HEDGES IN CAMPUS JOURNALISTIC ARTICLES
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Abstract

The study aimed to reveal the hedges in campus journalistic articles written by high school students and published in their newspaper issues. It particularly determined the frequency of forms of hedging used in campus journalistic articles; showed the frequency functions of hedging used in the said campus journalistic articles; and identified the implications of the use of hedges in each article. Through descriptive method via content or corpus analysis, 20 articles (5 for each of the sections) were evaluated. These articles were gathered from the recent published newspaper issue for 2011. The researcher purposively chose the articles through close reading so as to avoid too straightforward articles devoid of hedging incidence. It was revealed that editorial articles (f = 47, 51.09%) are the mostly hedged, modulated and mitigated articles and modal auxiliary verbs have the highest incidence with 30 or 32.61%. Accuracy-oriented hedges have a higher occurrence (62 or 67.39%) while reliability hedges are used widely (37 or 40.22%). Contributory factors on the presence of hedging are nature or purpose of articles, teaching instances of hedges, and at a certain point, the length of articles. Thus, it was recommended that Salager-Meyer’s categories of hedges be used to bring new perspective and compare if there would be difference in the results, similar and parallel studies may be conducted to explore other types of academic write-ups and incidence of discourse, and more articles may be evaluated for hedging forms and functions to further validate the result of this study.
Chapter I

THE PROBLEM AND ITS SETTING

Introduction

Much has been studied about the journalistic practices of national, community and campus publications; and its staff awareness of the current pressing issues. Being more interested on how to increase production, adhere to cost-effectiveness, or develop performance in the craft of writing, researchers and journalists alike focus more on the aspect of know-how of the field and the multi-faceted skills demanded on perpetuating the print media. Apparently, the content of journalistic articles has been given less attention in terms of its linguistic merits, truth-value and fidelity to its readers.

The process of academic writing particularly journalistic writing is a process of creating new knowledge or sharing insightful ideas in order to fulfill the demands of the society. Vasquez and Giner (2008) posited that specific patterns not only facilitate the process of writing, but also allow articles to be recognized within their particular discourse community. Therefore, conventions concerning the writing process should always be respected. Rhetoric plays a key role in the construction of knowledge within this genre. It helps the unfolding of the text and it becomes essential in order to persuade the audience and obtain a dialogic negotiation of the information conveyed. Interactional elements such as hedges strongly contribute to the consecution of these purposes.

As what Bhatia (1993) stated, hedges help highlight the subjectivity of a proposition (the fact that a proposition may generally be always subject to interpretation), reducing the author’s commitment, while adding a certain sense of politeness to the discourse. This contributes to
reducing confrontation in the dialogue between the author and other fellows or academicians. At the same time, it also helps the flow of new information. Without the presence of hedges, the text writer would be unable to formulate statements describing new information or creating different viewpoints through persuasion of information with the audience. In consequence, the primary communicative purposes of academic articles would not be achieved if the absence of hedges were an obstacle to the information flow.

From the analysis to be made on the presence of hedges in the journalistic writings, it can be assumed that more opinionated, featurized and subjectively descriptive writings would contain various hedges than straight-to-the-fact articles particularly hard news. This is in congruence of some scholars, like Booth (1985), Bazerman (1984) or Bolsky’s (1988) assertions that academic writing should stay aseptic and as objective as possible avoiding all sorts of ambiguous propositions. After all, the readership turns to this source of information to obtain accurate knowledge on the subject area in question. However, in support to the formerly mentioned types of descriptive writings, it must also be considered that there does not seem to be absolute truths. Everything is deemed to be interpreted from different perspectives. Assuming also that there are both high and low frequency of interactional elements or hedges in those journalistic works, special attention to the nature of the information or data used for each area of press product is extremely useful.

**Conceptual Framework**

Hedging is an implicit but rampant linguistic phenomenon. Various authorities offered insights on what hedging is.

For Zuck and Zuck (1986) it is “the process whereby the author reduces the strength of what he is writing.” In relation to that, Brown and Levinson (1987) defined hedges as “a particle,
word or phrase that modifies the degree of membership of a predicate or a noun phrase in a set, which speaks of that membership that it is *partial* or true only in certain respects, or that it is *more* true and complete than perhaps might be expected.” Hyland (1998) sees hedges as “the means by which writers can present a proposition as an opinion rather than a fact: items are only hedges in their epistemic sense, and only when they mark uncertainty.” The latter definition therefore is much applicable and helpful to use in the context of this study.

Hedging is a basic feature in academic discourse (Rounds, 1982) that enables academic writers to show their certainty and doubt towards their statements, to show the amount of confidence they put on their claim, and to start a dialog with their readers. Through using hedges, writers leave some room for their readers to judge the truth value of the assertion.

It is often believed that academic writing, particularly scientific writing, is factual. However an important feature of academic writing is the concept of cautious language, or “hedging”. It is necessary to make decisions about writer’s stance on a particular subject, or the strength his claims. The appropriate use of hedging strategies is a significant resource for writers and plays an important part in demonstrating competence in a specialist register. Though, hedging is not anymore a new phenomenological language. The term “hedge” was first used by Lakoff in 1972 to mean “words whose job is to make things more or less fuzzy.” Since then, hedging has become more defined. Since the 1980s, the use of hedging devices has been viewed as a pragmatic phenomenon that permeates academic writing. McEnery and Kifle (2002) as forerunners in investigating hedges noted that among the hedge forms, modal verb, adverb, noun and adjective were found to be very much significant. But through the years, categories of hedges have also developed.
Varttala (1999) has emphasized the functions of hedging in research articles as the indicator of textual precision and interpersonal relationship. While several literature and readings emphasize the importance of hedging, Hyland (1998) stressed that we know little about its use, frequency, and distribution in different disciplines or writing genres.

Despite its major role in academic discourse, hedging has received most attention in the context of casual and oral discourse (Coates 1987, Horman 1989, Nittono 2003, Stubbs 1986). There have not been any studies on hedging in journalistic articles and across press product sections. Though there is meagerness of studies conducted in this area, the researcher assumes that there are variations in the use of hedges across different journalistic articles and sections. News, editorial, feature and sports articles of this study are selected to address the scarcity of studies on hedges in the areas.

This research examines and compares the forms and functions of hedging across four sections of the newspaper. The foresaid concepts has then become the framework in the conduct this present study.

Figure 1 on the succeeding page shows three concentric circles representing the penetration of hedged forms and functions (on the bigger circle) on the specific types of journalistic articles such as news, editorial, feature and sports (on the medial circle), and in general, the campus journalistic articles (on the core circle).
The main target of analysis in this is therefore the campus journalistic articles. Investigation is carried out in the light of the forms and functions which are set on the peripheral. Though on similar circle, the two parameters are separated by broken lines to indicate their arbitrariness – that is to say, that although these are related, these are still treated separably for thoroughness and clarity of analysis.

**Statement of the Purpose**

To some people the term “hedging” is not as popular as greeting, thanking, or leavetaking. This does not mean they hedge less often than they greet, thank or apologies. In fact, people hedge very frequently in their very ordinary, everyday discourse. Hedging can also be
found in newspapers, magazines, books, even science textbooks and research reports, which many people think these should give exact and accurate information. There seems to be a negative perception about hedging among language users because it shows uncertainty that is perceived as indicator of unreliability.

On the other hand, second or foreign language speakers very often sound too blunt or too direct in the ears of native speakers. It might not be because they are rude or have simple understanding of this world, but it is probably because they do not hedge. In most cases, hedged statements will very often be more appropriate and accurate than those which are not hedged.

The study aims to reveal hedges in campus journalistic articles written by high school students and published in their newspaper issues.

Specifically, it sought to attain the following objectives:

1. Determine the frequency of forms of hedging used in campus journalistic articles as to:
   1.1 News articles
   1.2 Editorial articles
   1.3 Feature articles, and
   1.4 Sports articles

2. Determine the frequency functions of hedging used in the aforementioned campus journalistic articles; and

3. Identify the implications of the use of hedges in each of the articles.

**Significance of the Study**

This study is considered highly significant in many aspects to the following persons in one way or another:
Campus Journalists and Students. Knowledge of hedges in campus journalism would make the campus journalists and the students be less direct in stating their supposition, making references to other persons and establishing reliability in their discourse. Similarly, as what Erickson et al. (1978) asserted, academic people, and those holding authority, regardless of their sex, are assumed to use hedges less than lay persons – campus journalists and students upon using hedges would appear to be more academic and scholarly.

Teachers and Publication Advisers. The results or findings which would be revealed in this study would give teachers and campus paper advisers alike insights on the implication of the presence or absence of hedges in academic and journalistic writings. This would aid them on deciding upon including in their teaching repertoire the know-how of the forms and functions of hedges and its use on the discourse communities.

Writers. In general, the study would be helpful to the writers especially those who use English as a second language or non-native speakers. Aside from being more scholarly, writers would be aided in the following respect:

- Can avoid commitment to the assumptions they make (Brown & Levinson 1987, Prince 1982);
- Helps indicate approximate ranges, where detailed accuracy is not necessary or overprecision is unexpected (Prince 1982, Pappas, 1989);
- May help to have control over their clients. Pappas argues that “one way professionals indicate their level of expertise is the degree of uncertainty they convey to make their assertion indisputable and irrefutable”, because hedges, such as shields, can give “very high degrees of uncertainty or maximum protection against challenges.”
Administrators. Considering the role of principals and higher authority in schools, this study would be beneficial to track the anticipated positive changes in the learners’ performance and attitude towards writing as revealed in the hedges they use. In the long run, this could be the basis in developing more complex writing and other macroskills entailing hedging needed in the academic world among students.

Curriculum Designers. They could use the results of the study to implement curricular improvements with regards to the subject matters and choice of materials to be included in schools for motivating and developing effective and knowledgeable campus journalists.

Future Researchers. The outcome of this study may then catch the interest and enthusiasm of other researchers to delve with the hedges in other academic articles in their own institutions, or conduct similar, follow-up and parallel studies to strengthen or prove the outcome of this present research.

Scope and Limitation

This study deals with determining the forms and functions of various hedging devices in campus journalistic articles limited to news, editorial, feature and sports sections of the newspaper. Implications of the presence of hedges in the articles would likewise be covered in the study.

The research design used in this study is only descriptive-qualitative method through content or corpus analysis. Only 20 articles (five for each of the sections) were evaluated in the conduct of this research. These articles were gathered from the recent published newspaper issue for the academic year 2011. Intently, these were selected according to the personal choice of the researcher. Thus, close reading or scrutiny of the possible articles was done.
The duration of the study is from October 2011 to March 2012. This covers the start of selection of the articles subjected in the study until the interpretation and drawing implications out of the result of the study.

While it is true that to extend the scope and coverage would yield more valid results, limitations had to be made so that only one institution – Southern Luzon State University, and only one publication – The Junior Kingfisher were included.

**Definition of Terms**

Several terms used in this study are hereby defined conceptually and operationally for the purposes of clarity and better understanding.

**Campus Journalistic Articles.** These articles are intended for school paper publication which are issued periodically or yearly depending on the mode of issuance set/agreed upon by the school and the organization. In this study, these are classified as news, editorials, features or sports.

**Editorials.** These articles contain the opinion and the general stand of the publications and are usually in the form of main editorial, editorial columns, guest and mood editorials and editorial liners.

**Features.** These articles are descriptive of special or human interest journalistic articles which come in the form of travelogues; personality sketch; development communication articles; movie, book and TV show reviews; and other philosophical, psychological and social interest or “light” articles.
News. These are to-the-fact articles which bear the foremost element of immediacy and are categorized as hard or straight, news features, interpretive and analytical, and newsbriefs.

Sports. These articles are characterized by action and emotion-filled contents about players and games, and can contain the attributes of news, features and editorials rolled into one.

Forms of Hedges. These hedges according to form may be classified as introductory verbs, lexical verbs, modal verbs, adverbs of frequency, modal adverbs, modal adjectives, modal nouns, that clauses, to-clause + adjective, adverbials, epistemic verbs, cognition verbs, hypothetical constructions, and anticipatory it-clause.

Functions of Hedges. These hedges according to functions may be categorized into an array of purposes such as “weakening force of statements, containing modal expressions, expressing deference, and signaling uncertainty.” In this study, the functions are limited to Hyland’s (1998) division of hedges in the context of academic discourse: content-oriented hedges and reader-oriented hedges.

Content-oriented Hedges. These “serve to mitigate relationship between propositional content and a non-linguistic mental representation of reality; they hedge the correspondence between what the writer says about the world and what the world is thought to be like.” Hyland (1998) further divides the content-oriented hedges into accuracy-oriented and writer-oriented hedges. The accuracy-oriented hedges refer to “writer’s desire to express proposition with greater precision” which are further divided into attribute and reliability hedges. Attribute hedges help writers to specify more accurately how far their results
“approximate to an idealized state” and reliability hedges indicate the amount of writers’ certainty or uncertainty in a proposition. The writers’ motivation for using writer-oriented hedges is to make a shield for the self against any probable falsification of the proposition. This end is achieved through minimizing their involvement in the proposition and keeping a distance from it. The main distinction between writer-oriented and accuracy-oriented hedges is that writer-oriented hedges mostly concern the writer’s presence in the text rather than increasing precision which is the main concern of accuracy-oriented hedges.

**Reader-oriented Hedges.** These mostly deal with the interpersonal interaction between readers and writers. Certainty and categorical markers do not invite the readers into a negotiation and imply that the assertion made by the writer is the only possible interpretation of the phenomenon. Ignoring the readers in the text means that the statement made by the writer needs no feedback. Reader-oriented hedges make the readers involved in a dialog and address them as thoughtful individuals to respond and judge the truth value of the proposition.

**Hedges.** These are “the means by which writers can present a proposition as an opinion rather than a fact: items are only hedges in their epistemic sense, and only when they mark uncertainty” (Hyland, 1998). In the context of this study, these are the subject for scrutiny according to forms and functions.

**Modality.** It is considered to be related just to those linguistic items which are concerned with the assessment of probability and possibility (Halliday, 1970); refers broadly to “a speakers’ attitude toward or opinion about the truth of a proposition expressed by a
sentence and toward the situation or event described by a sentence” (Simpson, 1990). This is one form of hedging in the light of the study.

Chapter II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE AND STUDIES

This chapter reviews literature that has relevance to the study, including research conducted. The topics covered in this section are hedges as part of a bigger process of rhetorical discourse and linguistic incidence.

Related Literature

The following literature includes the concepts of hedges in general; purposes of hedging; hedging users, hedging and modality, functions of hedges, hedging functions in Politeness Model and in Polypragmatic Model, and campus journalistic and academic writing articles.

On Hedges

In simple words, hedging means the way people express their uncertainty about something or state something uncertain, and “hedges” are words or phrase which carry the speaker’s uncertainty (Bonano, 1982). One reason that speakers do not show certainty of what they say is that they want to indicate only the criteria or type of criteria they find important at that time (Schmidt, 1974).

The use of the term “hedge or hedging” dates back to Lakoff’s (1972) paper entitled “Hedges: A study in meaning criteria and the logic of fuzzy concepts” (Meyer 1997). Contrary to the prevalent idea among logicians at that time who believed that the sentences of natural languages are either true or false, or lacking a truth value, Lakoff proposed that “natural
language concepts have vague boundaries and fuzzy edges”, and sentences can often be false or true to some extent. Lakoff was not interested in the pragmatic application of hedges but was mainly concerned with the logical properties of words and phrases like *rather, largely, in a manner of speaking, very*, and their ability “to make things fuzzier or less fuzzy”. Since then, the concept has been expanded to be used in other disciplines such as Speech Acts Theory (Brown and Levinson 1987), and oral discourse (Holmes 1982), and has been adopted by language pragmatists and academic discourse analysts (Markkanen and Schroder 1997).

Hyland (1998) defines hedges as “the means by which writers can present a proposition as an opinion rather than a fact: items are only hedges in their epistemic sense, and only when they mark uncertainty”. The authors, through using hedging devices and showing uncertainty, try to show the amount of accuracy of their statements. At the same time, they attempt to save face in case of any possible falsification of their judgments. Through hedges and attributing the ideas to oneself, writers also invite readers to evaluate the truth value of the proposition as an independent and intelligent individual.

In more technical definitions, hedges are particles, words, or phrases that modify “the degree of membership of a predicate or noun phrase in a set” (Brown & Levinson, 1987). This membership shows that “it is partial, or true only in certain respects, or that it is more true and complete than perhaps might be expected.” This is shown by the use of “kind of”, “sort of”, “I think”, “I guess” and the like. Pappas (1989) categorized hedges as one type of “qualifiers”, i.e., indicators of the level of approximation and speaker commitment to a proposition. Hedges are qualifiers which suggest approximation or uncertainty of the main assertions, for example, “probably”, “appear”, “partially”, or “a tendency to”, while “intensifiers” are those which point out the speaker is confidence in the proposition, for example, “always”, “never”, or “obviously”.
Further, Prince et al. (1982) classified hedges into four types: (1) “rounders”, which show approximate ranges for quantitative information; (2) “adaptors”, which suggest the similarity of non-identical cases; (3) “plausibility shields”, when the speaker is not fully committed to the assertion or the assertion is not based on deductive logic but plausible reasons; and (4) “attribution shields”, when the speaker attributes the assertion to another person or object. For example, Rounder: This package is about 10 kilograms; Adaptor: He was sort of tall; Plausibility shield: It seems like it is going to rain; and Attribution shield: According to his mother he was good at sports.

**Purposes of Hedging**

From the listener’s view of the speaker’s competence, hedged statement may be interpreted as having a negative effect, because they fail to support their assertions. However, a number of studies suggest that hedging is necessary in several ways. First, by hedging speakers can avoid commitment to assumptions they make (Brown & Levinson 1987, Prince 1982). Second, hedging helps indicate approximate ranges, where detailed accuracy is not necessary or overprecision is unexpected (Prince 1982, Pappas 1989). Third, hedging may help professionals have control over their clients. Pappas argues that “one way professionals indicate their level of expertise is the degree of uncertainty they convey … (in order to) … make their assertion indisputable (and) irrefutable”, because hedges, such as shields, can give “very high degrees of uncertainty or maximum protection against challenges.”

To ‘hedge’ means 1) to use an intentionally noncommittal or ambiguous statement, 2) to use evasive or deliberately vague language, 3) to avoid fulfilling or answering a question completely, 4) to be confidently uncertain, and 5) to use verbal and adverbial expressions such as
can, perhaps, may, suggest, which deal with degrees of probability (Retrieved from www.bbk.ac.uk/studyskills). In order to distinguish between facts and claims, writers often use tentative language such as it seems likely that... or arguably.... This technique is called hedging or vague language. Hedging is crucial in academic discourse, and hedge words account for approximately 1 word in every 100 in academic articles. In addition, four (4) reasons for hedging are indicated as follows:

1. By hedging, authors tone down their statements in order to reduce the risk of opposition. This position associates hedges with scientific imprecision and defines them as linguistic cues of bias which avoid personal accountability for statements.

2. Writers want their readers to know that they do not claim to have the final word on the subject. Expressing a lack of certainty does not necessarily show confusion or vagueness. One could consider hedges as ways of being more precise in reporting results. Hedging may present the true state of the writers' understanding and may be used to negotiate an accurate representation of the state of the knowledge under discussion. In fact, academic writers may well wish to reduce the strength of claims simply because stronger statements would not be justified by the data or evidence presented.

3. Hedges may be understood as positive or negative politeness strategies in which the writer tries to appear humble rather than arrogant or all-knowing. Hedging is a rational interpersonal strategy which supports the writer's position, builds writer-reader (speaker/listener) relationships and guarantees a certain level of acceptability in a community. Once a claim becomes widely accepted, it is then possible to present it without a hedge.
4. A certain degree of hedging has become conventionalized; hedging now functions to conform to an established writing style in English.

At the other end of line, the reasons why discourse analysts bother to study expression which are not certain or fail to give reliable information is because generally, it is may be because no concept, not even those of mathematics, is absolutely precise, and some of the most important for everyday use are extremely vague when anybody undertakes to say precisely, he will quickly find he outruns all logical warrant (Piece, 1956 in Schmidt, 1974).

**Hedging Users**

Hedges are classified as “powerless” language and thus, are indicative of uncertainty. Erickson et al. (1978) stated that people will assume that women will use hedges more than men. Also, physicians, scientists, academic people, and those holding authority, regardless of their sex, will be assumed to use hedges less than lay persons.

The first assumption is supported by Lakoff (1975) who concludes that hedges are one characteristic of female communication behavior. Buikema and Roeters’ study (1982) reported that in male-female conversation women tend to use politeness strategies (including hedges) more often that men with a purpose to minimize the face-threatening acts. Coates (1988) also confirmed that when women are talking among themselves, hedges are frequently used to respect the face needs of all participants. The work of Wright and Hosman (1983) on legal communication, points out the unfortunate situation of female witnesses when they use hedges. They found that both male and female witnesses using hedges in their testimony were perceived as less attractive that those not using hedges. The female witnesses using a higher number of hedges particularly were perceived as less credible than the male witnesses in the same category.
Regarding the second assumption, little evidence supports it. In fact, Pappas’ study (1989) on patient-physician discourse indicates a surprising situation where the professional used qualifiers more often than the patients. It is possibly because a diagnosis is, to a degree, tentative. In addition, Prince et al. (1982) reported that doctors produce more than one hedge every fifteen seconds when talking among themselves.

Concerning the use of hedges in the spoken and written language, hedges seem to appear more in the spoken discourse than the written one. Chafe and Danielwics (1987) indicated that academic lecturers use limited vocabulary, hedge frequently and are referentially inexplicit. Moreover, Drechsel (1989) confirmed that hedged forms were found more in oral language, while in written language there was a balance between modals and hedges.

**Hedging and Modality**

There are different linguistic concepts which may come close to hedging, having the same function and use. One of these linguistic concepts which is closely related to hedging is modality. Researchers have provided different definitions for modality.

Halliday (1970) considered modality to be related just to those linguistic items which are concerned with the assessment of probability and possibility, whereas according to Simpson (1990) modality refers broadly to “a speakers’ attitude toward or opinion about the truth of a proposition expressed by a sentence and toward the situation or event described by a sentence”. Modality is divided into two main categories: root and epistemic. Coates (1992) considers epistemic modality as “speaker’s assumptions or assessment of possibilities” which can show the speaker’s confidence or lack of confidence in the truth of the proposition expressed. Root or non-epistemic modality, on the other hand, is “concerned with the necessity or possibility of acts
performed by morally responsible person” (Lyons 1977). Coates asserted that root modality covers a range of meanings such as “permission and obligation and also possibility and necessity.” Hedging is associated with the epistemic modality since both epistemic modality and hedging express the degree of speakers’ confidence in the proposition expressed. Hyland (1998) has emphasized the link between hedging and epistemic modality by stating that “the writer or speaker’s judgments about statements and their possible effects on interlocutors is the essence of hedging, and this clearly places epistemic modality at the center of our interest”. Moreover, languages used in hedging are shown below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Introductory verbs:</th>
<th>e.g. seem, tend, look like, appear to be, think, believe, doubt, be sure, indicate, suggest</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Certain lexical verbs</td>
<td>e.g. believe, assume, suggest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certain modal verbs:</td>
<td>e.g. will, must, would, may, might, could</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adverbs of frequency</td>
<td>e.g. often, sometimes, usually</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modal adverbs</td>
<td>e.g. certainly, definitely, clearly, probably, possibly, perhaps, conceivably,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modal adjectives</td>
<td>e.g. certain, definite, clear, probable, possible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modal nouns</td>
<td>e.g. assumption, possibility, probability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>That clauses</td>
<td>e.g. It could be the case that. e.g. It might be suggested that. e.g. There is every hope that.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To-clause + adjective</td>
<td>e.g. It may be possible to obtain. e.g. It is important to develop. e.g. It is useful to study.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Meanwhile, Heng & Tan (2007) presented the typology of hedging construction. Hedges can be examined as adverbials, epistemic verbs and modal verbs, clausal structures, hypothetical constructions and the anticipatory it-clausal constructions.

**Adverbials.** Examples: The length of the metal bar was approximately 22 cm.; Generally, girls are more eloquent speakers compared to boys; His views on the matter were quite well received; In the use of these hedges, some adverbials are placed immediately after the verb form
such as *approximately*, but others such as *quite* modify an adjective. The word *generally*, modifies a complete idea expressed in a clause.

**Epistemic Verbs.** Examples: The graph *suggests* that there was a dip in the sale of Proton Saga cars between the months of January to March; It *seems* that the football team manager will be replaced soon; The new regulations *appear* to safeguard the interests of women, but they do not. The epistemic verbs are a class on their own as they do not show action such as *kick, wash, eat*, etc.; and In the use of these verbs, a continuation is obligatory in the form of a ‘that’ clausal structure or in the instance of ‘appear’, the use of the infinitive is obligatory if the subject is not of the cleft structure.

**Modal verbs.** Examples: Gases *may* be changed into liquids; It *would* be inappropriate to discuss the matter with your colleagues; The experiment on cloning *could* be dangerous to humanity; Your teacher *may* have been able to help you with that application; The modal verbs are verbs that allow the writers to express the tentativeness of the proposition. In the use of the modals, there should be a realization of a gradation in terms of the strength of the claims made. Generally, the order that is followed is as follows (from the weakest to the strongest): *might, could, should have, had better.* An area of confusion could be in the choice of the modals with reference to the tense such as *can* and *could*. Both are examples to express possibility in the future, but the use of *can* denotes a slightly more definite possibility. More often than not, the two forms are often seen as interchangeable. *Could, would* and *might* may not be the past form. The use of the modals may be realized in perfective forms which express unfulfilled or unrealized actions or events. Attention should be given to the use of modals with perfective and those without to suit the appropriate communicative act.
**Cognition Verbs.** Examples: I *believe* that we need to further explore the causes behind child abuse; I *surmise* that there is a need for a more intensive English language programmes; I *think* it is not a sound method for increasing productivity. The choice of cognition verbs appears connected to a stronger stance taken in mitigating the proposition. Personal pronouns always precede the use of such verbs giving a focus to the writer’s assumption of personal responsibility. These structures are always followed by a *that* clause.

**Hypothetical Constructions.** Examples: *If* we agree on the report, then it can be handed up now; *Unless* we attend to it now, we will not get the target results; and The machine could *possibly* be repaired for RM500. In making a hypothesis, the hypothetical constructions using *if* and *unless* are found in the subordinated clauses. Words like *possibly* and *probably* are more mobile as they can be inserted into the verb phrase or in the initial position preceding the clause.

**Anticipatory it- clause.** Examples: *It is likely* that the experiment will stretch on for another hour; *There is a tendency* to under-declare the amount of taxes to be paid; and With English becoming more important, *it is probable* that more students will take the subject seriously. The constructions make use of a dummy subject to begin a sentence. It helps to front the claim giving it more prominence in the proposition. These constructions also necessitate the use of a *that* clause to complete the sense of the proposition. There is a gradation in the intensity of the claims made. Words like *seem*, and *appear* are not as strong as words like *believe* and *surmise*.

Each structure therefore illustrates a specific stance chosen by the writer or speaker in conveying the intended message. Moreover, elaborate presentation of the languages used in hedging is provided, to wit:

<p>| Modal auxiliary verbs | may, might, can, could, would, should | ‘Such a measure <em>might</em> be more sensitive to changes in health after specialist treatment.’ |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Modal lexical verbs</th>
<th>to seem, to appear (epistemic verbs), to believe, to assume, to suggest, to estimate, to tend, to think, to argue, to indicate, to propose, to speculate</th>
<th>‘In spite of its limitations, the study appears to have a number of important strengths.’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Probability adjectives</td>
<td>possible, probable, unlikely</td>
<td>‘It is likely to result in failure.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nouns</td>
<td>assumption, claim, possibility, estimate, suggestion</td>
<td>‘We estimate that one in five marriages end in divorce.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adverbs</td>
<td>perhaps, possibly, probably, practically, likely, presumably, virtually, apparently</td>
<td>‘There is, perhaps, a good reason why she chose to write in the first person.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approximators of degree, quantity, frequency and time</td>
<td>approximately, roughly, about, often, occasionally, generally, usually, somewhat, somehow, a lot of</td>
<td>‘Fever is present in about a third of cases.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introductory phrases</td>
<td>believe, to our knowledge, it is our view that, we feel that</td>
<td>‘We believe that there is no simple explanation.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“If” clauses</td>
<td>if true, if anything</td>
<td>‘If true, our study contradicts the myth that men make better managers than women.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compound hedges</td>
<td>seems reasonable, looks probable</td>
<td>Such compound hedges can be double hedges (it may suggest that; it seems likely that; it would indicate that; this probably indicates); treble hedges (it seems reasonable to assume that); quadruple hedges (it would seem somewhat unlikely that, it may appear somewhat speculative that) and so on.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above categorization is deemed included in the literature since it is used by the researcher to classify the hedged forms analyzed across the four campus journalistic articles.

**Functions of Hedges**

The most obvious function of hedges is as softeners, among others: to soften claims (Hatch, 1992), to soften complaints, requests and commands (Brown & Levinson, 1987), to soften performatives (Lakoff, 1972), and to soften criticism (Drechsel, 1989). Examples of each softener are given below:

Softened claim: The data appear to support the assumption of the…

...
Softened complaint: Excuse me. I think I came here before her.

Softened request: I was wondering if you could bring me another cup.

Softened command: Open that window, will you?

Softened performative: I can promise you that we will be there on time.

Softened criticism: Well, personally, I think it would be better if the table was placed there.

The second function is as cooperative devices in conversation, for example, to diminish face threatening acts such as interrupting; to negotiate sensitive topics and encourage participation; and to strengthen or weaken statements. In particular, Hatch (1992) suggested that hedges can smooth a disagreement with a conversational partner. Finally, hedges can act like one of politeness strategies, such as in understating and giving comment.

Functions of hedging constitute another main focus of this study. There are two main approaches taken in different studies towards hedging functions. They are hedging in politeness model and in polypragmatic model (which is considered in this study) which are discussed in succeeding pages.

**Hedging Functions in Politeness Model**

Hedging has been treated as a sign of politeness by Brown and Levinson (1987) in their unified model of politeness in spoken context. According to this model, hedging is a strategy which is employed to reduce the risk of confrontation in social interactions. In this model, hedges are one type of linguistic device through which negative politeness strategies can be realized. Negative politeness, according to Brown and Levinson (1987), refers to addressee’s “want to have his freedom of action unhindered and his attention unimpeded. It performs the
function of minimizing the particular imposition that the face threatening act (FTA) unavoidably affects.”

Normally hedges are a characteristic of negative politeness (Brown and Levinson 1987), but they can also be used in positive politeness strategies as well. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), positive politeness is “redress directed to the addressee’s positive face, his perennial desire that his wants (or the actions/ acquisitions/ values resulting from them) should be thought of as desirable”.

However, due to the inappropriateness of this model to account for hedging in academic discourse, Hyland (1998) builds up a functional classification of hedges which is discussed in the next section. This approach is adopted in the present study.

**Hedging Functions in Polypragmatic Model**

Starting from Zadeh’s (1972) theory of fuzzy sets, Hyland established a polypragmatic model of hedging. Noticing that the traditional linguistic principles such as (epistemic) modality cannot fully account for the various functions of hedging, Hyland devised a model to account for the multi-functional nature of hedging.

Due to the polypragmatic nature of hedging devices, Hyland confirmed that assigning specific meanings exclusively to particular forms is not possible. Hedging categories always contain traces of meaning which are conveyed by the other. Instead of having some categories with “firm boundaries and clear criteria of membership”, prototypes model of categories “suggests that members do not necessarily share the same discrete attributes but can be linked by family resemblance. Categories are not homogeneous but have a prototype, good and bad members and fuzzy borders” (Hyland 1998). According to this model, hedges can cover an array
of purposes such as “weakens force of statements, contains modal expressions, expresses deference, and signals uncertainty.”

Hyland (1998) divides the hedges in the context of academic discourse into two main categories: content-oriented hedges and reader-oriented hedges. According to him, content-oriented hedges “serve to mitigate the relationship between propositional content and a non-linguistic mental representation of reality; they hedge the correspondence between what the writer says about the world and what the world is thought to be like.”

He further divided the content-oriented hedges into accuracy-oriented and writer-oriented hedges. The accuracy-oriented hedges refer to “writer’s desire to express proposition with greater precision” which are further divided into attribute and reliability hedges. Attribute hedges help writers to specify more accurately how far their results “approximate to an idealized state” and reliability hedges indicate the amount of writers’ certainty or uncertainty in a proposition.

The writers’ main motivation for using writer-oriented hedges is to make a shield for the self against any probable falsification of the proposition. This end is achieved through minimizing their involvement in the proposition and keeping a distance from it. The main distinction between writer-oriented and accuracy-oriented hedges is that writer-oriented hedges mostly concern the writer’s presence in the text rather than increasing precision which is the main concern of accuracy-oriented hedges. It should be noted here that this distinction, as Hyland states, is not very distinct and certain hedges can have multiple meanings at the same time.

The second main category which is distinguished by Hyland is reader-oriented categories. The main distinction between this category and content-oriented is that reader-
oriented hedges mostly deal with the interpersonal interaction between readers and writers. Hyland argues that ignoring the readers in the text by the writers will present “claims as ex-cathedra assertions” which “displays an unacceptable deviant persona”. Certainty and categorical markers do not invite the readers into a negotiation and imply that the assertion made by the writer is the only possible interpretation of the phenomenon. Ignoring the readers in the text means that the statement made by the writer needs no feedback. Reader-oriented hedges make the readers involved in a dialog and address them as thoughtful individuals to respond and judge the truth value of the proposition.

**On Campus Journalistic and Academic Writing Articles**

The genre of journalistic article like other products of academic writing has become the significant subject of various linguistic analyses in other countries. Since journalistic articles are already an important part of the bibliography of students and professionals as well, both the population read such works. This being so, students and professionals need to have both “rhetorical awareness” of the text and a “linguistic awareness” of the range of language forms (Crompton, 1997) that can be used to express the basic rhetoric of the journalistic article that they read. In addition, awareness of the text structure of journalistic article would help student and professionals to be more flexible in their expectations from it. Likewise, it would increase their understanding of the content of the articles and make the most out of what they read. Hence, this is the pedagogical importance of analyzing journalistic articles in which the analyses of the various samples would lead to a promising area of linguistic study.

Recent trends in the study of written texts, as Atai and Sadr (2008) observed, reflect a growing interest in interaction between reader and writer. Most studies have focused on analysis
of the text product, describing organizational patterning, aspects of clause structure and discourse functions in the systematic functional tradition and particularly text features such as uses of hedges, modality and reporting verbs. The most important aspect of any discourse is to weigh evidence and draw conclusions from it. It is now commonly pointed out that despite the popular belief that academic texts are neutral accounts of factual information, these are better regarded as “socially constructed rhetorical artifacts” (Hyland, 1998). Whereas caution and honesty are normally expected by the academic community, authors including journalists may wish to formulate their statements cautiously and by means of items relating to vagueness, uncertainty, or tentativeness referred to as hedges. In so doing, hedges allow writers “to express a perspective on their statements” or “the statements of others, to present unproven claims with caution and to enter a dialogue with their audience (Hyland, 1998).

Rhetorically, while studies on articles written by native speakers offer interesting insights into the genre of academic article, this paper argues that articles written by nonnative speakers in English – specifically in journalism and more specifically in campus or school press – are also worth analyzing though Skelton (1997) findings revealed that unqualified and direct writing distinguishes nonnative speakers from their native English speaking counterparts. At grave, since much has been said about other Asian writing styles but not much on the rhetorical styles of Filipino writers, it may be a high time to establish what is Filipino by putting it in a position uniquely its own, rather than have it stereotyped with others. Thus, a study on hedges in journalistic writings would contribute to building up Filipino identity in academic-intellectual writing.

However, to resolve the predicament on the use of hedges in campus journalistic writings, it is necessary to be guided by the following paces. First, relative frequencies and raw
number of hedges would be determined in the journalistic articles. Then, these hedging distributions would be categorized as full verbs, nouns, adjectives or adverbs in line with the incidence of subcategories such as nonfactive reporting, tentative cognition and linking (full verbs); nonfactive assertive, tentative cognition and likelihood (nouns); probability, indefinite degree and frequency (adjectives); and probability, indefinite degree and frequency, and approximative (adverbs). This is called corpus analysis wherein the aim of the analysis is to determine whether current authors of journalistic articles actually make use of the words charged with modal value. Further interpretation of the meaning of hedges in the context of the articles would be done for final analysis.

Related Studies

This review of related studies was provided to support the necessary ground for this study. While the survey of historical background of hedging was presented and the main model for interpreting hedging was discussed in the review of related literature, the main empirical studies in this area were reviewed.

In a local study done by Nivales (2011), she determined that differences in showing commitment and detachment were apparent between the two disciplines: psychology writers appear to be more detached while mass communication writers seem more committed. The topics of RAs apparently influenced the commitment and detachment of these writers. These findings suggest the need for awareness-raising on the usefulness of hedging and boosting devices in mitigating claims despite the seeming sensitivity of the research article topics or its affect on the writers.

On the other hand, Mercado (2006) concluded that in general, hedges used in the text-genre tend to limit the degree of certainty about a claim or a fact presented or an opinion
imposed upon by the writer to the members of a particular discourse community. Hedges are linguistic means through which writers mitigate and modulate their discourse. The use of hedges in the text-genre examined revealed a somewhat modulated or toned down rhetorical style of writers in linguistics, mathematics and science. Evidently, all hedging categories presented in Salger-Meyer’s *Taxonomy of Hedges* and which are found in the text-genre analyzed in the researcher’s study indicate that the statements in which they appear contain personal beliefs based on plausible reasoning.

These studies of Nivales and Mercado in general, though have emphasized on hedging in research articles are suggestive that hedging occurrences are really already prevalent in Filipino writings and thus, prompted the present study on campus journalistic articles to strengthen and support the former’s research.

On foreign studies, Falahati’s (2008) study on examining and comparing the forms and functions of hedging across two rhetorical sections of research articles (RA) as well as three disciplines revealed that the distribution of hedging forms and functions in the RAs are not evenly distributed between different rhetorical sections. The Discussion sections of RAs generally contained more hedging forms than the Introduction sections did (41.79 vs. 39.87). The results of this study also show some interdisciplinary differences in terms of frequency and forms of hedges. As the results of the current study indicate, the three disciplines show some noticeable differences in the use of hedges. The psychology RAs contain the highest amount of hedges, whereas the relative overall number of hedges in medicine and chemistry RAs was about 57% less than psychology. Though the nature and the focus of the study is interdisciplinary, much of the knowledge in the present research on hedges in campus journalistic articles gives credence to the work of Falahati’s work.
A cross-disciplinary study by Vasquez and Giner (2008) talked about different social needs constructing different disciplines in the research area. In addition, and according to the results of our analysis, this construction of knowledge is reflected differently in academic discourse. Regarding interactional elements, soft sciences, such as Marketing, will use a higher rate of these elements in order to show willingness for negotiation. In the case of hard sciences, these elements will also appear, although at a much lower level. The nature of the data in these sciences will determine the amount of hedges inserted in the discourse. To sum up, they believe that differences in appearance of hedges in the three disciplines mainly depend on the nature of the data; on which point within the scientific continuum (abstract-concrete) a discipline is located. For example, the data in their analysis reveal that Biology could be found on a rather middle point within this continuum. Such are the results derived from a moderate presence of hedges in contrast to Marketing and Mechanical Engineering, positioned towards the two extremes of this continuum.

Varttala (2001), in his study on hedging in three disciplines of economics, medicine, and technology reported that the incidence of hedging in economics is the highest and the overall number of hedges in medicine and technology is about one third lower. He considers the object of the study, the different types of material and method used to study these objects, and the general nature of disciplines as the main reasons for such variations. This study also shows that the Discussion section is the most heavily hedged section in RAs followed by Introduction. The findings also indicate that hedges are more evenly distributed in technology RAs than in the other two disciplines.

Salager-Meyer (1994) in her study on hedges in medical English written discourse focused on the distribution of five pre-established hedging categories (i.e., shields,
approximators, authors’ personal doubt, emotionally-charged intensifiers, and compound hedges) in different rhetorical sections of two fundamental medical English genres - case report (CR) and research paper (RP). Her study is quite revealing in showing the different distribution of hedging categories across rhetorical sections of the two genres. The results of this study show that the three most frequently used hedging devices in both genres (shields, approximators, and compound hedges) account for 90% of the total number of hedges used in the medical texts. Salager-Meyer’s study also shows that the Discussion sections in the RP and Comment section (equivalent of Discussion section in RP) contain the most hedges whereas the Methods sections are the least-hedged rhetorical sections.

Bloor and Bloor’s (1993) main objectives in their study were to investigate the way in which economists make knowledge claims in RAs and also to see how far their claims are modified. The authors of this study state that the amount of hedging that researchers use in their RAs is closely connected to the type of claims that they make in their study. In this research they focus on different kinds of claims, namely field central, critical and meta-textual claims. They also mention that economics texts are less hedged than biology articles.

Hyland (1994), in an attempt to examine hedging in EAP (English for Academic Purposes) and EST (English for Science and Technology) textbooks, examined a corpus of 24 textbooks which were representative of a range of writing material intended for L2 students. In his analysis of the corpus of the study, he concluded that the general interest in modality which exists in the research literature is not widely reflected in the pedagogic materials. Moreover, he finds EAP writing texts as dealing more with the issue of modality compared to ESP materials.

Yang (2003) in a quantitative and comparative study of hedges in English and Chinese academic discourse investigated the frequency and distribution of hedges across the two
languages and the rhetorical sections of RAs. The results of this study showed that the Introduction, Discussion, and Result sections are the parts which contain the most hedges in English RAs.

As a whole, researches done by Falahati, Vasquez and Giner, Varttala, Salager-Meyer, Bloor and Bloor, Hyland and Yang are not only related to the present study because of the incidence of hedging forms and functions but also on proving that these hedges vary according to the nature of the disciplines, which in the context of the present study is the variations in the nature of the articles. From these studies, it can be concluded that there might be different disciplinary cultures for using rhetorical features like hedging devices. Another speculation is that the distribution of hedging expressions can vary across different rhetorical sections of articles.
Chapter III

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This chapter discusses the research design and methodology used in the study. It expounds details on the research design undertaken, the sources of data, the whole procedure of the research, and the measures used in analyzing and interpreting the data.

The very purpose of the study is to survey the hedging forms and functions which could be attained through identifying the forms present across four articles – news, editorials, features and sports; specifying the distribution of hedges depending on the languages used such as modal auxiliary verbs, modal lexical verbs doubting and evaluating rather than merely describing, approximators of degree, quantity, frequency and time, compound hedges, adverbs, introductory phrases, probability adjectives, and “if” clauses; determining hedging functions classified as content-oriented (accuracy or reliability-oriented) or writer-oriented; and interpreting the meanings of these hedges as used in foregoing sentences/ paragraphs in the articles to support the analysis.

Research Design

The descriptive qualitative-quantitative method of research through content-analysis was used in this study. It describes the hedged forms and functions in order to draw implications from it. Content or corpus analysis is the specific technique used “to examine artifacts of social communication by making inferences through systematic and objective identification of special characteristics of messages” (Holsti, 1968). However, the nature of the probe has a quantitative touch since numerical frequencies are still necessary to bring about reliable results out of the data treated.
Sources of Data

This study is based on a set of English data composed of 20 campus journalistic articles from four text-types: news, editorials, features and sports. There are five (5) articles drawn from each of the journalistic genre. In these four articles, writers mainly establish the significance of the study and make generalizations regarding the major findings. For the purpose of this study, the researcher himself personally selected all the articles from a single newspaper issue (June to November 2011) so as to avoid too hard and straight-to-the-fact articles that no incidence of hedges is possible.

This study chose articles in each journalistic section based on some criteria. The first criterion was the nature of the articles wherein too straightforward written works are eliminated from the roster of selection, hence in-depth news, sports feature, and sports column or editorials are preferred to hard news and play-by-play sports accounts. The second criterion is the length of the articles – relatively long articles are promising area of studies more than short ones. Next criterion is the recentness of publication. The campus journalistic articles are all limited to those published in the latest issue. It is assumed that time influences the style of the writers and with this time limit this factor has been taken into account.

Once the research articles were selected, they were analyzed in terms of the hedging forms and functions. Interpretations followed to substantiate the meaning of the hedging occurrences in the articles.

Data Gathering Procedures and Treatment

One of the main objectives of this study is to identify and classify the linguistic devices which act as hedges. Another aim is to examine the functions of hedges and to see whether the incidence of hedging forms and functions varies across the four campus journalistic articles of
news, editorials, features and sports. In order to meet these goals, languages used such as modal auxiliary verbs, modal lexical verbs doubting and evaluating rather than merely describing, approximators of degree, quantity, frequency and time, compound hedges, adverbs, introductory phrases, probability adjectives, and “if” clauses were identified. The list of items expressing doubt and uncertainty provided by Hyland (2000) were used as a guideline. Due to the different interpretations that can be made from hedging devices, decisions were made upon the meaning of the devices.

After identifying the hedging forms in the two sets of data, the researcher provided possible contextual interpretations of the hedging devices to identify their functions. At this point, a distinction was made between two sub-categories of content-oriented hedges, namely accuracy-oriented and writer-oriented hedges, as two functions of hedges. According to Hyland (1998), the motivation for using these two hedges is the writer’s interest in “stating propositional accord with reality” or “seeking self protection from the negative consequences of poor judgment”. He further explains that the accuracy-oriented hedges refer to the “writer’s desire to express proposition with greater precision”. Writer-oriented hedges, according to him, are related to the degree of commitment that the writers wish to invest for their knowledge claims. In addition to the main category of content-oriented hedges, Hyland has also provided another main category, namely reader-oriented hedges. These mainly deal with the interpersonal purposes requiring writers to attend to the “social relationship between writer and reader. ”According to Hyland, they also represent “conformity to research community expectations concerning deference due to colleagues in presenting information.”

The main feature which distinguishes reader-oriented hedges from content-oriented hedges is the writers’ presence and agentivity in the text which implies that writers’ statement is
a personal interpretation and they do not intend to generalize their proposition for interpersonal reasons, but rather invite the readership in making their conclusions and inferences. Due to the challenges faced in distinguishing accuracy and writer-oriented hedges as two sub-categories of content-oriented hedges from reader-oriented hedges, the latter type is not included in the categorization of the hedging functions. However, accuracy-oriented hedges are further classified into attribute or reliability-oriented hedging functions.

Meanwhile, frequency and percentage distribution was utilized to determine the hedging incidence in the articles. This renders the very quantitative nature of the study.

Chapter IV

PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

This chapter deals with the presentation and analysis of the data incurred from the content analyzed from the selected campus journalistic articles. Interpretation is also provided to support the results revealed in the tables.

1. Distribution of Forms of Hedging

Table 1
Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Hedging Forms in News, Editorial, Feature and Sports Articles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Campus Journalistic Articles</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>News</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10.87%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 1 shows the frequency and percentage distribution of hedging forms evident in various campus journalistic articles such as news, editorial, feature and sports. Out of 92 hedging forms, a little more than half of the total number of hedged forms in all the articles is incurred from editorial articles \((f = 47, 51.09\%)\). It is followed by feature (with 24 or 26.08\%) comprising half the total number of hedges in editorial. Meanwhile, sports has 11 or 11.96\% nearly the same with news \((f = 10, 10.87\%)\).

The results of Table 1 reveal a considerable variation of the incidence of hedged forms according to the type of articles. Editorials, being personalized articles are greatly hedged in contrast to news which are to-the-fact and therefore are highly objective.

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hedging Forms</th>
<th>News</th>
<th></th>
<th>Editorial</th>
<th></th>
<th>Feature</th>
<th></th>
<th>Sports</th>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>f</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modal auxiliary verbs</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.17</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16.30</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10.87</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.26</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>32.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modal lexical verbs doubting and evaluating rather</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.17</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.17</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.26</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.17</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>than merely describing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approximators of degree, quantity, frequency and</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.35</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15.22</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.35</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>23.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>time</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compound hedges</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.09</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.35</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.35</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.09</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10.87</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2 presents the frequency and percentage distribution of language used classified to identify specific hedging forms in news, editorial, feature and sports articles. Of the four articles, hedging forms are widely distributed in editorials since modal auxiliary verbs (15 or 16.30%), approximators (14 or 15.22%), “if” clauses (5 or 5.43%), compound hedges and adverbs (both with 4 or 4.35%), modal lexical verbs and probability adjectives (both with 2 or 2.17%), and introductory phrases (1 or 1.09%) are all present in the articles; but less in news with no representative hedges in the form of adverbs, probability adjectives and “if” clauses, and sports with nothing of probability adjectives, approximators and “if” clauses. Though feature articles are in the medial position with respect to the incidence of hedging, it is likewise characterized by the absence of introductory phrases, probability adjectives and “if” clauses hedged forms.

On the other perspective, modal auxiliary verbs have the highest incidence with 30 or 32.61% followed by approximators with 22 or 23.91%, adverbs with 11 or 11.96%, compound hedges with 10 or 10.87% and modal lexical verbs with 9 or 9.78%. At the end of the spectrum are “if” clauses, introductory phrases, and probability adjectives with 5 or 5.44%, 3 or 3.26% and 2 or 2.17%.

It can be inferred from the results shown on Table 2 that modal auxiliary verbs are the commonly used hedged forms in journalistic articles while probability adjectives are the least used. This can be deduced from the standard campus journalism rules that verbs should be used
more than adjectives (except in feature and sports) in newspaper articles because verbs are “semantically dynamic contrary to adjectives which are static” (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 2008) and thus are preferable for readership in terms of catching readers’ interest. Surprisingly, these probability adjectives are present in editorials where they are less expected.

2. Distribution of Functions of Hedging

On the next page, table 3 reveals the frequency and percentage distribution of hedging functions in news, editorial, feature and sports articles. The two main functions of hedging, namely accuracy-oriented which is further categorized as attribute and reliability hedges, and writer-oriented hedges were determined and counted in the data of this study. The main function of accuracy-oriented hedges is to express propositions with greater precision. Specifically, attribute hedges help writers to specify more accurately how far their results “approximate to an idealized state” and reliability hedges indicate the amount of writers’ certainty or uncertainty in a proposition (Hyland, 1998). Writer-oriented hedges mostly function as a protection for a writer’s face.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Function of Hedge</th>
<th>News</th>
<th>Editorial</th>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>Sports</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>f</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accuracy-Oriented</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attribute</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.26</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>17.39</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subtotal</strong></td>
<td><strong>6</strong></td>
<td><strong>6.52</strong></td>
<td><strong>29</strong></td>
<td><strong>31.52</strong></td>
<td><strong>18</strong></td>
<td><strong>19.56</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writer-Oriented</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.35</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>19.57</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>27.17</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>40.22</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>67.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30</td>
<td>32.61</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Between accuracy-oriented and writer-oriented, the former hedging functions are widely employed. This is evident in its frequency of 62 or 67.39% share of the total number of hedges in the four articles. More particularly, reliability hedges are used contrary to attribute. Writer-oriented hedges, on the polarity, consist of 30 or 32.61% of the hedging functions.

In a clearer lens, since editorial articles have the extensive amount of hedged words and expressions, these are intentionally subjected to corpus analysis. Hence, when it comes to functions, editorials cater to broad range of hedges: To wit:

1. This custom somehow strengthens one Pinoy value that is distinctive among us – family ties or kinship… That is, the more pasalubong he brings, the more stable or at least rewarding his job has affected him.

   - On Pasalubong and Recession (main editorial)

2. …some of the controversial "artworks" of Medeo Cruz, that gained so much attention to public. Indeed, a big chunk of debate sparked by the exhibit has been an extraneous topic and not about "Poleteismo" itself. For Cruz, his art just showed his interpretation about how Filipinos were influenced in beliefs…

   - View it, then #%!*@ it! (editorial column)

3. They say it’s art for art's sake. Their condemnation of Cruz’s work, while largely on the level, sometimes degenerated into religious bigotry, which is destructive and undemocratic.

   - View it, then #%!*@ it! (editorial column)

4. …they only over reacted Cruz's ways in expressing himself. They just didn't look on the side that Cruz's artistry desired to portray.

   - View it, then #%!*@ it! (editorial column)

Paragraphs above are taken from a main editorial and a column from the latest issue of the subjected publication. At the onset of the article, there are already two hedged words visible, which the first and second ones are both approximators and are therefore accuracy-oriented but both are an indication of a modulated discourse pertaining to the writer’s estimate of its conjecture. Example [2] carries the same function as that of the hedges in example [1], however
so much is a weak approximator since it gears towards gross or massive state. Its generality is the only thing viewed for it to be classified as a hedge. Example [3]’s introductory phrase passes the authority to the unidentified multitude for the writer to detach himself out of the context, and instead leave the judgment to the unnamed majority outside the text. Largely, sometimes and only on examples [3] and [4] closely function in similar respect with hedges on the former examples.

At shallow and meager status, accuracy-oriented hedges are also present in feature, sports and news articles but unlike in editorial articles, its distribution is scattered, i.e. one in every paragraph or one in the whole article at the very least:

[5] The feast is somewhat similar to the past celebrations of Easter Sunday whereas dousing of waters enlightens the entire event.

   - Papusitan to be hailed Nat’l Fest (news feature)

[6] At the very least, use of nail polishes containing DBP should be avoided during pregnancy.

   - Most dangerous cosmetics (science feature)

[7] …and now find themselves virtually out of medal contention in the country’s second appearance in the competition in six years.

   - Azkals: Super Under DOGS (sports editorial)

For the analysis, example [5] shows undetermined comparison of the subject to the previous event. That is to say, there is no concrete parameter to establish the basic criteria for comparison. Example [6] is somehow suggestive but still leaving the readers their choice of whether to conform to the implied suggestion or not. Meanwhile, example [7] seems to create a fuzzy picture to the audience mind, though striving to be vivid, the hedged function is still open for negotiation with the prospective readers.

Meanwhile, successive examples disclose samples demonstrating use of reliability hedges, viz:
Knowing and experiencing the current economic status of the Philippines, more and more Filipinos are migrating overseas every year to earn a living. They leave their families to *in a way or another* offer them a decent and comfortable standard of living, that is quality education for the children at an avant-garde school and a wholesome way to meet their everyday needs.

*On Pasalubong and Recession* (main editorial)

Alongside with the past and other social crazes like die-ins and owling, planking is another concern people *would likely* to do due to its peculiar twists *that might* give additional taste for the others.

*Stop Plank, Let's Stand!* (editorial column)

At the affirmative side of the bill, the Anti-Planking Act of 2011 *will* help the students, themselves, to know their limitations regarding participating in such activities. Because the pending policy disallows youths to engage in ‘planking,’ interruption along busy streets and the danger they *could possibly* get *would* be minimized.

*Stop Plank, Let's Stand!* (editorial column)

Despite that the bill is still on its way on the senate, students will be kept safe on what *possible* effects they could get. It is not actually wrong for us to plank. But it is *should* be in manner that does not disturb, cause delay, or even destruct others or necessitate grave complain.

*Stop Plank, Let's Stand!* (editorial column)

Example [8] though a compound hedge by form can also be assumed to be an indicator of writer’s uncertainty wherein implied alternatives are offered. Succeeding examples [9], [10], and [11] are recognized to use hedging with the apparent author’s intention of showing uncertainty in the view of alternative perspectives regarding the interpretation of the analysis. The author all throughout the statements is being careful of not conveying a rigid description. This brings politeness to the discourse.

Moreover the following examples from other articles aside from editorials show strong evidence of reliability-oriented hedges:

[12] The foresaid celebration is *anticipated to be recognized* as Lucban’s national festival in line with San Isidro Labrador Pahiyas.

   *Papusitan to be hailed Nat’l Fest* (news feature)

[13] *Perhaps*, that lost to that High School team is an indication of how truly ill-prepared the team is for the SEA Games.
I *guess* that media-hype that the team is the best ever assembled line-up for the conference is not helping at all… I seriously *doubt* whether the Azkals can snatch a medal in the 26th SEA Games.

- *Azkals: Super Under DOGS (sports editorial)*

On the former example, a token of hedged phrase by which the author conveys ambiguity to the statement in a sense that the assumption made has no duly expected fulfillment. He seems to be aware of the existence of other possible interpretations on the topic. Even though the information appears to be easily concluded, there are external factors anticipated to influence the event that may not be so easily predicted. On the other hand, three evidences of hedged functions appear on example [13], which are all indicative of strong level of uncertainty. However, the author also wishes to convey a level of politeness as part of the journalistic convention and to shield oneself from the possible condescending reactions of the readers.

The following hedged statements reflect the less employed hedging functions across the four article types. The writer-oriented hedges seem to be an attribution to the external cosmos outside the writer’s accountability or at the very least, his latent participation in the context of the articles.

[14] And again, Filipina beauty stood out among the rest but *some say* Shamcey deserves a higher placing…
[15] Many *believed* especially her kababayans that she deserves if not the title at least a higher placing.

- *Hoping for a Higher Place* (editorial column)

[16] And with the advent of a new millennium and the rapidity with which technology has changed society, the concept of literacy has *assumed* new meanings for us…

- *Digital Literacy* (special interest feature)

[17] Olympic medals *can be considered* as slippery as an eel in muddy water…

- *Game is not Over* (sports column)

[18]… Presidential spokesperson Edwin Lacierda named Science and Technology Undersecretary Graciano Yumul, [who] as one of those who *would* be asked to explain the incident.
Looking at examples [14] and [15], it is noticeable that the writer removes himself from the statements and attributes the supposition from the unidentified majority. On the contrary, though example [16] appears anthromorphed (i.e. giving the subject concept human characteristic of assuming), the author still successfully detached himself from the conjecture and heavily laid the contention on the subject matter itself. Meanwhile, [17] and its metaphorical construction added to the rhetorical value of the statement and completely divert the focus from the writer’s own claim to the argument of the statement. Example [18] however is a critical attempt of the writer to keep distance from the article’s content since there are specific persons involved but he managed to maintain his distanced posture by using modality to suggest probability instead of strong possibility.

3. Implications of the Use of Hedges in the Articles

The results of this study show some differences across various journalistic article types in terms of frequency of forms and functions of hedges. As the results of the current study indicate, the four articles show some noticeable differences in the frequency of hedges as to forms. Editorial articles reveal the most number of hedged forms with 51.09% in contrast to the other half shared by the other three articles – news, feature and sports – combined. The nature of the articles has therefore something to do with hedging. Since editorials represent the stand of the whole publication to the prevailing issues, it is likely to involve insights and opinions of the writers. However, since the area is the most attacked or opposed or reacted upon by the readers, editorials seem to “modulate and mitigate the discourse” (Mercado, 2006) whereby avoiding potential threat from the audience. On the polarity, features strive to be more descriptive or
narrative depending on the purpose and thus should bring the readers close into the actual person, object or place being written so a roomful of hedges does not contribute a convincing stance. Sports and news which are intimately related by nature target actuality and factuality in addition to its very nature of objectivity. Hence, to expect tremendous hedged forms adversely affect the articles’ credibility.

Similar with the present study, the differences between disciplines and their very nature in using hedges have been approached differently by researchers. Some scholars like Markkanen and Schroder (1997) suggest that the differences in the use of hedges between texts in different fields are not as significant as some scholars have assumed. However, Varttala (2001) has emphasized that the results of his study showed certain noticeable disciplinary differences in the use of hedges in RAs. In general, the differences in the overall incidence of hedges in different disciplines can be explained by considering the object and general nature of disciplines. It is just in the context of this study, the difference in the nature of the articles is at verge, so to speak.

In line with the forms of hedges, modal auxiliary verbs (with 32.61%) are predominant in the corpus analysis. This could be deduced from the fact that pedagogically, modalities are the only aspect of grammar that has been widely taught in classrooms. Since these modals are just single-worded and thus are simple, they are likely to be employed by the campus journalists in contrast to probability adjectives, introductory phrases, and “if” clauses which are more complex and atypical to occur in a discourse. As Coates (1983) and Palmer (1990) amplified, “the lexical category which is mostly associated with epistemic modality is modal auxiliaries. Due to the wide range of meanings of modal auxiliaries (e.g., possibility, permission, necessity, and obligation), they may cover a range of meanings which can be associated to hedging, but in different degrees. Moreover, possibility and probability gambits should be part of the teaching
repertoire of language teachers to in turn touch the use of hedges both in written and orally knowingly. As what Nugroho (2008) confirmed based from her study, most statements in [her locale] sound too direct if they are transferred into English.

Statements in most papers of university students were often found too direct and strong. The reason is perhaps not that they have simple understanding or want to simplify the subjects, but rather it is because they do not know that they need to soften their statement by hedging. In learning vocabulary, among other things, learners need to learn the degree of the strength of words, that is, which words suggest strong, mild or weak claims. In learning the grammar, learners need to know for example, that Conditional Sentences are not only to express “unreal present event”, but also to soften claims.

In terms of hedging functions, most hedged statements are found to be content-oriented (67.39%) which means that student writers seldom take complete accountability of their press outputs (except for editorial articles). On the other hand at grave, they wanted to sound more to-the-fact, certain and truthful if hedging is absent in the discourse. Non-native speakers of English language in general tend to claim unduly authorship of the information cited or second and third hand account intentionally or accidentally due to inadequate knowledge of hedging (Falahati, 2008).

Another probable factor, based on the analysis, that caused uneven distribution of hedges are the length of the articles, wherein editorial posts the longest as it is by nature evaluative, analytical and critical, while news and sports are presumed to be fast-pacing, straightforward, and action-packed, and feature as elaborative but exact, vivid, sensible, and picturesque.
Chapter V

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents the summary of the findings of the study, the conclusions that could be drawn from the results, and the recommendations offered to improve the very findings of the study.

Summary of Findings

The study aims to reveal hedges in campus journalistic articles written by high school students and published in their newspaper issues. It particularly determined the frequency of forms of hedging used in campus journalistic articles as to news, editorial, feature, and sports articles; showed the frequency functions of hedging used in the said campus journalistic articles; and identified the implications of the use of hedges in each of the articles. Through descriptive-qualitative method via content or corpus analysis, 20 articles (5 for each of the sections) were evaluated. These articles were gathered from the recent published newspaper issue for 2011. The researcher purposively chose the articles through close reading or scrutiny so as to avoid too straightforward articles devoid of hedging incidence. Moreover, it was revealed in the study that:

1. Editorial articles \( (f = 47, 51.09\%) \) has a little more than half of the total number of hedged forms where modal auxiliary verbs \( (15 \text{ or } 16.30\%) \), approximators \( (14 \text{ or } 15.22\%) \), “if” clauses \( (5 \text{ or } 5.43\%) \), compound hedges and adverbs (both with 4 or 4.35%), modal lexical verbs and probability adjectives (both with 2 or 2.17%), and introductory phrases \( (1 \text{ or } 1.09\%) \) are all present. Modal auxiliary verbs have the highest incidence with 30 or 32.61%
2. Accuracy-oriented hedges have a higher occurrence with its frequency of 62 or 67.39% out of the total number of hedges in the four articles opposite writer-oriented. Meanwhile, reliability hedges are used widely with 37 or 40.22% contrary to attribute-oriented ones.

3. The nature of the articles is a potent determinant in the presence of hedging. Editorials being the most interacted upon by the readers seem to hedge more than features which are lighter and sports and news which are objective, and hence are more accuracy-subjected rather than discourse-negotiated. Considering the forms of hedges, modal auxiliary verbs are more prevalent since modalities are the only aspect of grammar taught in classrooms. Teaching chances for hedges are therefore a count. For hedging functions, content-oriented hedges specifically reliability-oriented are widespread in the articles which are affecting the writers’ certainty over the matter discussed in their articles. Length of the articles is also regarded as variant of hedging incidence across the campus journalistic articles.

Conclusions

From the foregoing findings of the study, the following conclusions were tendered:

1. Editorials are the mostly hedged, modulated and mitigated campus journalistic articles among the areas of campus paper publications.

2. Campus journalists/ writers mostly based the content of their articles on mere presumptions and conjectures as indicated by the use of hedged forms functioning for doubt and evaluation rather than description.

3. Contributory factors on the presence of hedging are nature or purpose of articles, teaching instances of hedges, and at a certain point, the length of articles.
Recommendations

Based from the findings and conclusions of the study, the recommendations are offered as follows:

1. Salager-Meyer’s categories of hedges could be used to bring new perspective and compare if there would be difference in the results.

2. For accuracy of interpretation, coding of hedges may be done by a native speaker of English who is expert on pragmatics and areas of rhetorics.

3. To perpetuate consistent means of measurement on identifying hedging incidence, inter-rater reliability value may be done through MINITAB Release 14 to compare the proportions of two samples and also to calculate the correlation coefficient used to see if there is statistical difference between the distribution of hedging forms or functions in four various journalistic articles.

4. Reader-oriented hedges should also be viewed in line with hedging functions.

5. Similar and parallel studies may be conducted to explore other types of academic write-ups and incidence of discourse.

6. More articles may be evaluated for hedging forms and functions to further validate the result of this study.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


