

ENGLISH DEPT

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USE OF HEDGING DEVICES IN GOOD AND POOR EFL ESSAYS

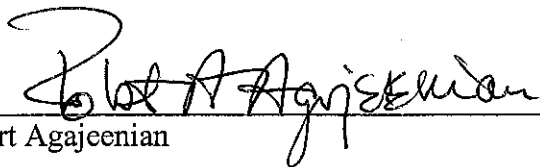
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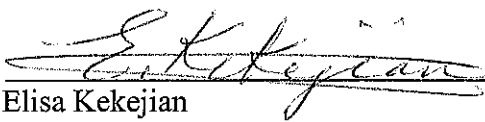
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ABSTRACT

This paper describes the analysis of 100 entrance and 56 exit essays (i.e. 156 total essays) written by American University of Armenia students in terms of the amount of hedging structures used by different levels of writers. There were 50 essays with high scores and 50 essays with low scores from an entrance exam and 28 essays with high scores and 28 essays with low scores from an exit exam. Hedging is a linguistic device, which is used to lessen the writer's responsibility for the true value of the claim and expresses uncertainty to display politeness (Hinkel, 1997). The research focuses on a comparison of the applicants who scored high (50 entrance and 28 exit essays) with those who scored low (50 entrance and 28 exit essays) and an analysis of their essays in terms of the amount and type of hedges used. The research hypothesizes that the students with the higher scores might use a greater number and variety of hedging devices than the students with lower scores. The results indicate that this is not the case. The students with lower essay scores tended to use more hedges on both the entrance and exit essays than those with higher essay scores.

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