Hedging in academic discourse: linguistic research articles
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The present research focused on the possible differences in the usage of hedging strategies in linguistic research articles of native Czech speakers writing in English (NCS) and native speakers of English (NES). Hedging is considered to be a fundamental part of any academic text ensuring that the outcomes of one's research are successfully communicated to the intended audience. The hypothesis that there will be differences in the use of hedging strategies was based on previous work done by Čmejrková et al. (1999) and Dontcheva-Navrátilová (2015) who have shown significant differences between the two groups in the conventions and approach to presentation of one's research to the academia. Czech academic writing is characterized as being less interactive, primarily writer-oriented, and concealing authorial presence in comparison to Anglophone academic writing, which exhibits higher level of interactivity, is primarily reader-oriented, and often shows marked authorial presence.

The research articles providing data for this study were collected from international and Czech based peer-reviewed journals. Subsequently, two corpora were created, each consisting of 23 concluding sections of research articles and each containing approximately 11.000 words. The data were analysed using the taxonomy of hedges established by Hyland (1996, 1998), employed in Varttala's work (2001), and further modified by Malášková (2015) who recognizes three hedging strategies – content-oriented (attenuation of claims), writer-oriented (limiting personal commitment of the author), and reader-oriented hedging (subjectivizing claims). The analysis of the data was twofold; firstly the individual lexical items functioning as hedges either by themselves or contributing to a more complex hedging structures were identified and classified. Secondly, the items were categorized according to which hedging strategy they represented.

The results were normalized and compared through log-likelihood to be able to determine significantly different values. The results have shown that the existing conventions in Czech academic writing do influence the use of hedges in research articles of NCS. The most salient differences were found in the category of the reader-oriented hedging strategies (personal reference to methods, personal attribution, inclusive we, questions, etc.) which were present with significantly higher frequency in the corpus of NES. The reader-oriented hedging contributes to higher interactivity and dialogic nature of the text and the results thus comply with the previous research. The category of writer-oriented hedges shows significant difference in the frequency of use of passive constructions (higher frequency in the NCS corpus), a strategy used to avoid overt authorial presence, which is again in compliance with the preliminary hypothesis. Content-oriented hedging strategies were employed consistently and with no significant differences in frequency by both groups, except for the category of adverbs, whose frequency was significantly higher in the NCS corpus. Finally, the overall number of all hedging devices and strategies was higher in the NES corpus. The results of this small-scale study may have implications for teaching academic writing to native Czech authors in order to

achieve academic discourse that is able to better compete in the environment of the Anglophone academic community.

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