем такие параметры текста, как полифункциональность, многозначность и антропоцентричность, и выявляем три его важнейшие функции: когнитивную, коммуникативную и эстетическую. (We consider such parameters of the text as polyfunctionality, ambiguity and anthropocentricity, and identify three of its most important functions: cognitive, communicative and aesthetic). (SC2)*
- (25) *Материалом для исследования служат тексты анекдотов на испанском языке из сборников анекдотов, периодики, интернет-сайтов, а также нами исследуются образцы данного речевого жанра, полученные от информантов — носителей испанского языка (пиренейский вариант). (The material for the study is Spanish texts of jokes from the collections of jokes, periodicals, websites, and samples of this speech genre received from informants – native speakers of Spanish (Pyrenean version) — are also analyzed by us). (SC1)*

The first person plural pronouns are used to soften the effect of criticism. As Hyland (1996: 20) put it, “an overt acceptance of personal responsibility mitigates the expression of a proposition and signifies a reader-oriented hedge”. The analysis revealed that the first person plural and possessive pronouns were the only functional categories used for reader-oriented hedging in the corpus (see Table 6).

Table 6. Most frequent reader-oriented hedges by functional categories (listed in descending order of frequency)

SC1		SC2	
<i>Pronouns</i>		<i>Pronouns</i>	
First person plural pronouns	<i>мы 'we'</i>	First person plural pronouns	<i>мы 'we'</i>
Possessive pronouns	<i>нам(у) 'us'</i>	Possessive pronouns	<i>наш 'our'</i>
	<i>наш 'our'</i>		
	<i>наши 'our'</i>		

The corpus-based analysis revealed several instances of first-person plural pronouns even in the single-authored articles (0.19 per 1,000 words in SC1 and 0.11 per 1,000 words in SC2). I can assume that this trend reflects culture-specific writing preferences or inexperience of some Russian authors with international academic writing conventions. Even in our globalized world, some scholars tend to adhere to well-established writing standards of their national academic communities. This view was also supported by Shchemeleva (2019), who explains writing preferences by national traditions, which give no room to make pronominal choices. In the literature, the heavy use of first-person plural pronouns, which is seen as inappropriate in English academic prose, is also explained by the author’s desire to enhance the significance of the work presenting his/her claims as the opinion of a scientific school. In addition, as Krapivkina (2014) put it, the use of

first-person plural pronouns instead of “I” by Russian scholars is rooted in collectivism typical of Russian culture and unconscious fear of manifesting individual contributions to the field. Collectivism makes scholars write on behalf of a larger academic community and hide their authorial ego. One more explanation of using first-person plural pronouns instead of the first-person “I” was provided by Kozhina (1977), who believes that authorial “we” is used to show modesty. In the same vein, Larina et al. (2017: 123) claim that “I” is hardly used in Russian academic discourse, as it is associated with arrogance and “it is considered stylistically inappropriate to make the authorial voice so visible”.

5. Concluding remarks

This article explored hedging in Russian-medium RA abstracts from a diachronic perspective, which previously did not attract much attention of linguists. Although recently many studies on hedging in academic discourse have emerged, they have focused on a synchronic perspective only. This article adopted a diachronic approach dealing with variation in the use of hedging devices in Russian academic prose in the two different periods. At the beginning of this research the assumption was that the distribution of functional categories of hedges in Russian-medium RA abstracts had evolved over time. The study confirmed this assumption. In 2008–2014, Russian authors showed a tendency to underuse hedges and regularly employed only three functional categories of lexical items. The study revealed that in the first period of research (2004–2008) hedging was most frequently realized through modals, reporting verbs and quantifiers. In the second time span (2015–2021), reporting verbs, epistemic verbs and adjectives of probability were among the most frequent functional categories. Overall, the distribution of functional categories of hedging changed in the second period when hedging was realized through a variety of lexical means belonging to different functional categories.

In terms of the functions of hedging employed, the difference was also striking. In 2008–2014 the Russian authors used hedges to diminish their presence in the text, while in 2015–2021 they hedged to point toward possible methodological limitations and to signal inaccuracies of research results. In other words, in 2008–2014 the authors preferred writer-oriented hedges to shield themselves from the consequences of opposition, whereas in 2015–2021 accuracy-oriented hedges were frequently employed to negotiate the precision of claims and convey an attitude towards them. The reasons for these differences are complex, but I can attribute them to the weakening intrusion of national Russian criteria of good writing in 2015–2021 when Russian academic writers gained greater awareness of the international academic writing norms due to the need to publish internationally. Russian writers have been learning to present their claims cautiously and accurately both in Russian- and English-medium texts. However, some trends in the abstracts selected to build the corpus seem to contradict international academic writing

requirements. These include the employment of passive voice instead of active voice or first-person plural pronouns in single-authored academic texts. These trends were explained in cultural terms as an accepted Russian academic writing practice. Russian scholars are instructed to avoid authorial я ('I') and use passive voice or first-person plural pronouns instead. What is promising however, is that the number of these metadiscourse elements has slightly decreased in SC2, which also indicates that Russian writers have become more aware of international academic writing style.

It should be admitted here that the research results presented in the article are limited due to a small size of the corpus. Further research involving longer periods would be required to verify findings on diachronic variation in the metadiscourse patterns. Hedges could be also investigated from other perspectives. It would be interesting to compare the distribution of hedges in English-and Russia-medium RA abstracts by Russian scholars. In this way, we will be able to reveal differences in the employment of hedges in the international and national academic contexts and provide novice writers with guiding principles regarding hedging in academic prose. Cross-cultural and cross-disciplinary variation in the use of hedges in RA abstracts could be also of interest. This study focused on only one type of interactional metadiscourse. Further research into other metadiscourse markers, such as boosters, self-mentions, or attitude markers, would broaden the scope. Last but not least, future research could involve interviews of academic writers to analyze considerations they take into account when using metadiscourse in their English-or Russian-medium research articles. Thus, despite the above-mentioned limitations, this study could be seen as a starting point for future studies of metadiscourse in academic prose from cross-disciplinary, cross-cultural or diachronic perspectives.

REFERENCES

- Al-Khasawneh, Fadi Maher. 2017. A genre analysis of research article abstracts written by native and non-native speakers of English. *Journal of Applied Linguistics and Language Research* 4 (1). 1–13.
- Alonso-Almeida, Francisco. 2014. Evidential and epistemic devices in English and Spanish medical, computing and legal scientific abstracts: A contrastive study. In Marina Bondi & Rosa Lorés Sanz (eds.), *Abstracts in academic discourse: Variation and change*, 11–23. Bern: Peter Lang.
- Alward, Ali. 2012. Hedges and Boosters in the Yemeni EFL Undergraduates' Persuasive Essay: An Empirical Study. *The Internet Journal of Language, Culture and Society* 34. 1–12.
- Aull, Laura & Zak Lancaster. 2014. Linguistic Markers of Stance in Early and Advanced Academic Writing: A Corpus-based Comparison. *Written Communication* 31 (2). 151–183.
- Belyakova, Maria. 2017. English-Russian cross-linguistic comparison of research article abstracts in geoscience. *Estudios de Lingüística Universidad de Alicante* 31. 27–45.
- Brown, Penelope & Stephen Levinson. 1987. *Politeness: Some Universals in Language Usage*. Cambridge University.
- Channel, Joanne. 1994. *Vague Language*. Oxford University Press.

- Chen, Chenghui & Lawrence Jun Zhang. 2017. An intercultural analysis of the use of hedging by Chinese and Anglophone academic English writers. *Applied Linguistics Review* 8 (1). 1–34.
- Clemen, Gudrun. 1997. The concept of hedging: Origins, approaches and definitions. In Raija Markkanen & Hartmut Schröder (eds.), *Hedging and discourse. Approaches to the analysis of a pragmatic phenomenon in academic texts*, 235–248. New York: Walter de Gruyter.
- Connor, Ulla & Anna Moreno. 2005. Tertium comparationis: A vital component in contrastive rhetoric research. In Paul Bruthiaux (ed.), *Directions in applied linguistics: Essays in Honor of Robert B. Kaplan. Multilingual matters*, 153–164. Clevedon.
- Crompton, Peter. 1997. Hedging in academic writing: Some theoretical problems. *English for Specific Purposes* 16 (4). 271–287.
- Crismore, Avon & William Vande Kopple. 1988. Reader's learning from prose. The effect of hedges. *Written Communication* 5 (2). 184–202.
- Dontcheva-Navratilova, Olga. 2016. Cross-cultural variation in the use of hedges and boosters in academic discourse. *Prague Journal of English Studies* 5 (1). 163–184.
- Haufiku, Nafital & Jairos Kangira. 2018. An exploration of hedging and boosting devices used in academic discourse focusing on English theses at the University of Namibia. *Studies in English Language Teaching* 6 (1). 1–11.
- Heng, Chan & Helen Tan. 2022. *May BE, Perhaps, I Believe, You Could Making Claims and the Use of Hedges*. University of Malaysia.
- Holmes, Richard. 1997. Genre analysis and the Social science: An investigation of the structure of research article discussion sections in three disciplines. *English for Specific Purposes* 16. 321–337.
- Hu, Guangwei & Feng Cao. 2011. Hedging and boosting in abstracts of applied linguistics articles: A comparative study of English-and Chinese-medium journals. *Journal of Pragmatics* 43 (1). 2795–2809.
- Hubler, Axel. 1983. *Understatements and Hedges in English*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia, PA: John Benjamin's PC.
- Hyland, Ken. 1995 The author in the text: Hedging in scientific writing. *Hong Kong Papers in Linguistics and Language Teaching* 18. 33–42.
- Hyland, Ken. 1996. Writing without conviction? Hedging in scientific research articles. *Applied Linguistics* 17. 433–454.
- Hyland, Ken. 1998. *Hedging in Scientific Research Articles*. Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Hyland, Ken. 2004. *Disciplinary Discourses: Social Interactions in Academic Writing*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press.
- Hyland, Ken & Hang Zou. 2021. "I believe the findings are fascinating": Stance in three-minute these. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes* 50. 100973.
- Ji, Xiaoli. 2015. Comparison of abstracts written by native speakers and second language learners. *Open Journal of Modern Linguistics* 5. 470–474.
- Kozhina, Margarita. 1977. *Stylistics of the Russian Language*. Moscow: Prosveshchenie.
- Kozubíková Šandová, Jana. 2021. Interpersonality in research article abstracts: A diachronic case study. *Discourse and Interaction* 14 (1). 77–99.
- Krapivkina, Olga. 2014. Pronominal choice in academic discourse. *Middle-East Journal of Scientific Research* 20 (7). 833–843.
- Lakoff, John. 1973. The logic of politeness: Or, minding your p's and q's. In Claudia Corum (ed.), *Papers from the 9th Regional Meeting of the Chicago Linguistic Society*, 292–305. Chicago Linguistic Society.

- Larina, Tatiana, Vladimir Ozyumenko & Svetlana Kurteš. 2017. I-identity vs we-identity in language and discourse: Anglo-Slavonic perspectives. *Lodz Papers in Pragmatics* 13 (1). 109–128.
- Larina, Tatiana & Douglas Mark Ponton. 2020. Tact or frankness in English and Russian blind peer reviews. *Intercultural Pragmatics* 17 (4). 471–496.
- Lenardič, Jakob & Darja Fišer. 2021. Hedging modal adverbs in Slovenian academic discourse. *Slovenščina 2.0* 9 (1). 145–180.
- Markkane, Raija & Harmut Schröder. 1997. Hedging: A challenge for pragmatics and discourse analysis. In Pakja Markkanen & Hartmut Schröder (eds.), *Hedging and discourse: Approaches to the analysis of a Pragmatic phenomenon in academic texts*, 3–18. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.
- Martin, Pedro. 2001. Epistemic modality in English and Spanish psychological tests. *Revista de Lenguas para Fines Específicos* 8. 195–208.
- Mauranen, Anna. 1997. *Hedging and Discourse. Approaches to the Analysis of a Pragmatic Phenomenon in Academic Texts*. New York: Walter de Gruyter.
- Myers, Greg. 1989. The pragmatics of politeness in scientific articles. *Applied Linguistics* 10. 1–35.
- Petchkij, Worawanna. 2019. Explicit teaching of hedges: Bringing hedging in academic writing into the Thai EFL Classroom. *Electronic Journal of Foreign Language Teaching* 16 (1). 95–113.
- Prince, Elen. 1982. *On Hedging in Physician Discourse*. Amsterdam: Ablex Publishing Corporation.
- Rezanejad, Atefeh. 2015. A Cross-Cultural Analysis of the Use of Hedging Devices in Scientific Research Articles. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research* 6 (6). 1384–1392.
- Salager-Meyer, Françoise. 1994. Hedges and textual communicative function in medical English written discourse. *English for Specific Purpose* 13 (2). 149–170.
- Shchemeleva, Irina. 2019. “It seems plausible to maintain that...”: Clusters of epistemic stance expressions in written academic ELF texts. *ESP Today* 7 (1). 24–43.
- Sládková, Vera. 2017. Hedging in academic discourse: Native English speakers vs. Czech and Slovak writers. *Littera Scripta* 10 (2). 110–129.
- Takimoto, Masahiro. 2015. A Corpus-based analysis of hedges and boosters in English academic articles. *Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics* 5 (1). 95–105.
- Thuy, Nguen Thi Thuy. 2018. A Corpus-based study on cross-cultural divergence in the use of hedges in academic research articles written by Vietnamese and native English-speaking authors. *Social Sciences* 7 (4). 1–13.
- Varttala, Teppo. 2001. *Hedging in Scientifically Oriented Discourse: Exploring Variatio*. University of Tampere.
- Vassileva, Irena. 2001. Commitment and detachment in English and Bulgarian academic writing. In Anna Duszak (ed.), *Culture and styles of academic discourse*, 83–103. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Yagiz, Oktay & Cuneyt Demir. 2014. Hedging strategies in academic discourse: A comparative analysis of Turkish writers and native writers of English. *Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences* 158. 260–268.

Article history:

Received: 18 January 2022

Accepted: 21 April 2022

Bionote:

Olga A. BOGINSKAYA is Doctor Habil., Professor at the Department of Foreign Languages, Irkutsk National Research Technical University. Her research interests lie in the field of professional and academic discourse studies. She has publications in peer-reviewed academic journals in the field of linguistics such as *Discourse Studies*, *ESP Today*, *Revista de Llengua et Drett*, *Elope: English Language Overseas Perspectives and Enquire*, *Slavia Centralis*, *International Journal of Language Studies* among others.

e-mail: olga_boginskaya@mail.ru

ORCID: 0000-0002-9738-8122

Сведения об авторе:

Ольга Александровна БОГИНСКАЯ – доктор филологических наук, профессор кафедры иностранных языков Института лингвистики и межкультурной коммуникации Иркутского национального исследовательского технического университета. Область исследовательский интересов: анализ профессионального и академического дискурса. Имеет публикации в ряде высокорейтинговых лингвистических журналов: *Discourse Studies*, *ESP Today*, *Revista de Llengua et Drett*, *ELOPE: English Language Overseas Perspectives and Enquire*, *Slavia Centralis*, *International Journal of Language Studies* и др.

e-mail: olga_boginskaya@mail.ru

ORCID: 0000-0002-9738-8122