Hedging in ESL: a Case Study of Lithuanian Learners

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Abstract. Recently hedging has been extensively studied in different language activities (reading, speaking and writing) with a particular focus on academic English. Its importance for generating an increasingly dialogical academic text nowadays can hardly be questioned. The present paper focuses on the use of hedging devices by L2 users of English, more specifically, by Lithuanian undergraduate students majoring in English. The investigation draws on the data collected from the Lithuanian students’ BA papers written according to Swales’ IMRAD model (Swales 1990). The research has been limited to the introductions of the papers, which were subjected to peer-review before submission. The findings do not support the view that L2 users of English can hardly notice hedges in the text (see Low 1996; Hyland 2000). Even more, more advanced and proficient learners of English are able to produce texts which in terms of hedging are comparable to those produced by experienced academics.