

**International Symposium on Academic Writing across
Disciplines and Mentorship for Junior Scientists
Yaoundé-Cameroon, July 20-22, 2015**

**Academic Writing in Ghana: Hedging among
Advanced L2 Users of English**

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1.1 Background of the study

- L1 – about 81 languages in Ghana (2014 SIL International:
<http://www.ethnologue.com/country/GH> retrieved on 28.05.2014)
- L2 – English is the official language
- English becomes the official code of instruction in class 4 (at app. age ten) up to university level
- English is a course for the first two years of university studies (Bachelors degree). The course is called Communication skills / Academic Writing
- No Academic Writing course - Research Methods

1.2 Statement of the problem

- Academic Writing research on Research Articles
 - Increase in Academic Writing research on Masters' Theses (MA) Genre (Nkemleke, 2011; Afful & Mwinlaaru, 2012; Beyer, 2015)
 - Limited research on Academic Writing in Ghana
 - Limited research on Hedging in Ghanaian Academic Writing (Musa, 2014)
1. Hedging in English and Chemistry Master's Theses in the University of Cape Coast. *Journal of ELT and Applied Linguistics*. Volume 2, Issue 3
 2. Hedging In Academic Writing: A Pragmatic Analysis Of English And Chemistry Masters' Theses In A Ghanaian University. *English for Specific Purposes*. Volume 15, Issue 42

1.3 Research Questions

1. Which lexico-grammatical forms or strategies are used as hedging devices by advanced L2 users of English in Ghana?
2. What are the pragmatic functions of the hedging devices used by advanced L2 users of English in Ghana?
3. What is the complexity of the hedging strategies used by advanced L2 users of English in Ghana?
4. Does the proficiency level of the advanced L2 users of English in Ghana affect the choice of hedging devices?

1.4 Theoretical Framework

- Academic texts “seek to inform readers of activities, objects, or people in the world, to persuade them to some action or thought, or to seek to promote the writer’s scholarly claims and credentials” (Hyland and Tse, 2004: 160)
- “writing is always a personal and socio-cultural act of identity whereby writers both signal their membership in a range of communities as well as express their own creative presence”. (Hyland, 2006: 35)
- “Hedging [...] represents a major “rhetorical gap” that L2 students have to cross before they can gain membership of a discourse community and pursue their chosen careers.” (Hyland, 1995: 39)

2.1 Hedging/Hedges: Definition

- Since coinage – „words whose job it is to make things more or less fuzzy“. Lakoff (1972)
- Other definition - Brown & Levinson (1987), Biber (1988), Crismore & Farnsworth (1990), Collins (1994), Dudley-Evans (1994), Schröder & Zimmer (2007), Hyland (1998), etc.
- Textual strategy of using linguistic devices to
 - express lack of complete commitment to the truth of an accompanying proposition
 - present a proposition/claim as an opinion in an objective manner

Or simply

- Process by which a writer or writers distance themselves from the claim that they wish to make (*Dudley, 1994*)

2.2 Categories of Hedging

(Hyland, 1994; Hyland, 1998; *Malášková*, 2011; Nkemleke, 2011)

Major Categories	Sub-categories
Lexical Hedging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Epistemic modal verbs • Epistemic lexical verbs • Epistemic adverbs • Epistemic adjectives • Epistemic nouns
Strategic/ Non lexical Hedging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal attribution • Impersonal structures referring to model/method/experimental conditions/etc. • Attribution to literature • Reader engagement structures (questions, conditionals, reference to testability, admission of lack knowledge, etc.)

- **Epistemic** Modality – *evaluation of the chances that a certain hypothetical state of affairs under consideration (or some aspect of it) will occur, is occurring or has occurred in a possible world...* (Nuyts, 2001: 21).
- The writer's opinion about the truth of a claim

2.3 Semantic Functions of Hedges

According to Malaskova (2011:145)

content oriented		participant oriented		
		writer oriented	reader oriented	
aim at greater accuracy (precision)	aim at the extent of applicability/ generalizability	protect the writer by depersonalizing the information presented in the proposition	appeal to the reader by employing various strategies of reader involvement	protect the writer by personalizing the information presented in the proposition

Table 1: Semantic classification of hedges

2.3 Semantic Functions of Hedges

According to Malaskova (2011:147)

content oriented	participant oriented	
primarily expressed by:	writer oriented primarily expressed by:	reader oriented primarily expressed by:
precision adverbs	impersonal structures	personal engagement
epistemic lexical adjectives	referring to model/method/theory/ experimental conditions	structures (personal attribution, reference to methods/models, etc.)
epistemic lexical nouns	abstract rhetors	reader engagement structures
epistemic modal nouns	epistemic lexical verbs	(assumption of shared goals,
limited knowledge	attribution to literature	conditionals, questions, reference to testability, etc.)

Table 2: Formal classification of hedges

2.4 Hedging Complexity

- **Simple hedging**

only one form of hedging strategy (lexical or non lexical)

*These mean scores **suggest** that the two sex groups agreed that they enjoyed mathematics. (ED0042006M)*

Judgement verb

- **Compound hedging**

More than one form of hedging strategy (two or more lexical hedges or lexical hedge(s) and non-lexical hedge)

*This **would seem to indicate** that an increase in knowledge and skills leads to tolerance even to compassion and empathy. (ED0322010M)*

Modal + Evidential verb + Judgemental verb

3.1 Advanced Users of English

Post graduate students:

- Masters level
- Doctorate level
- Post-Doctorate level

Academic texts

- Essays
- Term papers
- Theses
- Articles
- Books

Corpora

- Principal – MA theses
- Secondary – ICE-Gh Academic Writing

3.1 Advanced Users of English

MA theses :

- Average length : 20,000 to 30,000 words
- Humanities and social sciences
- Three universities in Ghana:
 1. Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology,
 2. University of Education Winneba,
 3. University of Cape Coast
- File name: ED for Education, ENG for English etc. + year of submission (2003-2013) + Gender (M/F)

Theses component

GhE-MA - Microsoft Excel non-commercial use										
G14 UCC										
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	
1	Text	MT/L1	Author	Gender	Comments	Year	University	Department	No. of Words	Title
2	ED0012009M	N	Bukari Abdulai	M		2009	UCC	Basic Education	25939	ATTITUDES OF FEMALE PARTIC
3	ED0022003M	N	Amadu Musa Abudu	M	exclude due to size	2003	UCC	Arts and Social Sciences Education	35533	AN EVALUATION OF THE IN-IN
4	ED0032009M	A	Bernard Yaw Sekyi Acquah	M		2009	UCC	Arts and Social Sciences Education	29265	ECONOMICS STUDENTS' RATI
5	ED0042006M	A	Christopher Kwabena Kumah Addy	M		2006	UCC	Basic Education	26413	PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS'
6	ED0052008M	A	Christopher Adu-Yeboah	M		2008	UCC	Basic Education	27265	TRANSACTING THE SOCIAL ST
7	ED0062010M	A	Michael Agyei	M		2010	UCC	Health, Physical Education and Recreation	28282	ASSESSMENT OF PHYSICAL FIT
8	MS0072007M	A	Adane Appiah Akaboha	M	exclude due to size	2007	UCC	Mathematics and Statistics	9620	STATISTICAL ANALYSIS OF FAC
9	ED0082008F	A	Janet Ampong	F		2008	UCC	Health, Physical Education and Recreation	22601	FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH L
10	ED0092009F	G	Elizabeth Ani-Boi	F		2009	UCC	Arts and Social Sciences Education	21911	CONCERNS OF PRIMARY SCH
11	ED0102009F	A	Abena Gytowa Asiedu	F		2009	UCC	Arts and Social Sciences Education	28072	TEACHERS' AND PUPILS' PERC
12	ED0112009F	A	Mavis Awuah	F	exclude due to size	2009	UCC	Science and Mathematics Education	19410	THE TEACHER FACTOR IN JUN
13	ED0122009M	A	Rexford Baah	M		2009	UCC	Science and Mathematics Education	20203	SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDEN
14	ED0132009M	E	Boniface Sigme Boinde	M		2009	UCC	Science and Mathematics Education	21852	TEACHER TRAINEES' ATTITUDE
15	ED0142009M	A	Isaac Buabeng	M		2009	UCC	Science and Mathematics Education	24281	FEMALE STUDENTS' PREFEREN
16	ED0152009M	A	George Davis	M		2009	UCC	Science and Mathematics Education	22346	SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL
17	ED0162008M	E	Francis Kofi Dzikunu	M		2008	UCC	Basic Education	29408	CHALLENGES OF TEACHING A
18	ED0172007F	A	Faustina M. Addington	F		2007	UCC	Basic Education	20288	CHALLENGES OF TEACHING A
19	ED0182009M	A	John Elvis Hagan	M		2009	UCC	Health, Physical Education and Recreation	20090	AWARENESS AND ATTITUDES
20	ED0192008M	N	Salifu Inusah	M		2008	UCC	Educational Planning and Administration	25462	ADMINISTRATORS' PERCEPTI
21	ED0202008M	A	Joseph Yaw Kussi-Twum	M	exclude due to size	2006	UCC	Science Education	13146	FEASIBILITY OF TEACHING QU
22	ED0212009M	A	Joseph Tufuor Kwarteng	M		2009	UCC	Arts and Social Sciences Education	28418	STATUS OF ACCOUNTING CUP
23	ED0222007M	A	Bernard Korsah	M		2007	UCC	Health, Physical Education and Recreation	24682	COMPARISON OF HEALTH-REL
24	ED0232008M	E	Benjamin Kwaku Meteku	M		2008	UCC	Science and Mathematics Education	17436	VIEWS OF SELECTED STAKEHO
25	ED0242006M	N	Thompson Mumuni	M	exclude due to size	2006	UCC	Arts and Social Sciences Education	17436	TEACHERS' AND STUDENTS' PE

Data Description

- Original MA theses: PDF documents
- Written according to Swales' IMRaD model (Swales,1990)
- Authors are Ghanaians
- Save Files as PDF documents
- Convert to Text files and Edit:
 - Delete paratext
 - Tables
 - Figures
 - Diagrams

3.1 Advanced Users of English

ICE-Gh Academic Writing :

- Average length : 2,000 words
- Humanities and social sciences
- Mostly research articles
- Authors hold at least MA degrees, lecturers, seasoned writers (published more than once)
- For example: W2A-002
- Sarpong, P. (1967). Ghana in Retrospect: some aspects of Ghanaian culture. Ghana Publishing Corporation.
- Sarpong, P. (1977). Girls' Nobility Rites on Ashanti. Tema. Ghana Publishing Corporation.

ICE-Gh Academic Writing component

1	Spoken/ Written	Genre A	Genre B	Genre C	Code	zuletzt bearbeitet im	pages scanned	number of words		computerized	proofread	annotated	corrected
383	Written	Printed	Academic	Humanities	W2A-001		21-26	2003	Arhin, Vera E.M. (2005): "The lecturer as a speaker and student as listener in an academic discourse context." in <i>Language Centre Journal</i> 2005.1. 21-34.	Melanie	Melanie	Melanie, Ulrike, bt	Tina
384	Written	Printed	Academic	Humanities	W2A-002		94-100	2,016	Sarpong, Peter K. (2002): <i>Peoples Differ - An approach to Inculturation in Evangelisation</i> . Legon: Sub-Saharan Publishers.	Nora	sven, nora	nora, Ulrike, bt	Tina
385	Written	Printed	Academic	Humanities	W2A-003		44-48	2024	Kofie, Nicholas N. (2000): "In search of a philosophy of Music education in Ghana." in <i>The Oguaa Educator</i> 2000.12.2. 43-56.	Melanie	Melanie	Melanie, Ulrike, bt	Tina
386	Written	Printed	Academic	Humanities	W2A-004		28-33	2,037	Gadzepko, Seth Kordzo (2005): <i>History of Ghana since Pre-History</i> . Accra: Excellent Publishing and Printing.	Nora	sven, nora	Melanie, Ulrike, bt	Tina
387	Written	Printed	Academic	Humanities	W2A-005		1-5	2,016	Agbodeka, Francis (1998): <i>A History of University of Ghana: Half a Century of Higher Education (1948-1998)</i> . Accra: Woeli Publishing Services.	Nora	sven, nora	Melanie, Ulrike, bt	Tina
388	Written	Printed	Academic	Humanities	W2A-006		1-6	2,026	Adubofuor, Nana Otamakuro (2000): <i>Asante: The Making of a Nation</i> . Kumasi: Cita Press.	Nora	sven, nora	nora, Ulrike, bt	Tina
389	Written	Printed	Academic	Humanities	W2A-007		35-42	2,006	Amuzu, Evershed Kwasi (2006): "Language Maintenance in Pervasive Codeswitching: Insights from Ghana." in <i>Language Centre Journal</i> 2006.2. 35-80.	Melanie	Ulrike, Melanie, Teresa	Ulrike, bt	Tina
390	Written	Printed	Academic	Humanities	W2A-008		xiii-7	2014	Nimako, Annor (2004): <i>Mind Your Language: Educated Ghanaian English</i> . Tema: Ronna Publishers.	Melanie	Melanie, Ulrike	Ulrike, bt	Tina
391	Written	Printed	Academic	Humanities	W2A-009		192-197	2020	Mahaba, Ibrahim (2003): <i>Ethic Conflicts in Nothern Ghana</i> . Tamale: Cyber Systems.	Melanie, Ulrike	Melanie, Ulrike	Ulrike, bt	Tina
392	Written	Printed	Academic	Humanities	W2A-010		18-23	2000	Amua-Sekyi, Ekua Tekyiwa (2000): "The Status of English as a Subject in an English Medium Context." in: <i>The Oguaa Educator</i> 2000.12.2. 18-28.	Melanie, Ulrike	Melanie, Ulrike	Ulrike, bt	Tina
	Written	Printed							Yankah, Kwasi (2002): "Language, Media and Ghana's Democracy"	done	done	Ulrike, bt	Tina

Description of authors of ICE-Gh AcW

	number of words		computerized	proofread	annotated	corrected	author
383	2003	Arhin, Vera E.M. (2005): "The lecturer as a speaker and student as listener in an academic discourse context." in <i>Language Centre Journal</i> 2005.1. 21-34.	Melanie	Melanie	Melanie, Ulrike, bt	Tina	The author has a B.A. Dip. Ed (UCC) and an M.A. (Lond) MPhil (Ghana).
384	2,016	Sarpong, Peter K. (2002): <i>Peoples Differ - An approach to Inculturation in Evangelisation</i> . Legon: Sub-Saharan Publishers.	Nora	sven, nora	nora, Ulrike, bt	Tina	The author is the Catholic Archbishop of Kumasi and a renowned anthropologist and sociologist. He has travelled extensively on all the six continents, lectured widely on various topics.
385	2024	Kofie, Nicholas N. (2000): "In search of a philosophy of Music education in Ghana." in <i>The Oguua Educator</i> 2000.12.2. 43-56.	Melanie	Melanie	Melanie, Ulrike, bt	Tina	The author is a professor in the Department of Music at the University of Cape Coast.
386	2,037	Gadzepko, Seth Kordzo (2005): <i>History of Ghana since Pre-History</i> . Accra: Excellent Publishing and Printing.	Nora	sven, nora	Melanie, Ulrike, bt	Tina	The author comes from Mafi-Kumase in the Volta Region. He has his Bachelor of Education at the University of Cape Coast in 1987 and he also read History at the same University. He taught History for ten years in Accra's Girl's Secondary School where he was
387	2,016	Agbodeka, Francis (1998): <i>A History of University of Ghana: Half a Century of Higher Education (1948-1998)</i> . Accra: Woeli Publishing Services.	Nora	sven, nora	Melanie, Ulrike, bt	Tina	The author is a product of Achimota School and the then University College of the Gold Coast. He received his B.A. and Ph.D. degrees in 1956 and 1969 respectively. At the University of Cape Coast, he was the Pro-Vice Chancellor (1974-78) as well as the
388	2,026	Adubofuor, Nana Otamakuro (2000): <i>Asante: The Making of a Nation</i> . Kumasi: Cita Press.	Nora	sven, nora	nora, Ulrike, bt	Tina	The author was born in Wawase on 24th December, 1935. Nana had his infant and Junior Education at Adumakase-Lese and Aboabogya respectively. He completed his Middle School Education at the Welsey College Practice School. Nana entered Ashanti Business
389	2,006	Amuzu, Evershed Kwasi (2006): "Language Maintenance in Pervasive Codeswitching: Insights from Ghana." in <i>Language Centre Journal</i> 2006.2. 35-80.	Melanie	Ulrike, Melanie, Teresa	Ulrike, bt	Tina	The author is a research fellow in the Language Centre, University of Ghana, Legon.
390	2014	Nimako, Annor (2004): <i>Mind Your Language: Educated Ghanaian English</i> . Tema: Ronna Publishers.	Melanie	Melanie, Ulrike	Ulrike, bt	Tina	The author was the Executive Director of the Ghana Book Development Council from 1989 to 1996. he was a senior editor at the Publishing Division of the Ghana Publishing Corporation from 1972 to 1977. Before then he was a geography teacher.
391	2020	Mahaba, Ibrahim (2003): <i>Ethic Conflicts in Northern Ghana</i> . Tamale: Cyber Systems.	Melanie, Ulrike	Melanie, Ulrike	Ulrike, bt	Tina	The author was born in 1936 in Tibung, near Tamale in Northern Ghana. He entered University of Ghana in October 1962 where he read law and received his LLB Degree in 1965. He was called to Ghana Bar in 1966. He was appointed Commissioner for Forestry
392	2000	Amua-Sekyi, Ekua Tekyiwa (2000): "The Status of English as a Subject in an English Medium Context." in: <i>The Oguua Educator</i> 2000.12.2. 18-28.	Melanie, Ulrike	Melanie, Ulrike	Ulrike, bt	Tina	The author works in the Department of Arts & Social Sciences Education at the University of Cape Coast.

3.2 Data Analysis

- AntConc 3.2.4w:
A freeware, multi-platform, multi-purpose analysis kit - the number of times the target word or phrase occurs will be counted in the different texts.
- Quantitative analysis : frequency of occurrences normalised per 10, 000 words
- Qualitative analysis: epistemic/non-epistemic use, pragmatic functions, complexity

Analysis of *indicate*

A	B	C	D	E
indicated/indicates/indicate GhMA:				
indicated				
Epistemicity		KWIC/Example	File name	Comments
a	1	five year development plan in the University of Namibia to illustrate his assertion. The statistics indicated that out of a total of 105 stu	ED0012009M.txt	abstract rhetor
a	2	girls tend to suffer from low self-esteem more commonly than boys do. Findings of the study further indicated that the low self- este	ED0012009M.txt	abstract rhetor
a	3	t over a third of high school students switching out of a science, mathematics or engineering field indicated that one of their primary	ED0012009M.txt	
a	4	ce topics. (p.243). Ormerod and Duckworth (1975) and Sjoberg (2002) corroborated these findings and indicated that it is very importa	ED0012009M.txt	quotative
a	5	A third girl said that she was more equipped to attack strategy and logic problems. Laura further indicated that in 2002, as the first gr	ED0012009M.txt	
a	6	of ACTUA's all-girls' camps in encouraging girls to consider engineering as a career. The findings indicated that enjoyment of science	ED0012009M.txt	
a	12	erception about the nature of science and mathematics. Responses from the pre-clinic questionnaires indicated that girls consider sc	ED0012009M.txt	
a	13	ten percent, are scientists, engineers or technologists in Canada and the United states. It further indicated that even in medicine and	ED0012009M.txt	
a	14	ther teacher gender has any influence on the career choice of female students. Whereas some studies indicated that female teachers	ED0012009M.txt	
a	15	MacIver & Stake cited in Sharon, 2004), other studies indicated otherwise, arguing that though male and female	ED0012009M.txt	abstract rhetor
a	16	eh, 2000; Date-Bah, 1979; Rice, 1984) Ginzberg as cited in Baryeh, Obu, Lamptey & Baryeh, (2000) indicated that the final choice of oc	ED0012009M.txt	quotative
a	17	es between interest, values, opportunities and limitations in the real world. Niezer (1993) further indicated that students' entry into	ED0012009M.txt	quotative
a	40	sponded. The SASI had an equal number of statements which connoted positive attitude and those that indicated negative attitude t	ED0012009M.txt	
a	45	Figure 1: The Triadic Relationship of Teaching Source: Tamakloe, Amedahe and Atta (2006). As indicated by Tamakloe et al (2005, p	ED0032009M.txt	
a	49	Feldman, 1978; and Centra, 1993). Also, research conducted by Strathan, Richardson and Cook (1991) indicated that there are no signi	ED0032009M.txt	quotative
a	50	with teachers in any subject or grade level and thus are useful in multiple contexts. Again, as indicated by Goe et al (2008), teaching	ED0032009M.txt	
a	51	lity purposes. Justification for using Student Rating for Assessing Teacher Effectiveness As indicated earlier on, the use of student	ED0032009M.txt	as indicated
a	54	leniency was explicitly defined and measured, not inferred from expected grade and workload. Data indicated that pre-course inter	ED0032009M.txt	
a	55	from 2915 university classrooms were collected in classes ranging from 1 to 234 students. Results indicated that there was a weak re	ED0032009M.txt	abstract rhetor
a	56	from 2915 university classrooms were collected in classes ranging from 1 to 234 students. Results indicated that there was a weak re	ED0032009M.txt	abstract rhetor
a	58	ificant, a test for differences, using the two-tailed independent sample t- test was used. The test indicated a significant difference in	ED0032009M.txt	

3.3 Preliminary Analysis

Sample

1. GhE-MA

- 24 Theses
- Total No. of word tokens: 591,004
- Average length : 20,000 to 35,000 words

2. ICE-Gh – Academic Writing

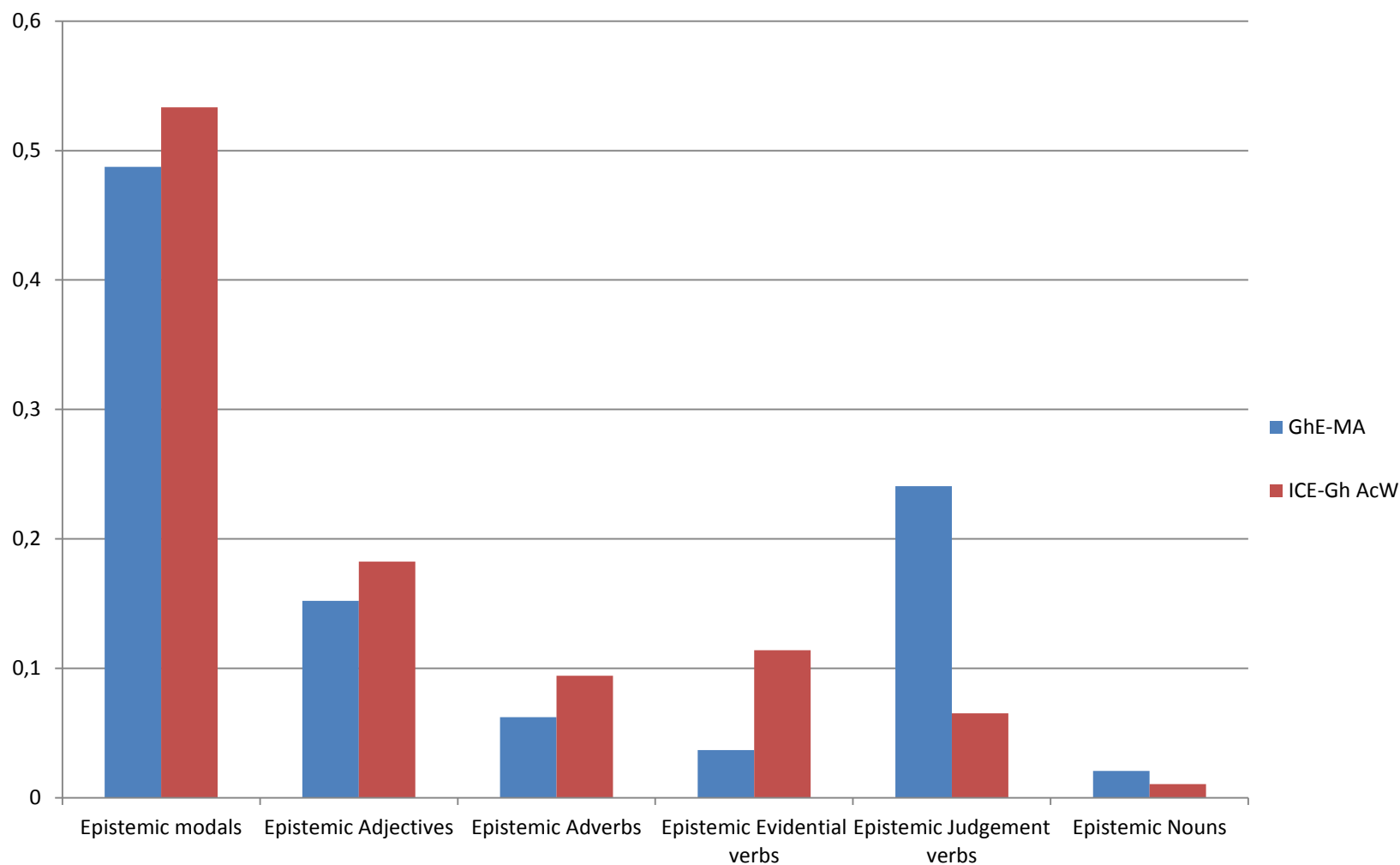
- 40 Articles and Book extracts
- Total No. of word tokens: 109,078
- Average length: 2,000 to 2,065 words

3.4 Preliminary Data Analysis

- Based on most frequently used hedges in Nkemleke (2011) and Beyer (2013).

Modals	Adjectives	Adverbs	Evidential verbs	Judgement verbs	Nouns
may might could would	<i>likely</i> <i>possible</i> <i>clear</i> <i>probable</i> <i>obvious</i> <i>evident</i> <i>certain</i>	<i>usually</i> <i>probably</i> <i>certainly</i> <i>apparently</i> <i>possibly</i> <i>perhaps</i> <i>typically</i>	seem appear tend	suggest think assume indicate	<i>possibility</i> <i>probability</i> <i>assumption</i>

3.5 Preliminary Results



Summary

- Preliminary results do not answer all research questions.
- Differences seem to exist in the use of hedging devices depending on the level of proficiency of advanced L2 users of English. (Increase corpus size?)
- Epistemic nouns appear to be the least used in the preliminary analysis. (Exclude from overall analysis?)
- Final Corpus size still under consideration:
 - Option 1: Only Humanities and Social Sciences (more than 70 edited files)
 - Option 2: Humanities and Social Sciences compared to Natural Sciences (collected from field research)

Lexical hedging devices to be considered

Modal	Adjectives	Adverbs	Evidential verbs	Judgement verbs	Nouns
may might could would	likely possible probable	usually probably apparently possibly perhaps presumably relatively	seem appear tend seek attempt report note	suggest think assume indicate believe imply	possibility probability assumption likelihood

References

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