

**UNIVERSITY OF TARTU
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH STUDIES**

**HEDGE USE AND AWARENESS IN ENGLISH ACADEMIC
WRITING AMONG ESTONIAN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS**
BA thesis

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ABSTRACT

Academic language can be distinguished from colloquial language in a number of ways, one of those being the importance of textual metadiscourse markers, which include but are not limited to hedges, boosters, metaphors, and reformulations. Hedges, which are defined as interactional metadiscourse devices utilized by a speaker or a writer to withhold commitment and open dialogue, based on the definitions provided by Hyland (2005) and Aull (2015), are a crucial element of academic writing. With that in mind, we explored the hedge use of four purposively sampled Estonian university students from the English Language and Literature department at the University of Tartu through text analysis and adapted stimulated recall interviews. The objective of the study was to seek answers to the questions on the frequency of the hedging employed by the participants and how they compare to corpus data; on the participants' abilities to identify their own use of hedges; and on how the participants' rationales may relate to what is available in the relevant literature.

In the Introduction, the problem and the objective of the study were articulated, as were the research questions that were to be explored. The Introduction was followed up by the Literature Review section, where contrastive writing traditions were discussed. Following a "general to specific" organization, the issues of academic writing and academic writing in the Estonian context were explored. Finally, the Literature Review ended with a discussion of the current literature on hedges. The design of the study, the sampling strategies taken into account, and the rationales for the selected data collection tools as well as their descriptions, were laid out in the Methods section. In the Results, the analysis of the collected data was presented in accordance with the research questions that guided the study. The Discussion section aimed at interpreting the analyzed data in order to be able to draw conclusions in line with the current literature on the themes that emerged during the data analysis. Finally, a summary of the study was presented in the Conclusion section.

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INTRODUCTION

One of the characteristics of academic language is the “central role of textual metadiscourse markers” (Snow & Uccelli 2009: 119). Metadiscourse markers such as hedges, boosters, metaphors, and reformulations (Fairclough 1992: 122) are considered to be crucial elements of written language that help writers organize their texts in a coherent and convincing manner, aid them in expressing their point of view regarding the content, and contribute to engaging the reader in a dialogic interaction as a participant (Hyland 2005).

Hedges or hedging devices are particularly important since they allow claims to be made with due caution, modesty, and humility while also allowing for a diplomatic negotiation of the claims when referring to the works of others. Additionally, in a study conducted by Hyland (2005), it was found that 83% of all the metadiscourse employed in the studied text were either hedges or boosters; hedges being four times more prevalent than boosters. In accordance with Hyland (2005), Hinkel (2005), quoting from Myers (1989: 9), also notes that:

The uses of hedging are highly conventionalized in academic writing and appear to be particularly necessary in texts that include claim-making and/or expressing personal positions or points of view. (Hinkel 2005: 30)

As for what constitutes a hedge, there are varying accounts. While Lakoff (1973) simply notes that hedges are “words whose job is to make things fuzzier or less fuzzy” (1973: 471), Hyland (2000) states they are “expressions of doubt used by writers to tone down their ‘potentially risky claims’” (2000: 179). Despite the fact that there is no fully agreed upon definition of what a hedge is, it is possible to define a hedge or a hedging device as an interactional metadiscourse device utilized by a speaker or a writer that withholds commitment and opens dialogue based on the definitions provided by Hyland (2005) and Aull (2015).

Another important aspect of hedges or hedging devices is how they are employed. It is noted in Chen and Zhang (2017) that hedging strategies, among other things, are one of the vital

indicators of L2, and by extension L1, pragmatic competence. While pragmatic competence in all that it might entail is beyond the scope of this study, the frequency with which hedges are employed, and whether the participants are aware of their own instances of hedge use, is the focus of this study since these prominent features of the written language can be taken as one of a number of crucial indicators of “fluent” academic writing. To that end, the following research questions guided the study:

- 1) at what frequency the hedges have been employed by the participants and how those frequencies compare to average frequencies of university students obtained through corpus data;
- 2) their ability to identify their own use of hedges; and
- 3) whether their rationales for their hedge use can be related to the literature.

While writing in a foreign language is viewed as challenging in and of itself (Hinkel 1997), the research on the use of hedges in academic writing in English in the Estonian context appears rather limited. As this study explores the hedge use of a purposively selected sample of participants in terms of frequency and awareness in a two-layered manner (intrinsically by the authors of the academic texts themselves and extrinsically by a team of coders), the findings might be salient in terms of future research involving the relationship between employment and awareness of hedges and other kinds of metadiscourse markers in academic writing in English in Estonia and elsewhere.

This thesis is divided into four main sections. Section 1 is the Literature Review; Section 2 encompasses the Methods; Section 3 encompasses the Results; and Section 4 consists of a Discussion.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW

1.1. Contrasting writing traditions

In the context of writing research across cultures, one strong contrast which is often referred to when comparing writing traditions in English, from here on referred to as the Anglo-American tradition of writing, and the writing traditions originating from other European languages, from here on referred to as the continental writing tradition (Rienecker and Stray Jörgensen 2003), is reader-responsible writing and writer-responsible writing. While reader-responsible writing is generally considered to be writing where the responsibility falls on the reader to understand the meaning of the text, writer-responsible writing is generally considered to be writing where the writer bears the responsibility for making the text understandable to the reader. In that case, German writing could be considered reader-responsible and English writing, writer-responsible. Rienecker and Stray Jörgensen (2003), in their discussion on how to go about meeting the needs of “continental” writers in university writing centers (which have their origins in the Anglo-American tradition), summarized some characteristics of what they call the “Continental (German-Romanic) tradition”, as well as those of the “Anglo-American (British-American tradition”, acknowledging that these characteristics exist on a continuum (2003: 103). Some of the text features they claim distinguish Continental writing from Anglo-American writing include: research questions often beginning with “what” or “who” (as opposed to “why” or “how”); more flexible structures; digressions; less information meant to guide the reader (metacommunication, sub-headers, etc.); short introductions and long paragraphs; complex and varied language; a more obvious authorial presence in “reasoning, thoughts, conclusions /.../ [and] style” (Rienecker and Stray Jörgensen 2003: 105).

It is also important to consider text genre, as well, however. We can assume that different genres in the same language or even examples of what could be considered the same genre across academic disciplines in the same language may have different expectations and/or conventions. We can also assume then, that though there may be certain rhetorical preferences in Anglo-American writing, or continental writing, or Chinese writing, generally speaking, it is also possible to see more or less similar styles of writing across languages in texts belonging to certain genres or disciplines. In fact, this appears to be the case with medical texts; Dahl (2004) concludes that because a set structure for writing up medical research is globally implemented (the IMRD model – Introduction, Methods, Results, Discussion), cultural preferences play much less of a role than they might in other disciplines. One might assume then, that even if writing in the Anglo-American tradition is ideally writer-responsible, and writing in the Continental tradition or traditions is often reader-responsible (and that this is the ideal, or at least not considered “bad writing”), something like a Bachelor’s thesis, Master’s thesis, or Doctoral dissertation may also be ideally writer-responsible, regardless of language or culture, if a committee made up of academic staff, who, while assumed to be experts of some field or sub-field, may not be experts in the field of the work they are tasked with evaluating. In such a situation, being as explicit as possible may be seen as preferable. On the other hand, it may be that writing in what could be described as a reader-responsible manner does not require more effort to process by someone who is from a linguistic community that regularly utilizes this manner of writing (MacKenzie 2015: 10).

1.2. Academic Writing

In the context of writing academically in English, and in the context of this study, it is important to provide a general description of academic writing. In other words, what makes

writing academic? What linguistic or text features are features of academic writing? While there is no universally agreed upon definition of academic writing, there have certainly been attempts to describe it which support the context of this investigation. Snow and Uccelli (2009), for example, finding that “explicit discussion of linguistic expectations...and some explicit teaching about [academic language] might be useful”, attempt to outline the important “linguistic features identified under the domains of knowledge involved in academic language” (2009: 118). Essentially, they synthesize previous work done by other scholars, producing a table consisting of five linguistic features (interpersonal stance, information load, organization of information, lexical choices, representational congruence) and “three core domains of cognitive accomplishment” (genre mastery, reasoning strategies, and disciplinary knowledge) (Snow and Uccelli 2009: 118-120). In it they outline how those features manifest in “more colloquial” and “more academic” language. With regard to academic language, interpersonal stance is described as “detached/distanced” and “authoritative”; the information load is characterized by “conciseness” but with a higher proportion of content words (density); lexical choices involve “high lexical diversity”, “precision”, and the use of formal expressions and “abstract/technical concepts”; and representational congruence involves the use of complex sentences, as well as clause embedding and nominalization in more advanced academic language (Snow and Uccelli 2009: 119). What they refer to as organization of information, in more academic language, is characterized by the embedding, where “one element is a structural part of another”, the “central role of textual metadiscourse markers”, autonomous text, and “stepwise logical argumentation” which is “tightly constructed” (Snow and Uccelli 2009: 119).

Because English has become a kind of lingua franca in academia, the ability to produce academic writing in the English language has become a very desirable skill and has resulted in the development of an entire body of research focused on how to most effectively teach this

skill. EAP (English for Academic Purposes) and ESP (English for Specific Purposes) courses have been implemented globally, one of the goals of which being the teaching those whose first language is not English the writing skills needed to produce academic texts in English. Writing centers housed at universities, which appear to have originated in the US, have also expanded to other countries. While the writing assistance offered may be in the official language of the country and/or university, in English, or both, it appears that the writing center model is essentially borrowed from the American context (Rienecker & Stray Jørgensen 2003: 101).

1.3. Academic Writing in Estonia

If we accept the notion that there is a continental tradition or traditions of writing, it appears that Estonian could be considered continental, through the distinction made earlier writer-, reader-responsible writing. Rummel (2005) attributes historical Estonian “writing conventions” largely to the influence of those of the German, Russian, and Finnish styles (Rummel 2005: 22). She assumes that Germans and Estonians likely have a “similar writing style”, stating that German writing demonstrates a preference for: writing inductively; a structure allowing for “interruptions and digressions”; and “complex syntactic structures” (Rummel 2005: 54). She goes on to characterize Estonian writing convention directly, without referring to its comparability to German writing, as apparently emphasizing “content over form” through a preference for “digression, textual asymmetry and discontinuity of argument” (Rummel 2005: 54). She also states that it is possible to classify Estonian as a reader-responsible language and that explicit division of a text into sections (i.e., introduction, methods, discussion, etc.) is less common in Estonian writing than in English writing (Rummel 2005: 55). In spite of all of this, she also acknowledges that the “norms” of English academic writing have influenced

Estonian writers “which marks the transition away from the formerly accepted writing system” (Rummel 2005: 22).

Rummel (2005) also discusses the problems that she believes L2 writers of English face in the Estonian context. Besides the rhetorical differences themselves, there is also the issue of how writing is taught in the educational system. Rummel (2005) claims that the essay is generally utilized in Estonia to test the “L1 competence” of writers (i.e., it is utilized in Estonian language classes for native speakers in schools) and that in other subject areas (i.e., history, biology, etc.), students generally write “summary-type texts” which eschew “developing arguments” in favor of “conveying facts” (2005: 23). She claims that the expository essay is most prevalent in L1 writing, and that the format is “quite loose” (Rummel 2005: 23). In Anglo-American writing, on the other hand, the essay has wide acceptance as a way of “assessing writers’ mastery both of knowledge and of prose-composition skills” and the Anglo-American writer needs to “master the argumentative type of essay” (Rummel 2005: 23).

When it comes to writing in English, Rummel (2010) states that even when “Estonian academic writers /.../ appear linguistically quite proficient in English” it may be that the writing they produce does not always successfully “[communicate] their knowledge to the intended readership” (Rummel 2010: 21-22). She states that they may have issues that include but are not limited to: “purpose and the reader-writer relationship, text overall organisation and patterning, coherence and cohesion, argumentation and style, metadiscourse, and genre conventions” which can be related back to their lack of familiarity with the “discourse and socio-cultural differences” of English and Estonian (Rummel 2010: 22). When it comes to metadiscourse, and hedging in particular, Männamaa (2014), in his study which compared Economics MA theses written by Anglophone and Estonian writers of English, found that while it does not appear that Estonian writers used fewer hedges than Anglophone writers (and may have in fact used more), the kinds

of hedges they employed and/or the frequencies with which they were employed was different (2014: 51-54). They also appeared to “hedge less” not in terms of the number of hedges employed, but in terms of the strength of their hedges; they used “stronger modals” (Männamaa 2014: 57).

1.4. Hedging

It appears that the term “hedge” was first introduced by Lakoff (1973). He defines hedges as “words whose job is to make things fuzzier or less fuzzy” (1973: 471). However, since then, other researchers have worked to develop taxonomies and definitions of hedges themselves. Prince, Frader, and Bosk (1982) developed a taxonomy of hedges based on Lakoff’s (1973) original definition, which includes *approximators* and *shields*. Salager-Meyer (1994) developed a more expanded definition and a more expanded taxonomy as well. According to Salager-Meyer (1994) hedges may involve: deliberate “fuzziness” and vagueness, which functions as a threat-minimizing strategy; an author’s projected modesty and “avoidance of personal involvement”; and the lack of possibility and/or desirability of complete precision (1994: 153). Salager-Meyer’s (1994) taxonomy includes Prince et al.’s (1982) original two categories, plus “expressions...which express the author’s personal doubt and direct involvement”, emotionally-charged intensifiers, and compound hedges (1994: 154). Hyland (1994) takes Lakoff’s (1973) original definition and connects it to the concept of epistemic modality, as defined by Lyons (1977):

Any utterance in which the speaker explicitly qualifies his commitment to the truth of the proposition expressed by the sentence he utters...is an epistemically modal or modalised sentence. (Lyons 1977: 797)

Hyland (1994) also mentions different forms that hedging often takes (including “modal auxiliary verbs”, “modal lexical verbs”, and if-clauses, to name a few) which he states “imply that statements contain personal beliefs based on plausible reasoning” as opposed to

“knowledge”. Hyland (1994) claims that epistemic modality is “crucial in academic discourse” due to the need to first “convince one’s fellow scientists” of one’s findings (1994: 241). Crompton (1997) agrees with Hyland’s (1994) identification of hedging with epistemic modality, but finds the taxonomies and definitions previously developed as less than satisfying, taking particular aim at those of Salager-Meyer (1994). Crompton (1997), appearing to make use of Lyons’ (1977) definition of epistemic modality, defines a hedge as “an item of language which a speaker uses to explicitly qualify his/her lack of commitment to the truth of a proposition he/she utters”, emphasizing that the definition only applies to hedges on propositions, the “main kind of speech act” in academic writing (1997: 281).

Despite a lack of consensus with regard to a definition of a hedge or hedging, or with regard to a taxonomy, work on hedging has continued. Hyland (2005) referred to hedges as a kind of “interactional metadiscourse” which “involve the reader in the text” (Hyland 2005: 49). He defines hedges as:

.../ devices such as possible, might and perhaps, which indicate the writer's decision to recognize alternative voices and viewpoints and so withhold complete commitment to a proposition. Hedges emphasize the subjectivity of a position by allowing information to be presented as an opinion rather than a fact and therefore open that position to negotiation. Writers must calculate what weight to give to an assertion, considering the degree of precision or reliability that they want it to carry and perhaps claiming protection in the event of its eventual overthrow .../ Hedges therefore imply that a statement is based on the writer's plausible reasoning rather than certain knowledge, indicating the degree of confidence it is prudent to attribute to it. (Hyland 2005: 52)

Laura Aull (2015, 2020) has made use of corpus linguistics to examine the writing of university students in the United States. Aull (2015) examined the writing of first-year university students and compared to that of “experts” (published writing by academics), while Aull (2020) examined the writing of first-year university students (referred to as First-Year writing) as well as that of “late-undergraduate and early-graduate” students (referred to as Upper-Level writing). Among other things, Aull (2015, 2020) examined the corpora for the presence of different kinds of metadiscourse, including hedges. Aull (2015) relied heavily on

Hyland's (2005) definition of hedges but developed her own list of possible hedges by "culling hedged and booster lexical items from research in applied linguistics and discourse studies" and then by "examining uses of those lexical items in individual texts and in concordance frequencies, collocations, and phrases" (Aull 2015: 90). While Aull (2015) refers to hedges as epistemic markers (and a kind of metadiscourse), Aull (2020) refers to them as stance words.

2. METHODS

In this small-scale study, the objective is to collect and analyze data on the hedge use of four third-year undergraduate students of the English language and literature department whose first language is Estonian in order to understand how these students employ hedges in their academic setting.

Though the scale and the number of the participants is too small for large-scale generalizations, this study fills a gap with regard to studying the use of hedges in undergraduate writing in the Estonian context by investigating authentic texts from two aspects: internally by the writers of the texts themselves and externally by coders. The findings, then, could be used as a starting point for further studies that could be used to evaluate possible strengths and weaknesses of the program the students are attending with regard to writing support the students might need and suggest possible further studies to provide further implications for change (if needed).

To that end, a three-step study was planned. For the first step of the study, a text written in a course that all English language and literature students at the University of Tartu are required to take was selected. The text that was ultimately selected could be described as a literary analysis essay. The rationale regarding the text selection took the following into consideration: the text should, ideally, be as recently written as possible, so that the work is

more comparable to the work that the students are currently able to produce and so that they are more likely to recall the texts in question; the texts should have a single author; the texts should have a minimum length of approximately 1000 words. Ultimately, a text from a second-year required course was chosen because it best met the criteria. Following the decision to pick a target text, a sample was decided through purposeful sampling (Palinkas 2015) so that the data rich cases can be investigated. Four of the students who successfully completed the class were approached, and asked to submit a sample text which they were later interviewed on. While sampling the participants, it was not possible to reach the exact number of the students who took the said class; however, given the number of students in then-second-year English department cohort (and now-third-year cohort) was approximately 20 students, it was decided that a gender balanced 20% would provide data that could bear relevant results. The goal of taking the gender balance into consideration was to account for possible differences that might be attributed to sex differences in using the language.

Following the locating of the participants, four potential participants were contacted and the objective and the scope of the study was separately explained to each of them. All four of the potential participants contacted agreed to participate in the study and provided their texts to be coded. Since the texts are already devoid of personal cues, they did not need to go over them to ensure their anonymity.

The texts the participants provided were divided up into sentences (with sentences containing quotations consisting of more than one sentence counted as one sentence) in order to be coded. It was decided that the sentences would be coded as “hedged” or “not hedged”. A coding book was developed in order to ensure reliable coding (see Appendix 1). The following definition, adapted from Hyland (2005) and Aull (2015), was utilized: “a hedge is an interactional metadiscourse device utilized by a speaker/writer that withholds commitment and

opens dialogue” (Appendix 1). In addition, a practical taxonomy was adapted from Aull (2015), and the following hedge types were included in the coding book: modal verbs of probability, approximative adverbs, downtoners/minimizers, phrasal hedges, hedge evident verbs, and hedge nominalizations. Examples of each type were also included.

For the coding process, a team of three coders was assembled to provide inter rater reliability. The participating coders were the supervisors of the researcher and were trained using the definition and examples provided above. To test whether the coder had agreement on what a hedge is, first, the text written by the researcher himself to fulfill the same course requirement was coded in binary as a sample. The text was coded by each coder separately and then the results were compared (see Appendix 2).

Upon the completion of the initial coding of the sample, the Fleiss’ Kappa, which is a statistical index commonly used for assessing the reliability of agreement between more than two raters (Falotico and Quatto 2014) was calculated in Microsoft Excel in order to measure the extent of the inter-rater reliability. It was found that the three raters had an agreement of 93.57% after the calculation of the fixed-marginal Fleiss’ Kappa (0.83). Although there is no fully agreed upon scale on how Fleiss’ Kappa can be interpreted, an agreement over 80% is considered high reliability (Bobbitt 2020), and having achieved this, the group then decided to proceed to code the texts that formed the basis of the study.

Prior to coding the four participant texts, the team discussed the cases in which there was disagreement in the sample text and ultimately came to an agreement in each case. The coding book was also updated to include information regarding the genre of the texts to be coded and more information regarding what is to be considered a hedge. It was also updated to include example sentences to illustrate hedged and unhedged sentences accordingly (see Appendix 3,

for the updates to the specifics of the coding procedure, deliberated following the coding of the sample text).

The texts were then coded by the team and the raters had agreements of: 94.74% for Text A (with a fixed-marginal Fleiss' Kappa of 0.74); 91.30% for Text B (with a fixed-marginal Fleiss' Kappa of 0.66); 98.37% for Text C (with a fixed-marginal Fleiss' Kappa of 0.74); and 86.39% for Text D (with a fixed-marginal Fleiss' Kappa of 0.57). Even though the rates for three of the texts were above 90%, and the rate of the of one of the texts approached 90%, which suggests a very strong agreement among all three coders, the coders still met to discuss where they differed from each other. The team discussed rationales for their choices, and the majority opinion was recorded to be used following the participants' own reflection on their texts during the last phase of the study.

Upon the completion of the coding and after having reached a consensus on what is and is not a hedge, the second quantitative phase of the study was initiated. In this step, the frequency of the hedges in the coded texts were, in a way, compared to Aull's (2020) findings on the frequency of hedges in student writing. Aull's (2015) list of hedges utilized in her corpus-based study of metadiscourse in student and professional academic writing appear to be the basis for corpus-based component of Aull's (2020) work on what she calls First-Year (first-year undergraduate) and Upper Level (what Aull (2020) describes as "late-undergraduate- and early-graduate-level") writing. Aull (2020)'s First-Year corpus was compiled from essays written by first-year composition students at the University of South Florida, while her Upper-Level corpus was compiled from the Michigan Corpus of Upper-Level Student Papers (MICUSP), which consists of A-graded writing from across various disciplines. Aull (2020) examined 595 First Year (FY) papers and 750 Upper Level (UL) papers, and for each corpus divided them into two broad genres: Argumentative and Explanatory.

The genre of the text analyzed in this study can be termed a literary analysis essay. Because the participants in the study are undergraduate students, and Aull's (2020) results appear to be rather novel in terms of the presenting a general picture of undergraduate (and early-graduate-level) writing, it may be useful to compare the figures Aull (2020) found in terms of hedges used per 10,000 words. The comparison is not meant to serve as a model for what all students should produce; indeed, it is not a corpus-based study of literary analysis essays, and even if it were, the figures in terms of number of hedges per 10,000 words represent an average of the work of hundreds of writers, meaning there are writers at each level and in each genre who hedge more or less than the average figures provided. Rather, it may simply serve as a reference point which may help make some sense of the data. In order to do so, however, the texts were also simply coded for hedges according to Aull's (2015) list of hedges (See Aull 2015: 192-197 for an exhaustive list); all examples found were then recorded as hedges, except for words with alternative meanings (for example, the verb "tend" with the meaning of "care for" was excluded).

In the third phase of the study, the participants were invited to a meeting that had two steps: a semi-structured background interview and a stimulated recall. The background interview comprised of questions regarding their education, their experience and views with regard to writing in Estonian and in English, including their experiences in school and at university. The objective of this step was to account for possible differences owing to personal background. To elaborate, if one of the participants had lived in an English-speaking country or studied at a school specializing in honing language skills, it could affect the way they conceptualized and used hedges in their writing. Hence, the semi-structured interviews were added as a step to acquire details on the backgrounds of the participants.

Immediately after the semi-structured interviews, the participants were asked to investigate their own texts through an adapted stimulated recall. Stimulated recall, or SR, is a research method used to aid the process of the participant when reflecting on a past situation (Calderhead 1981: 212). While SR often includes a visual aid to help the participant in their reflections, in this instance, the texts the participants created were used as aids. The participants were presented with their own texts separated sentence by sentence and asked to code the sentences as hedged or not hedged. There was no time limit given. They were also asked to underline possible hedges in the sentences they coded as hedged but were informed that this was not essential. Upon completing the task, interviews were conducted. Each participant was asked to try to explain their rationales for the sentences they coded as hedged (regardless of whether the coding team also coded those sentences as hedged). They were also asked if there were any sentences that they had been unsure about, and asked to point them out and provide explanations, if possible. In instances where the coding team had coded particular sentences as hedged, but the participants had not, they were then informed of this fact and asked to try and find a rationale for why that might be. These sessions were recorded with the permission of the participant, and later transcribed to their rationales could be analyzed for emergent themes.

3. RESULTS

In this section, the results of the collected data are presented.

3.1. Comparison with Aull's (2020) Corpus Data

In order to observe how the frequencies of hedge use of the participants in this study might compare to average frequencies of university students obtained through corpus data, Aull's (2020) corpus data was taken as a reference (See Aull 2020: 178-187). The hedging

rates of First-Year and Upper-Level university students in the United States, also taking into account two genres explored by Aull (2020), are presented below.

Hedges in Aull's (2020) corpus study	
Student Level	Hedges per 10,000 words
FY Argumentative	56.32
FY Explanatory	50.42
UL Argumentative	84.27
UL Explanatory	89.73
FY (Argumentative + Explanatory)	53.45
UL (Argumentative + Explanatory)	88.07
FY + UL Argumentative	72.62
FY + UL Explanatory	80.76
<i>FY: First-Year UL: Upper-Level</i>	

Table 3. Aull's (2020) corpus data on the hedging tendencies of university students

The texts of the participants were scanned for hedges according to Aull's (2015) list of hedges. Later, the figures were compared to Aull's (2020) findings from her corpus-based studies on the frequency of university students' hedge use. The findings are as follows:

	Number of words in Text	Hedges found	Hedge rate per 10,000 words	Closest Convergence with Aull's Data
Participant A	987	6	60.79	FY Argumentative - 56.32
Participant B	1153	8	69.38	FY + UL Argumentative - 72.62
Participant C	1104	3	27.17	FY Explanatory - 50.42
Participant D	1510	15	99.34	UL Explanatory - 89.73

Table 4. Participants' rates of hedging per 10,000 words in comparison with Aull (2020)

Participant A's text, in terms of the number of hedges used according to Aull's (2015) list per 10,000 words (60.79), is closest to the figure of Aull's (2020) First-Year corpus of argumentative writing (56.32), exceeding it somewhat. It exceeds the First-Year corpus

(including both argumentative and explanatory writing) figure of 53.45 by a slightly larger amount.

Participant B's text, with a figure of 69.38, is closest to Aull's (2020) combined corpus of First-Year and Upper-Level argumentative writing (72.62), not quite reaching that rate. When compared to the combined First-Year corpus (53.45) and the combined Upper-Level corpus (88.07), this figure is somewhat closer to that of the combined First-Year corpus.

Participant C's text, with a figure of 27.17, is closest to Aull's (2020) First-Year corpus of explanatory writing (50.42), although this appears to be a much lower figure than the corpus one. Again, this means that the distance of Participant C's figure to that of the combined First-Year corpus is slightly greater (53.45).

Participant D's text, with a figure of 99.34, is closest to Aull's (2020) Upper-Level corpus of explanatory writing (89.73), exceeding it by nearly 10 hedges per 10,000 words. This means it exceeds the combined Upper-Level corpus figure (88.07) by slightly more.

The basis for the part of the study involving the participants, in which they had had to examine their own work and decide whether each sentence of their own text was hedged or not hedged, however, were the results of the coding carried out by the team of expert coders. Thus, it would be useful to examine the correspondence between the results of the coding team and the participants themselves.

3.2. The Analyses of the Texts by the Coders and the Participants

This part of the study focused on the ability of the participants to identify the instances of hedging in their own texts, as well as their definitions of hedging and rationales for their own hedging which they provided, and the relation of the aforementioned definitions and rationales to the literature on hedging, if any. When asked about their own definitions of what a hedge is

and how it is employed during the interviews, the participants provided varying accounts. While the definitions may be able to provide some insight into how the participants view hedging, examining their rationales regarding real examples of what may or may not be hedged sentences would also contribute to an understanding of how they view hedging. During the post-coding interview, they were asked to justify why they considered sentences to be hedged; whether or not there were examples from their texts that they were unsure of in terms of whether or not it was hedged at the sentence level; and, when applicable, to try to justify why the coding team might have coded sentences as hedged that they themselves did not. Below, the definitions and the rationales the participants provided are presented along with the coding team's findings.

3.2.1. Text A

In Text A, all five hedged sentences determined by the coding team were also found by Participant A, who associated hedges with “ambiguity and probability” during the interview. Participant A also considered 6 other sentences to be hedged (see Appendix 4, for a complete text and coding results).

Text A	Coding Team's Findings	Participant's Findings
Number of Hedged Sentences	5 out of 38	11 out of 38
Sentence Number of the Hedged Sentences	Sentences 15, 18, 26, 27, 31	Sentences 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 26, 27, 31, 32, 33

Table 5. Hedged Sentences in Text A

Participant A's definition, or components of it, appears many times in their explanations for why they considered particular sentences hedged, many times explicitly, and other times implicitly, when they state that the sentences in question were similar to previous examples in

which they were more explicit. Indeed, this is the case with nearly all of the sentences they coded as hedged. While Participant A's rationales seem to more or less correspond with their definition, it is difficult to say whether or not the rationales are an accurate description of what the sentences convey.

Participant A: *“Uh, a hedge is a word that, uh, I guess implies, uh, ambiguity and probability. That’s how I would describe it.”*

For example, Participant A's rationale for Sentence 18, in which they underlined “can be assumed”, was: *“You know, it doesn’t really confirm anything. And it’s just an assumption. So, there’s like a degree of, I think probability. Or like, ambiguity or something.”*

Sentence 18: ***It can be assumed that he suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder or PTSD for short.***

The words ambiguity and probability may not be the most appropriate words to describe how the words “can be assumed” modify the sentence. Perhaps if they had used the word “possibility” or even “strong possibility”, this would have been more accurate.

Participant A did not provide a rationale for Sentence 15, but stated that when they think of hedges, the word “imply” (and they had identified “implies” as a hedge in this sentence) *“is one of the first words that come to mind”*. As they did not provide a rationale, they were asked how an unhedged sentence might look and stated that “implies” could be replaced with “shows”. Indeed, this would render the sentence unhedged.

Sentence 15: ***The quote above implies that Muriel is blinded by materialism and does not care about Seymour or his mental health.***

Regardless of how they expressed their rationale, however, Participant A found all five hedged sentences determined by the coding team. The other six sentences Participant A considered to be hedged included two sentences that one member of the coding team originally

coded as hedged prior to coder consensus and one sentence that would have been found to contain a hedge according to Aull's (2015) list of hedges. Overall, Participant A was able to provide a definition that can be linked to the literature (elaborated on in the Interview Results) and was also able to point out multiple instances of their own hedging, including all of the instances determined by the coding team, and provide a rationale for most of them.

3.2.2. Text B

In Text B, three hedged sentences determined by the coding team were also found by Participant B. Four hedged sentences determined by the coding team were not found by Participant B (see Appendix 5, for a complete text and coding results).

Text B	Coding Team's Findings	Participant's Findings
Number of Hedged Sentences	7 out of 46	3 out of 46
Sentence Number of the Hedged Sentences	Sentences 2, 4, 7, 10, 15, 18, 36	Sentences 2, 10, 15

Table 6. Hedged Sentences in Text B

Participant B: *“Um, well, a hedging is, in my opinion, uh, again, making things less concise or less to the point. Uh, it’s basically the same as your mom catching you from doing something bad and you’re like, no, it probably, maybe, was not me. It may have been me, but it’s highly possible that it wasn’t me. Uh, so it’s just, yeah, making it less direct. And less of a claim as much as, uh, just a description of what could be.”*

Defining a hedge with an analogy, Participant B focuses on the indirectness. Despite the fact that Participant B's definition seemed to imply equivocation, they didn't state any intention to mislead the reader in their rationales. They did repeat the adjectives “direct” and “concise”, which they used in their definition, but also used the adjectives “certain” and assertive”. They

also mentioned “beating around the bush” and refer to the existence of “two possibilities”. In the rationales Participant B provides for the three sentences they coded as hedged, they also provide alternative unhedged sentences.

For example, Participant B’s rationale for Sentence 2, in which they identified the words “might come” as a hedge, was: *“Uh, mainly, because it makes it less certain. If you switched that out for ‘comes’, it’s a lot more certain and direct.”*

Sentence 2: **It *might come* as a surprise to the reader and in some cases probably put a smile on their face.**

Indeed, “adjusting the degree of certainty” of a claim, i.e., making it less certain, is one way of describing hedging (Hyland 1994: 240-241). The reasoning for doing so may of course vary. Participant B discusses their reasoning in more detail in the rationale they provided for Sentence 10.

Sentence 10: **In light of this information, the notice at the beginning of Twain’s book *could be* the author just giving a heads up to the reader to not waste their time on trying to find a hidden meaning and instead take the story at face value.**

In this case, Participant B stated that if they had replaced “could be” with “is”, the sentence would have been “a lot more concise, a lot more direct” and would not have involved “beating around the bush”. When asked why they might have wanted to beat around the bush, they stated:

“/.../ I don’t know the exact intentions of Mark Twain [the author of the text which was the subject of their essay] when he wrote that book. And I didn’t want to put words in his mouth /.../”

This rationale appears to relate to Salager-Meyer’s (1995) claim that “expressing a lack of certainty does not necessarily show confusion or vagueness” but that hedging in some instances “may present the true state of the writers’ understanding” (1995: 129). It appears that

Participant B did not want to make a claim they did not have direct knowledge of, i.e., Mark Twain's intentions.

Overall, Participant B coded three of the seven sentences that the coding team found to be hedged as hedged and provided rationales for them. When asked to examine the other four sentences after the SR activity and provide rationales and underline potential hedges, they were also able to do this in each case.

3.2.3. Text C

During the post-coding interview, the participant was also asked to provide a definition of their own and Participant C focused on the softening and strengthening aspects of hedges, providing the following definition:

Participant C: *“I would say a hedge is either softening or strengthening an argument based on the wording you use. Not, not the argument necessarily, but the wording. So, you don’t, for example, say something for a hundred percent certainty when you can’t really be sure it’s a hundred percent certain of a fact.”*

In Text C, the hedged sentence determined by the coding team was also found by Participant C. Participant C also considered 7 other sentences to be hedged (see Appendix 6, for a complete text and coding results).

Text C	Coding Team's Findings	Participant's Findings
Number of Hedged Sentences	1 out of 41	8 out of 41
Sentence Number of the Hedged Sentences	Sentence 20	Sentences 3, 4, 5, 6, 20, 23, 28, 36

Table 7. Hedged Sentences in Text C

The only instance of hedging according to the coding team, Sentence 20, was also found by Participant C, who also underlined “could”. Their rationale for this example was that they “*can’t /.../ completely draw a full parallel within this text and modern-day capitalism /.../ so I, again, soften. So, I kind of removed myself from this claim.*” Indeed, Participant C mentioned the softening of their claims multiple times in their rationales in order to express less certainty, as well as the desire to avoid making “false” claims.

Sentence 20: One *could* draw parallels with modern-day capitalism here, with the top 1% benefitting greatly from the community it gets their money from, or with putting gain above moral good.

Participant C mentions softening their claim, linking it with their definition and the literature. Their statement that they removed themselves from the claim also implies that they wanted to avoid possible negative feedback by not assuming responsibility for a stronger claim. Indeed, Hyland (1994) appears to refer to this when he states that hedging makes it possible for academics to “downplay their statements anticipate audience responses by adjusting the degree of certainty they give to their claims” (1994: 240-241).

Participant C also considered two sentences hedged that Aull (2015) has on her list of boosters (a form of metadiscourse that does the opposite of hedges). One such instance is Sentence 23, in which Participant C underlined the word “clear”.

Sentence 23: Another aspect of individualism versus community is *clear* here – one person’s reckless actions cause harm for the whole community.

Participant C stated they “*kind of strengthened [their] argument instead of like, softening it*”, which is indeed what a booster does. Participant C recognized what the word did in this case, but, as also shown in the definition of hedging they provided, appears to consider the function of boosters (i.e., to strengthen an argument) as just another function of hedges.

Excluding the two instances that appear to be boosted sentences, Participant C found six hedged sentences. Of those six, one was the only sentence that the coding team agreed was hedged, one was initially coded as hedged by one of the coding team members, and two were sentences which would have been found to contain hedges according to Aull's (2015) list. Thus, Participant C was able to find multiple instances of what could be considered hedges, and aside from the two instances involving boosters, appears to have given rationales for the sentences that they considered to be hedged that were in line with the literature.

3.2.4. Text D

In Text D, six hedged sentences determined by the coding team were also found by Participant D. Three hedged sentences determined by the coding team were not found by Participant D who also considered 4 other sentences to be hedged (see Appendix 7 for complete text and coding results).

Text D	Coding Team's Findings	Participant's Findings
Number of Hedged Sentences	9 out of 49	10 out of 49
Sentence Number of the Hedged Sentences	Sentences 5, 9, 20, 24, 29, 31, 35, 36, 48	Sentences 18, 19, 24, 27, 29, 31, 35, 48, 49

Table 7. Hedged Sentences in Text D

Participant D used the word “soften” discussing their rationales, which relates back to the definition they provided, but spoke of certainty and uncertainty more often.

Participant D: *“Um, well, hedges can be used to like, soften, an argument. Uh, to, to give emphasis to the writer's opinion or viewpoint rather than it being a fact.”*

They also discussed hedges as being “not necessary” sometimes, although given the context, this probably refers to the fact they are not necessary in order to create a grammatically correct sentence. They mention all of these things in their rationale for Sentence 29, in which they underlined the words “in a way”.

Sentence 29: Young Goodman Brown being a fervent practicing Christian is supposed to *in a way* protect him from the evils of the world, but even that ends up not being enough to stop his downfall.

Participant D states that the underlined phrases “*softens the whole sentence*” but is “*not necessary there*”, while also “*kind of /.../ [making the sentence] more uncertain*”. Thus, while they stated that the hedge is not necessary, it softens and expresses uncertainty, thus in fact has a function, which the participant recognizes. As previously mentioned, softening and expressing uncertainty are concepts relating to hedges found in the literature.

There was one instance in which Participant D coded a sentence as hedged that the coding team also coded as hedged, which was Sentence 24, but seems to have underlined a booster, the word “strongly”, within a construction that could be termed a stronger hedge, “strongly implies”.

Sentence 24: Due to the story being set in a Western society, where morality is based on instructions from the Old Testament, Brown calling himself and his ancestors Christians *strongly* implies that the reader should see the goodness of his heart.

Indeed, the coding team had the word “implies” in mind when this sentence was coded as hedged. The construction “strongly implies” would then be a stronger hedge, but a hedge nonetheless. Participant D did not appear to recognize this, however; instead, they stated that the word strongly “adds emphasis” to the sentence. Thus, similarly to what occurred with Participant C, it appears that Participant D recognized the function of a booster (i.e., to

strengthen a claim), assuming it to be a function of a hedge. This case was somewhat different because the sentence does indeed appear to be hedged, but the participant only recognized a booster.

Excluding the above instance, in which Participant D found a hedged sentence but appears to have located and described a booster, they coded five other sentences as hedged that the coding team also coded as hedged. They also coded two sentences as hedged that one coder had initially found to be hedged and coded one sentence as hedged that would have been found to contain a hedge according to Aull's (2015) list. There were three instances of sentences coded as hedged that Participant D did not. When asked, they provided one possible hedge for Sentence 20 (the word "even") but were unable to provide any other possible hedges for the other sentences or to offer any possible rationales for why the coding team might have chosen to code the sentences as hedged. Despite this, Participant D was able to find multiple instances of what could be considered hedges, and aside from one instance involving a booster, appears to have given rationales for the sentences they considered to be hedged that were in line with the literature.

3.3. Interview Results

The definitions the participants provided appear to differ from each other rather significantly, except in the case of Participants C and D, who have some overlap in their definitions. Participants C and D both described hedging as something that "softens" an argument, although Participant C also stated that hedging can "strengthen" an argument. Indeed, such a description of hedges as something that "soften" is in line with the Aull's (2015) statement that hedges "qualify or soften claims" (2015: 88). On the other hand, Participant C's claim that hedges also strengthen an argument is more in line with the role that boosters, another

form of metadiscourse, play; Aull (2015) states that boosters “do the opposite” (in relation to hedges) and “allow little room for doubt” (2015: 88).

Participant A associated hedging with “ambiguity” and “probability”. Participant A’s association of hedging with ambiguity could perhaps be related to what Salager-Meyer (1995) refers to as “purposive fuzziness and vagueness”, which is one of the components of her “three-dimensional concept” of hedging (1995: 128-129). If one refers to one’s own claim as ambiguous, it stands to reason that it was likely purposefully rendered so. Salager-Meyer (1995) states the reason for doing so would be to “reduce the risk of opposition” one might receive from readers (1995: 128-129).

Participant B describes hedging as something that makes things “less concise”, “less to the point” and “less direct” while also implying in his explanation that it is used by a speaker or writer to deliberately mislead someone. Indeed, even the use of the descriptors “less concise”, “less to the point”, and “less direct” imply a viewpoint that hedging involves beating around the bush, so to speak, even if it does not always involve outright deception. While there does not appear to be a definition of hedging as deception in the context of academic or scientific writing, as deception in this context is something sanctionable, Fraser (2010) does mention equivocation as one of the “discourse effects” that hedging “may give rise to” (2010: 25-28). He defines equivocation as “the use of a word with more than one meaning, where the intention is to mislead the hearer” (Fraser 2010: 28). Indeed, Skelton (1988) defends the use of hedges as necessary and mentions that the term “hedging” has “pejorative connotations” (1988: 38). It can be assumed then, that perhaps Participant B’s definition has been informed by their recognition of the existence of these phenomena.

4. DISCUSSION

Overall, despite the variety of definitions and rationales provided by the participants with regard to hedging, they do all appear to be found in the literature. All four participants found at least some of the hedged sentences determined by the coding team, although some participants also considered some sentences hedged that the coding team did not. Given that experts who devote their time and energy to researching the area do not fully agree on what hedges are or what functions they have, or on what counts as a hedge and what does not, it seems reasonable that students, who have been introduced to the topic in the course of their studies, but who are not experts, would also provide different definitions and rationales for considering a sentence to be hedged. Because of this, and because of the fact that the coding team was attempting to operationalize a particular definition, it also appears reasonable that the results of the participants' SR varied.

Indeed, regardless of their performances in terms of recognizing and explaining their own instances of hedging, it also appears that, according to the work Aull (2020) has done on student writing, at least three out of the four participants hedged, in this particular piece of writing, at what appear to be rates somewhere on the scale of successful student writing, be it closer to First-Year writing or Upper-Level writing. Of course, it also does not make sense to overstate the value of one piece of writing; Aull's (2020) figures represent an average obtained from corpus-based studies, and the fourth participant's figure may simply fall on the lower end of that.

Given that this study involved only four participants and given the fact that they all hedged in their writing, were able to provide definitions and rationales, and located at least some instances of their own hedging, it is not easy to draw conclusions about what this may mean

regarding the instruction they receive or what assistance they made need with regard to improving their academic writing. However, given that one of the participants related hedging to the action of misleading the listener and/or reader in their definition, which, though related to hedging in the literature (according to Fraser 2010), is something that would be sanctioned in academic writing, and given that two of the participants appear to have related a function of boosting to hedging (according to Hyland 2005, Aull 2015), it may be useful if time were devoted to explicit instruction in hedging (and metadiscourse in general) in relation to writing essays or other types of texts such as academic articles, which they will need more familiarity with should they choose to pursue an academic career. This could help achieve more of a common understanding of hedging among the students so that there is less variation in said understanding, especially regarding what hedges do and how and why they are used in the context of academic writing.

To elaborate, without a common understanding, the interpretation of text is left to the reader, which can be related back to the notions of reader-responsibility vs. writer-responsibility (according to Rienecker and Stray Jørgensen 2003, Rummel 2005). While this study encompassed only a small sample of students, as previously mentioned, their understandings of the role of hedging vary and could potentially also contribute to misinterpretation of texts belonging to other writers. Writing traditions appear to vary across linguistic and cultural groups, as well as across genres, but it also appears that it would be useful to provide students with the skills to be able to respond to a variation of meaning making devices, specifically the interactive devices which interact with readers (according to Hyland 2005), for example, and how these influence epistemic stances of writers.

CONCLUSION

Textual metadiscourse markers, including but not limited to hedges, which are employed to withhold commitment and open dialogue, among other things, are considered to be a crucial element of academic writing. The objective of the study was to seek answers to the questions on the frequency of the hedging employed by Estonian university students in English academic writing and how they compare to corpus data; on the participants' abilities to identify their own use of hedges; and on how the participants' rationales may relate to what is available in the relevant literature. Through text analysis and adapted simulated recall interviews, the hedge use and awareness of four purposively sampled Estonian university students from the English Language and Literature department at the University of Tartu were explored.

Overall, despite the variety of definitions and rationales regarding hedges and hedging provided by the participants, they do all appear to be found in the literature. While the results of each participant varied, all four participants found at least some of the hedged sentences determined by the coding team. Some participants also considered some sentences hedged that the coding team did not. This is reasonable considering the lack of full agreement in the literature on what hedges are what exactly they do. It also appears that, according to the work Aull (2020) has done on student writing, at least three out of the four participants hedged, in this particular piece of writing, at what appear to be rates somewhere on the scale of successful student writing. Considering these results and that the study was limited to four participants, it is not easy to draw conclusions regarding the needs of the students. However, it may be that more explicit instruction in hedging and metadiscourse in general could help achieve a more common understanding of hedging in the context of academic writing.

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Appendix 1: Coding Book (Original)

Hedge type - adapted from Aull (2015)	Examples
modal verbs of probability	may, might, can (used epistemically)
approximative adverbs	generally, likely, possibly
downtoners/minimizers	somewhat, almost, nearly
phrasal hedges	for the most part, can prove true, not unheard of, never fully
hedge evident verb	tend, indicate, seem
hedge nominalization	estimation, indication, appearance
Definition - adapted from Hyland (2005) and Aull (2015): a hedge is an interactional metadiscourse device utilized by a speaker/writer that withholds commitment and opens dialogue.	

Appendix 2: Sample Text Coded for Hedging

Nr.	Sentence	Coder 01	Coder 02	Coder 03	Coder Agreement
1	The late Nobel-prize winning African-American novelist Toni Morrison was inspired to write her novel <i>Beloved</i> by a true story of a runaway slave woman in the 19th-century United States, who killed her own child rather than send it back into slavery.	0	0	0	0
2	The novel is much more than the brief newspaper article plucked from the archives, however.	0	0	0	0
3	While the it deals with a variety of topics and ideas, the role of the female African-American community is certainly one that stands out.	0	0	0	0
4	With spirituality and ritual often playing an important role, the community members share what they have, celebrating in times of joy, commiserating together in times of sadness, uplifting each other, and literally nursing each other back to health.	0	0	0	0
5	This spirit of solidarity they find together within a majority society that is hostile to them is very prominent – however, throughout most of the novel, the refusal of the African-American community to demonstrate this spirit with regard to a particular woman, Sethe, and her family, stands out – and has dire consequences.	0	0	0	0

6	It must be said that while slavery and racism could be defined as the ultimate roots of Sethe's problems, the failure of the community to include and help her seem to have made things worse – something they eventually realize and attempt to remedy.	1	1	1	1
7	At the center of the novel is Sethe, a runaway slave who escapes from slave-holding Kentucky to “free” Ohio.	0	0	0	0
8	The importance of community among African-Americans, and really, the importance of the female community, becomes even more obvious as soon as Sethe arrives in Ohio.	0	0	0	0
9	Sethe has fled the plantation of Sweet Home, and her cruel overseer, Schoolteacher, and has been embraced wholeheartedly by the mother of her husband, whom she had never even met.	0	0	0	0
10	This extraordinary woman, the charismatic Baby Suggs, together with other women in the community, take care of Sethe and her children, including the baby she had given birth to along the way, Denver.	0	0	0	0
11	In fact, Baby Suggs could be said to have been almost a locus of the community – serving as a kind of preacher or spiritual leader to African-Americans in the local area.	1	1	1	1
12	She had also converted her house into a quasi-community center, where everyone felt welcome to share in the joy of belonging to the community.	1	0	0	0
13	“124 had been a cheerful, buzzing house where Baby Suggs, holy, loved, cautioned, fed, chastised, soothed,” (Morrison 2004, 86-87).	0	0	0	0
14	It is to this safe haven that Sethe runs after escaping from Sweet Home and Schoolteacher.	0	0	0	0
15	Through her actions, Baby Suggs is recognized as an example to her community, of the importance of generosity and solidarity.	0	0	0	0
16	The physical space she provided allowed anyone else in the community who wanted to a chance to join in and contribute, seen in the novel most vividly when Sethe arrives and she and her children are looked after.	0	0	0	0
17	However, not long after Sethe's arrival, the community fails in their role, certainly after the death of Sethe's unnamed toddler, and arguably before that even happens.	1	1	0	1
18	Less than a month after Sethe's escape, Schoolteacher, the cruel overseer of Sweet Home plantation, arrives with three others to retrieve Sethe and her children.	0	0	0	0
19	Sethe, unwilling to send her children back into human bondage, kills her unnamed toddler with a saw, cutting the child's neck, and attempts to kill her other children before she is stopped.	0	0	0	0
20	After this event, the community avoids Baby Suggs' home and leaves the family in isolation.	0	0	0	0
21	This is arguably the time when the support from the community she had given so much to is most needed – and yet, just like that, the family is abandoned.	1	1	0	1
22	Baby Suggs sinks into a depression and eventually dies.	0	0	0	0
23	It is also worth noting that the jealousy of the community may have played an indirect role in the death of Sethe's child as well.	1	1	1	1
24	Stamp Paid, a prominent man in the African-American community, years later, mentions the jealousy of community members as having left them distracted, perhaps allowing Schoolteacher and his men to approach undetected (Bloom 2004: 81).	1	1	1	1

25	“Nobody warned them...it wasn’t the exhaustion...that dulled them, but some other thing – like, well, like meanness – that let them stand aside, or not pay attention...” (Morrison 2004: 157).	0	0	0	0
26	After years of isolation, and years of dealing with the angry ghost of the child at home, Paul D, another ex-slave from Sweet Home, shows up at Sethe’s doorstep, and immediately rids the house of the ghost.	0	0	0	0
27	However, soon after, a strange woman appears, calling herself Beloved, the word which had been inscribed on the tombstone of Sethe’s deceased child.	0	0	0	0
28	Everyone at home soon realizes the young woman is fact that very child, and the presence of Beloved in Sethe’s life re-opens the wounds of the past she had managed to cover up and ignore for many years.	0	0	0	0
29	Sethe had not dealt with her past and Beloved uses Sethe’s guilt to get what she wants and even manages to drive away the only man that Sethe had had in her life after escaping slavery, Paul D.	0	0	0	0
30	“Beloved accused her [Sethe] of leaving her behind. Of not being nice to her....and Sethe cried, saying she never did, or meant to...” (Morrison 2004: 241).	0	0	0	0
31	The abandonment of the community after what Sethe had done all those years before played a significant role in the events that were to follow.	0	0	0	0
32	The occupants of the house remained isolated and only had themselves to rely on, left to deal with all of life’s problems (which were even more abundant for African-American women), haunted by the past as well as ever-present ghost that never seemed to give them any peace.	1	1	1	1
33	This abandonment also meant that when the ghost left, and Beloved showed up, Denver embraced Beloved fully, seeing her as a friend, loving her as the sister she wished she had known.	0	0	0	0
34	Any attention from her was welcomed.	0	0	0	0
35	“And to be looked at by her [Beloved], however briefly, kept her [Denver] grateful...” (Morrison 2004: 119).	0	0	0	0
36	Had Denver been a part of the community, rather than a lonely, isolated individual, it is possible that she would’ve been able to recognize the destructive nature of Beloved long before she did and done something about it.	1	1	1	1
37	It is also possible that the spiritual community to which Baby Suggs had belonged, and in fact led, might have served to help Sethe heal and learn to forgive herself.	1	1	1	1
38	Had she been in a better place mentally and spiritually, she may have been strong enough to handle all of the manipulation that Beloved brought with her – or perhaps Beloved would not have shown up at all.	1	1	1	1
39	The fact that Sethe was abandoned by her community also likely meant that, even if only in the back of her mind, the social alienation she experienced was always a reminder of what she had done.	1	1	1	1
40	The fact that the members of her community did not forgive her was perhaps, to her, a confirmation of the fact that she did not deserve forgiveness – or friendship.	1	1	1	1
41	Thus, when Beloved appears, she feels that the only way she can right her wrongs is through doing everything to please her – falling victim to her manipulation, neglecting her own family’s welfare, and literally endangering her own life.	0	0	0	0

42	“Listless and sleepy with hunger Denver saw the flesh between her mother’s forefinger and thumb fade. Saw Sethe’s eyes bright but dead, alert by vacant, paying attention to everything about Beloved...” (Morrison 2004: 242-43).	0	0	0	0
43	When Sethe ceases to work due to her unhealthy relationship with Beloved, Denver eventually makes the brave decision to go out and seek work, and help.	0	0	0	0
44	This is a crucial turning point, when the community begin to take notice of the problem and act together to help Denver.	0	0	0	0
45	Denver is able to get a job with the help of another African-American woman, and other women in the community begin providing food to the family.	0	0	0	0
46	They also provide Denver with something she had been missing virtually her entire life – the company of other people – rescuing her from the deep loneliness that helped Beloved take over her home.	0	0	0	0
47	Through Denver’s reacquaintance with the women of the community, they gradually learn of the presence of Beloved and her disturbing hold over Sethe.	0	0	0	0
48	Despite having previously alienated Sethe, the female community later reunites to help drive away Beloved and liberate Sethe and Denver from Beloved’s tyranny, essentially exorcising her with their collective spiritual power.	1	0	0	0
49	“Now she [Sethe] is running into the faces of the people out there, joining them and leaving Beloved behind,” (Morrison 2004: 261).	0	0	0	0
50	To sum up, it is possible to recognize the role of community, and particularly that of the female community, in Toni Morrison’s novel Beloved.	1	1	0	1
51	This sense of community, recognizable as a source of solidarity and comfort for African-Americans who are surrounded by a majority society that is hostile to them, is featured very prominently in the novel – but throughout most of the story, its failure to treat one woman and her family as their own stands out.	0	0	0	0
52	At the end, however, the women of the community come together to save one of their own, just as they had come together to welcome her all those years before.	0	0	0	0

Appendix 3: Coding Book (Updated)

Hedge type - adapted from Aull (2015)	Examples
modal verbs of probability	may, might, can (used epistemically)
approximative adverbs	generally, likely, possibly
downtoners/minimizers	somewhat, almost, nearly
phrasal hedges	for the most part, can prove true, not unheard of, never fully
hedge evident verb	tend, indicate, seem
hedge nominalization	estimation, indication, appearance
Definition - adapted from Hyland (2005) and Aull (2015): a hedge is an interactional metadiscourse device utilized by a speaker/writer that withholds commitment and opens dialogue.	

<p>The genre of the texts to be coded is 'literary analysis essay', the purpose of which is to demonstrate "a writer's personal perspective, interpretation, judgment, or critical evaluation of /.../ [a literary] work." (Germann Community College Academic Center for Excellence 2016); due to the nature of the genre, it is possible that sentences may appear hedged when they are not; for the purposes of this study, only positions taken by the author of the text in question should be considered to be hedged. Quotations (including those embedded in sentences written by the author), whether marked by quotation marks or indicated otherwise (for example, through the use of italics), are to be considered as one sentence, even when they consist of multiple quoted sentences.</p>	
Example sentence containing a hedge	It is possible that everyone may have already known that the protagonist was probably guilty.
Example sentence containing no hedge	In the story, it is known by everyone that the protagonist is probably guilty.

Appendix 4: Participant A's Text Coded for Hedging

Nr.	Sentence	Coder 01	Coder 02	Coder 03	Coder Agreement	Participant A
1	A Perfect Day for Bananafish is a short story written by J. D. Salinger after World War II.	0	0	0	0	0
2	The story is about life after World War II in the United States when they got out of the Great Depression and emerged into a massive consumer economy.	0	0	0	0	0
3	Society only cared about materialism and fitting in while blinded by the horrors of World War II and its repercussions.	0	0	0	0	0
4	The author, who experienced some of the horrors of the aforementioned war, does a great job of portraying the materialistic and greedy society of America at that time, while also depicting the psychological side and behaviour of an individual who experienced war.	0	0	0	0	0
5	The story follows the protagonist, Seymour Glass, and her wife, Muriel Glass, who are staying at a hotel in Florida.	0	0	0	0	0
6	The two never interact throughout the story and they have their own separate interactions with others.	0	0	0	0	0
7	Muriel talks to her mother over the phone in the hotel and Seymour has a conversation with a little girl at the beach.	0	0	0	0	0

8	Muriel is the embodiment of the society deluded by materialism and consumerism while the disillusioned Seymour represents the rejection of this society and the effect of war.	0	0	0	0	0
9	The author starts the story by describing what Muriel is doing while waiting for her call.	0	0	0	0	0
10	She reads a fashion magazine, grooms herself, tends to her designer clothes and puts “lacquer” on her nails and wears a silk dressing gown that she tries not to smudge with her manicure (Salinger 1953: 3).	0	0	0	0	0
11	These acts of her signify that she values material things and wealth.	0	0	0	0	0
12	Her upsession with material things, fashion and physical appearance of herself and others is a recurring motif of materialism throughout the story.	0	0	0	0	0
13	Another example of this is when Muriel talked to the psychiatrist about Seymour’s mental health and completely disregarded him and focused on his wife’s appearance, as seen on the fifth page: His wife was horrible. You remember that awful dinner dress we saw in Bonwit’s window? /.../. She had it on. And all hips. /.../. What’d he say, though? The doctor. Oh. Well, nothing much, really. I mean we were in the bar and all. It was terribly noisy. (Salinger 1948: 5)	0	0	0	0	0
14	This further supports that Muriel is corrupted by materialism and all of her acts exemplify the culture of materialism in American society.	0	0	0	0	1
15	The quote above also implies that Muriel is blinded by materialism and does not care about Seymour or his mental health.	1	1	0	1	1
16	Seymour’s mental health is mentioned continuously by her mother during the phone call and it is revealed that Seymour fought, most likely, in World War II (Salinger 1953: 4).	1	0	0	0	1
17	This explains Seymour’s destructive behaviour and actions such as the implied car crash, which is also implied as intentional, as seen during the conversation between Muriel and her mother on page 3 of Nine Stories.	0	1	0	0	1
18	It can be assumed that he suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder or PTSD for short.	1	1	1	1	1
19	PTSD is a psychiatric disorder that may occur in people who have experienced or witnessed a traumatic event such as war (Torres 2020).	0	0	0	0	1
20	Another example of materialism is the random story of the titular bananafish that Seymour told a young girl called Sybil about at the beach.	0	0	0	0	0
21	To sum up the story, bananafish swim in a hole and eat as many bananas they can and are unable to get out of the hole and “get bananafever” and die (Salinger 1953: 8).	0	0	0	0	0
22	The bananafish symbolise the greedy and insatiable people of American society such as Muriel, the bananas symbolise the material things and wealth, the “bananafever” that Seymour calls a terrible disease symbolises the idea of materialism itself and the death of the bananafish symbolise the destruction of people’s sensibility and emotion caused by greed and avarice.	0	0	0	0	0

23	The whole story about the bananafish shows Seymour's detestation of the society corrupted by materialism.	0	0	0	0	0
24	In the last paragraph, the protagonist decides to kill himself, as seen in: "He cocked the piece. Then he went over and sat down on the unoccupied twin bed, looked at the girl, aimed the pistol, and fired a bullet through his right temple.	0	0	0	0	0
25	There is no definite reason in the story that explains why Seymour killed himself.	0	0	0	0	0
26	A plausible motive could be that he committed suicide because of the horrific and terrible experiences he had in the war and it was too much for him to bear.	1	1	1	1	1
27	But his suicide could also be credited to the materialism and consumerism that has corrupted society and people around him.	1	1	1	1	1
28	Before Seymour kills himself, he enters his hotel room which "smelled of new calfskin luggage and nail-lacquer remover" and where his wife was asleep "on one of the twin beds" (Salinger 1953: 9).	0	0	0	0	0
29	These are the last mentions of materialism and consumerism before he kills himself.	0	0	0	0	0
30	The calfskin luggage and nail-lacquer, and Muriel herself who is the symbol of this greedy and shallow society of materialism.	0	0	0	0	0
31	These last mentions of materialism give the impression that Seymour is at his limit and breaking-point and these things ultimately decide Seymour's fate.	1	1	1	1	1
32	There is also a brief moment in the aforementioned quote where it is unsure whether Seymour decides to kill Muriel or himself.	0	0	0	0	1
33	Seymour opts for the latter, but there is no way of knowing whether he contemplated on killing her or not.	0	0	0	0	1
34	Seymour escapes this shallow lifestyle by removing himself completely, but the world of materialism and consumerism stay the same.	0	0	0	0	0
35	A Perfect Day for Bananafish is very reminiscent of J. D. Salinger's writing.	0	0	0	0	0
36	It has many themes such as innocence, isolation and death that also occur in many of his other books like The Catcher in the Rye.	0	0	0	0	0
37	The relationship between society and an individual is also a theme that Salinger has somewhat addressed in A Perfect Day for Bananafish.	0	0	0	0	0
38	The short story is a great example of the issue of wealth and materialism in American society in the early to mid 20th century and is even relevant in today's society.	0	0	0	0	0

Appendix 5: Participant B's Text Coded for Hedging

Nr.	Sentence	Coder 01	Coder 02	Coder 03	Coder Agreement	Participant B
1	The first thing to catch one's eye after opening Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, must be the notice left by the author which reads as follows: Persons attempting to find motive in this narrative will be prosecuted; persons attempting to find a moral in it will be banished; persons attempting to find a plot in it will be shot (Twain, 1885).	0	0	0	0	0
2	It might come as a surprise to the reader and in some cases probably put a smile on their face.	1	1	1	1	1
3	But why is it really there?	0	0	0	0	0
4	Is it the first indication that this book is not meant to be interpreted as a piece of modern art where everything has multiple meanings but rather as a direct description of life during the era of slavery?	0	1	1	1	0
5	In this essay I will focus on analysing the essence of realism in Mark Twain's Adventures of Huckleberry Finn.	0	0	0	0	0
6	As mentioned above, when the reader first opens Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, they are almost immediately greeted by a warning-like notice which prohibits the analysis of any aspect of the book.	0	0	0	0	0
7	Thus, writing this essay will probably put my life in danger but one must endure all signs of danger in order to get a better understanding of a good book.	1	1	1	1	0
8	Moving forward with the short notice, signs of realism lie in plain sight.	0	0	0	0	0
9	According to the webpage of The Washington State University on realism, as a characteristic of their style, realist writers did not moralize in their novels (Campbell, 2015).	0	0	0	0	0
10	In the light of this information, the notice at the beginning of Twain's book could be the author just giving a heads up to the reader to not waste their time on trying to find a hidden meaning and instead take the story at face value.	1	1	1	1	1
11	Right off the start the reader is informed that they are in fact reading a realist novel.	0	0	0	0	0
12	The next part of the book, Explanatory, gives it further assurance as the author explains the painful and unnecessarily long process of studying the colloquial version of the English language.	0	0	0	0	0
13	Those two sections exist in the beginning of the book due to Adventures of Huckleberry Finn being a part of the earlier section of the realist literature movement.	0	0	0	0	0
14	Objectivity became increasingly important and so authorial comments diminished as the century progressed (Campbell, 2015).	0	0	0	0	0
15	If Mark Twain were to release his book a few decades later, such fascinating way of introducing the reader to the story may not have come to be.	1	1	1	1	1

16	In the main text, everything is described in detail as one would expect from a realist novel.	0	0	0	0	0
17	So <i>The door was impenetrable</i> becomes <i>The door was thick solid oak slabs</i> (Twain, 1885) and 1/6th of a page is taken up by a in depth description of a basket full of fake fruit: <i>On a table in the middle of the room was a kind of a lovely crockery basket that had apples and oranges and peaches and grapes piled up in it which was much redder and yellower and prettier than real ones is, but they warn't real because you could see where pieces had got chipped off and showed the white chalk or whatever it was, underneath</i> (Twain, 1885).	0	0	0	0	0
18	As the name of the movement suggests, realist writers try to convey the storyline as realistically as possible, emphasizing on comprehensive detail.	0	1	1	1	0
19	A point of focus is also on character development and the choices one makes during the story. (Campbell, 2015).	0	0	0	0	0
20	Such moments come up in the story as dilemmas Huck needs to deal with.	0	0	0	0	0
21	Choosing between the social standards of the time and his own gut feeling.	0	0	0	0	0
22	The situations where Huck realized his own ways of doing or thinking were very well laid out throughout the story.	0	0	0	0	0
23	For example, the way he had been taught religious morality by Widow Douglas which made him feel guilty after being on the move with Jim but by the end of the book that guilt fades as he wanted to help Jim be free.	0	0	0	0	0
24	So, we see him struggle with deciding whether to help Jim because of the questionable legality and morality.	0	0	0	0	0
25	Though of course Huck did team up with Jim and camped together on the island until the storm and flood came.	0	0	0	0	0
26	Although similar dilemmas come up throughout the book, it is not only the moments of big choices that give examples of this realist characteristic but also the fact that the entire book is written from the perspective of the main character, Huck.	0	0	0	0	0
27	An entire book on the inner thoughts and interpretations of events unfolding before his eyes.	0	0	0	0	0
28	What better way of telling a realistic story than through the eyes of a <i>living-breathing human being</i> .	0	0	0	0	0
29	Furthermore, every single character is unique.	0	0	0	0	0
30	Every character appears in their real complexity of temperament and motive (Campbell, 2015).	0	0	1	0	0
31	Tom is the adventurous guy, Huck wants to get his life back on track and get his mind to peace on the dilemmas and Jim wants to be free, never forcefully separated from his family.	0	0	0	0	0
32	And like in real life, mob-mentality still exists.	0	0	0	0	0
33	Even if all the characters have their own face, their own thoughts – if someone notifies people, with similar views, about an escaped slave, the group still turns into a mindless mob, doing what they can to <i>return to their blissful, civilized life as soon as possible</i> .	0	0	0	0	0
34	But how to make a human being seem and feel like an actual human?	0	0	1	0	0
35	Well, Mark Twain solved that question by writing the entire book in different dialects of American English.	0	0	0	0	0

36	Truth be told, to an Estonian it is something that makes reading this book a little harder than any other book written in standard English.	0	1	1	1	0
37	Although it made the reading experience frustrating at times, after getting used to a slower pace of reading, I found it very enriching.	0	0	1	0	0
38	Found it very realistic.	0	0	0	0	0
39	Something similar to what I've already mentioned but still quite different is the fact that all events in realist literature are usually plausible.	0	0	0	0	0
40	No exaggerations, dramatic effects (Campbell, 2015).	0	0	0	0	0
41	In this novel, it wasn't always sunny, in fact there was a storm and a huge flood, Huck and Jim even missed their turn to the mouth of Ohio river because of a very thick fog.	0	0	0	0	0
42	Every major event in the book from Huck getting beat by his dad to Tom getting shot in his calf were pictured realistically.	0	0	0	0	0
43	None of the characters had a magic wand or an imaginary friend to help them out, reading the 40th chapter at its culmination had a similar effect to watching a black and white action movie.	0	0	0	0	0
44	Adventures of Huckleberry Finn by Mark Twain is in fact a very good example of realist literature as it covers many important aspects and characteristics of realism.	0	0	0	0	0
45	<i>Realism is nothing more and nothing less than the truthful treatment of material</i> (Howells, 1889).	0	0	0	0	0
46	Twain used his material very well and put a lot of effort into creating a truthful novel which ended up becoming a controversial literary classic.	0	0	0	0	0

Appendix 6: Participant C's Text Coded for Hedging

Nr.	Sentence	Coder 01	Coder 02	Coder 03	Coder Agreement	Participant C
1	William Faulkner's short story Barn Burning takes place in the American south and deals with issues that are to do with its geographical place, but also with human beings and more specifically, Americans, in general.	0	0	0	0	0
2	One of the main prevalent themes throughout the short story is the oppositions between different aspects of community obligations and individualism, and in this essay, I will discuss how these oppositions are represented throughout William Faulkner's Barn Burning.	0	0	0	0	0
3	A community needs some sort of commonality to work together as a cohesive unit.	0	1	0	0	1
4	A family is one such community, which usually shares genetic makeup, but also broader values, usually instilled into the family by the parental figures.	0	0	0	0	1
5	In a family unit, there is usually a power imbalance – the parental figures are superior to the children of the family in terms of authority.	0	0	0	0	1

6	People in the community starting to develop their own values and ideas different from the community can cause conflict between the individual (child) and the community (the family).	0	0	0	0	1
7	These types of conflict are very well shown in William Faulkner's Barn Burning.	0	0	0	0	0
8	The main protagonist of the story is a young boy by the name of Colonel Sartoris Snopes, who must bear witness and play a part to his father's spite and vengeance which he realises through criminal means.	0	0	0	0	0
9	The boy throughout the story wants to take individualist paths but is often swayed by the feelings of obligation to the community.	0	0	0	0	0
10	In this short story, the community is shown to be a clear hindrance and manipulator to the individual, as the boy finds a constant moral dilemma over his actions.	0	0	0	0	0
11	His personal nature and individual goals say one thing, but his nurture and a sense of responsibility towards the community say another.	0	0	0	0	0
12	During a trial where Colonel Sartoris Snopes' father was being rightfully accused of burning down a barn the boy felt forced to lie due to familial expectation, as shown in the following sentences: "He aims for me to lie, he thought, again with that frantic grief and despair. And I will have to do hit." (Faulkner 1939: 1)	0	0	0	0	0
13	The previous quote shows us that the boy is starting to become non-complicit with the community, wanting to act differently, but feeling obliged because of the community responsibility, as families are expected to stand up for each other, no matter the circumstances.	0	0	0	0	0
14	As the boy was called a "barn burner" publicly after the trial, he was attacked in the street.	0	0	0	0	0
15	But instead of his father helping him and backing him up when he wanted to stand up for himself and in tandem, for his family, he was dragged back and told to sit in the wagon by his father.	0	0	0	0	0
16	The boy would have been correct to stand up for himself, as technically he did not burn down the barn, but trying to voice his individual viewpoint was met with community hostility.	0	0	0	0	0
17	The individualist was thwarted by the community, here showing the prohibiting nature of the community towards personal growth and independence – even if it would have shown the family in a slightly better light, the action was stopped.	0	0	0	0	0
18	The father here is shown to be benefitting from the community – his crimes and wrongdoings are fixed with the forced help of the family.	0	0	0	0	0
19	Colonel Sartoris is the opposite – as he is lower on the figurative power ladder in the community, he is the one being benefitted from rather than gaining anything out of it himself.	0	0	0	0	0
20	One could draw parallels with modern-day capitalism here, with the top 1% benefitting greatly from the community it gets their money from, or with putting gain above moral good.	1	1	1	1	1
21	A good example of this from the short story is the carpet the boy's father purposefully ruins and then forces the family to clean up.	0	0	0	0	0
22	When the clean-up job is not adequate, the whole family pays the price.	0	0	0	0	0

23	Another aspect of individualism versus community is clear here – one person's reckless actions cause harm for the whole community.	0	0	0	0	1
24	They must reimburse the carpet's expensive price giving away a big part of their corn, which equals to the family's hard labour.	0	0	0	0	0
25	Not only has the one individual within the community who committed the wrong action have to pay, but the entirety of the family pays as a whole unit.	0	0	0	0	0
26	The final straw to this individualist struggle is when the father, out of his anger and spite tries to burn down a barn once again.	0	0	0	0	0
27	This time, the boy acts on his own, and mentions the force on his life that blood ties and family have been: /.../ this the old habit, the old blood which he had not been permitted to choose for himself, which had been bequeathed him willy nilly and which had run for so long (and who knew where, battenning on what of outrage and savagery and lust) before it came to him (Faulkner 1939: 9).	0	0	0	0	0
28	The boy clearly expresses that this community is forced upon him and carries with it values, which have been mindlessly pushed on generation upon generation.	0	0	0	0	1
29	Now it is the individualist's time to break out of this pattern and forge their own path.	0	0	0	0	0
30	He thinks of running away and tries to warn the family who owns the barn, with his own family trying to tie him down and stop him, but not succeeding.	0	0	0	0	0
31	This is Colonel Satoris moving strongly against what was expected of him as a member of the family – he was expected to not tell on his father's crimes and to work with him.	0	0	0	0	0
32	He does the opposite, trying to warn the family, and in the process completely alienates himself.	0	0	0	0	0
33	The boy escapes: "Then he was free." (Faulkner 1939: 10)	0	0	0	0	0
34	The community – family – tries to catch him, but again, they fail.	0	0	0	0	0
35	The father, while trying to catch up, gets shot.	0	0	0	0	0
36	The main opposition for independence and individuality is gone with the death of the boy's father.	0	0	0	0	1
37	The boy sits on a hill at midnight, and soon the sun starts to rise.	0	0	0	0	0
38	"He did not look back" (Faulkner 1939: 11) – the boy has no choice but leave this community behind, but while being alone watching the sunrise is also reminded– new and better times are ahead.	0	0	0	0	0
39	In conclusion, William Faulkner's Barn Burning shows us very clearly the development of a common theme – the choice between working towards yourself – individuality – or working towards the wellbeing of the community.	0	0	0	0	0
40	Choosing either of the two possible paths here is not without consequences and guilt.	0	0	0	0	0
41	In the end, the boy achieves individuality and a way towards what he believes in, but at the cost of community – a literal loss of his father and a more figurative loss of the rest of his family.	0	0	0	0	0

Appendix 7: Participant D's Text Coded for Hedging

Nr.	Sentence	Coder 01	Coder 02	Coder 03	Coder Agreement	Participant D
1	Nathaniel Hawthorne's short story Young Goodman Brown, first published in 1835 (Encyclopaedia Britannica 2015), is an example of American Romanticism, specifically Dark Romanticism.	0	0	0	0	0
2	The story features many elements representative of that literary school, but I will be focusing on the portrayal of human nature as an aspect of Dark Romantic writing and how Hawthorne shows an example of how it can be corrupted through his characterization of young Goodman Brown.	0	0	0	0	0
3	Human nature is an aspect that has been written about a lot.	0	0	0	0	0
4	This has interested Dark Romantic writers as well.	0	0	0	0	0
5	In his short story, Hawthorne introduces characters that at first glance seem to fit into a certain box, but at the same time, the story has an ominous feeling to it, which hints at things not being as they seem.	1	1	1	1	1
6	In this story, human nature is not described as inherently good or bad, but very much ambiguous.	0	0	0	0	0
7	As the story progresses the main character – young Goodman Brown – is presented with situations that change him as a person and also change the readers' view of him.	0	0	0	0	0
8	Hawthorne uses a dreamlike journey sequence to show how each of the characters Goodman Brown interacts with have some sort of ulterior motives or hidden evil streaks, meaning they have been already corrupted by sin and evil to an extent.	0	0	0	0	0
9	The more young Goodman Brown lets these characters influence him, the more his seemingly good nature deteriorates.	1	1	1	1	0
10	To start with, the story begins with the main character being portrayed as a good character.	0	0	0	0	0
11	From the very first time young Goodman Brown is introduced, the reader is made aware of the fact that he is indeed young.	0	0	0	0	0
12	In the story, he is continuously referred to as both "young Goodman Brown" (e.g. Hawthorne 1996: para. 1) and "the young man" (e.g. Hawthorne 1996: para. 6).	0	0	0	0	0
13	His young age is also affirmed when he says, "What, my sweet, pretty wife, dost thou doubt me already, and we but three months married?" (Hawthorne 1996: para. 3).	0	0	0	0	0
14	This shows that although he is old enough to be married, he is still young enough to not have been married for long (three months).	0	0	0	0	0

15	Hawthorne's brings the characters age up again when Brown meets a man – his brief companion later – in the woods and the man is described as about fifty years old and also older than Brown with an age gap big enough to justify the narrator saying, "they might have been taken for father and son" (Hawthorne 1996: para. 12).	0	0	0	0	0
16	The importance of Goodman Brown being young comes from the preconceived notion that children and adolescent people are inherently good-natured.	0	0	0	0	0
17	Their innocence is seen as them having been protected from the evils of the world and being too inexperienced to take part in unleashing the bad.	0	1	0	0	0
18	Older people are often viewed as morally corrupted by the world and therefore having more evil parts in their nature.	0	0	0	0	1
19	The older man in the story being revealed as "The devil!" by Goody Cloyse is in a way an example of that (Hawthorne 1996: para. 30).	1	0	0	0	1
20	Although Goodman Brown is by no means a child, him being regarded as a young man still supports the notion that the reader should view him as a good person and thus makes his fall from virtue even more noticeable.	1	1	0	1	0
21	At the beginning of the story, Goodman Brown comes across as a very devout man.	1	0	0	0	0
22	When talking to his wife Faith, Brown uses expressions such as "Amen!" and "Say thy prayers" (Hawthorne 1996: para. 5).	0	0	0	0	0
23	The fact that Goodman Brown is a religious man is solidified when he talks to his companion in the woods and says, "We have been a race of honest men and good Christians since the days of the martyrs" (Hawthorne 1996: para. 17).	0	0	0	0	0
24	Due to the story being set in a Western society, where morality is based on instructions from the Old Testament, Brown calling himself and his ancestors Christians strongly implies that the reader should see the goodness of his heart.	1	0	1	1	1
25	Moreover, Brown's companion adds, "I have been as well acquainted with your family as with ever a one among the Puritans," specifying that Brown and his family are part of the stereotypically more zealous and conservative group of Protestant Christians (Hawthorne 1996: para. 18).	0	0	0	0	0
26	That being even more evidence of the high morals the main character in this story must have	0	0	0	0	0
27	Considering all these instances, Goodman Brown seems to certainly live up to his name Goodman by being a 'good man'.	1	0	0	0	1
28	Hawthorne even lets Brown confirm these observations by having him say, "We are a people of prayer, and good works to boot, and abide no such wickedness" (Hawthorne 1996: para. 19).	0	0	0	0	0
29	Young Goodman Brown being a fervent practicing Christian is supposed to in a way protect him from the evils of the world, but even that ends up not being enough to stop his downfall.	1	1	1	1	1
30	As the fall from virtue comes closer, the reader is made aware of a part of Goodman Brown's nature that is not usually regarded as good.	0	0	0	0	0
31	In many aspects of his life, Brown seems to be lacking courage.	1	1	1	1	1
32	He is letting fear dictate his decisions, which in the end is the main catalyst in his downfall.	0	0	0	0	0

33	One thing that Brown fears is losing his wife and having her pure and good nature corrupted.	0	0	0	0	0
34	His wife Faith shares her hesitation about Brown going on his small trip – adventure – and asks him to “put off [his] journey until sunrise and sleep in [his] own bed to-night”, reasoning that, “a lone woman is troubled with such dreams and such thoughts that she's afeard of herself sometimes,” and therefore should not be left alone (Hawthorne 1996: para. 2).	0	0	0	0	0
35	But Goodman Brown seems to think the journey is inevitable, “My journey, as thou callest it, forth and back again, must needs be done 'twixt now and sunrise” (Hawthorne 1996: para. 3).	1	1	0	1	1
36	And to add, his later statements about how his wife should not know anything about what “work is to be done [that night],” because it “would kill her to think it,” make it seem that Brown feels the obligation to go out to the woods just so there would not be any consequences that could be the realizations of his fears, especially regarding Faith (Hawthorne 1996: para. 7).	1	1	0	1	0
37	Near the culmination of the story when Goodman fears that Faith has fallen to the dark side, he decidedly goes after the Devil to the gathering of dark magical beings, even though he had spent a good portion of the story resisting the evil as much as possible, for example when he exclaims, “With heaven above and Faith below, I will yet stand firm against the devil!” (Hawthorne 1996: para. 46).	0	0	0	0	0
38	In the end, young Goodman Brown is willing to let himself be corrupted by the ‘bad’, because of his fears regarding his wife and because he lacks the courage to trust that Faith is safe at home, while the Devil is playing tricks on him.	0	0	0	0	0
39	In addition to being scared about Faith, Goodman fears that his fellow villagers have been corrupted by evil as well, which makes him distrust them.	0	0	0	0	0
40	His blatant distrust of everyone is what solidifies his downfall the most, because it rots his seemingly good nature, as Hawthorne (1996: para. 73) writes that “a stern, a sad, a darkly meditative, a distrustful, if not a desperate man did he become from the night of that fearful dream.”	0	1	0	0	0
41	Even before the end of his journey, Goodman exhibits that distrust.	0	0	0	0	0
42	When he thinks he recognizes the voices of Deacon Gookin and his church minister in the woods, Goodman does not really suspect that what he is seeing is not true and might be fabricated by his weird companion, possibly the Devil, and he starts to suspect them of evil things right at that point.	0	1	0	0	0
43	Though Brown never gets the confirmation that what happened in the woods on that night and at the witch-meeting was true, he fears that it was and does not have the courage to believe in the goodness and purity his companion’s souls that he has before.	0	0	0	0	0
44	His fears even make him lose his faith and is no longer that fervent Christian, “at morning or eventide, when the family knelt down at prayer, he scowled” (Hawthorne 1996: para. 73).	0	0	0	0	0
45	Moreover, that last sentence of the story solidifies the knowledge the reader has about Brown being totally corrupted, “they carved no hopeful verse upon his tombstone, for his dying hour was gloom” (Hawthorne 1996: para. 73).	0	0	0	0	0

46	Goodman Brown let his fears and lack of courage determine the outcome of his life story, which lead to him losing his mostly good-natured being and purity of his soul.	0	0	0	0	0
47	In Young Goodman Brown Hawthorne shows that there is some ambiguity to human nature and how some aspects of a character's disposition can become their downfall.	0	0	0	0	0
48	Hawthorne creates a character who seems to be good but still manages to fall from virtue.	1	1	1	1	1
49	Young Goodman Brown lets his relations to other characters – companions – and his fears regarding those characters and himself influence his quite sudden downfall and deterioration of his good nature.	0	0	0	0	1

RESÜMEE

TARTU ÜLIKOOL
ANGLISTIKA OSAKOND

Jonathan Bull

Hedge Use and Awareness in English Academic Writing among Estonian University Students

Põiklusväljendite kasutamine ja teadlikkus ingliskeelses akadeemilises kirjutamises eesti üliõpilaste seas

bakalaureusetöö

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Käesoleva bakalaureusetöö eesmärk oli leida vastused küsimustele sellest, kui tihti kasutavad eesti üliõpilased põiklusväljendeid (ing *hedges*) ingliskeelses akadeemilises kirjutamises ja kuidas see suhestub korpuse andmetega; uurimuses osalenute oskusest identifitseerida nende enda põiklusväljendite kasutust; ja sellest, kuidas osalenute arutluskäik suhestub teaduskirjanduses väljatooduga. Töös uuriti nelja spetsiaalselt valitud inglise keele ja kirjanduse osakonna üliõpilase põiklusväljendite kasutust tekstianalüüsi ja intervjuu meetodil.

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Märksõnad: Inglise keel, akadeemiline kirjutamine, põiklusväljendid

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