

Important Features of Academic Writing: Hedging and Cohesion

1. Hedging

Important feature of academic writing due to its concept of *cautious language*, based on the *vagueness* of the statement. In other words, it is necessary to make decisions about your stance on a particular subject

Introductory verbs: seem, tend, look like, appear to be, think, believe, doubt, be sure, indicate, assume, suggest etc.

Modal verbs: will, would, may, might, could

Adverbs of frequency, modal adjectives, adverbs or nouns (certainly, probably, perhaps; probable, possible, conceivable; assumption, possibility, probability)

Compare the following statements and find the hedging expressions

- A. The lives they chose may seem overly ascetic to most women today.
The lives they chose seem overly ascetic to most women today.
- B. Weismann suggested that animals become old because, if they did not, there could be no successive replacement of individuals and hence no evolution.
Weismann proved that animals become old because, if they did not, there could be no successive replacement of individuals and hence no evolution.
- C. Recent work on the religious demography of Northern Ireland shows a separating out of protestant and catholic, with the catholic populations drifting westwards and vice versa.
Recent work on the religious demography of Northern Ireland indicates a separating out of protestant and catholic, with the catholic populations drifting westwards and vice versa.

2. Cohesion

Cohesion is the grammatical and lexical linking within a text or sentence that holds a text together and gives it meaning. It is related to the broader concept of coherence. A cohesive text is created in many different ways.

Watch a short lecture

John Kotnarowski, English language fellow from the Academic Writing University Centre of the National University for Science and Technology in Moscow, provides a brief introduction to the concept of cohesion in academic writing. He outlines the importance of cohesion in academic writing and offers examples of several useful cohesive devices.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TSepcKfQ9ds>