

Inventory of Hedges in Feminist Writings

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Abstract: In this paper we have attempted to find the inventory of hedges used by feminist authors by considering the usages of hedges by various feminist authors whose works were in demand during 19th and 20th century. This work is being done by using single period continuous probabilistic demand inventory model which has enabled us to find the inventory of hedges required in 21st century in feminist writings.

Keywords: Hedges, Feminism, Inventory Models.

1. Introduction

A hedge in linguistics is defined as an alleviating word used to reduce the impact of a statement, whether used intentionally or unintentionally. Hedges are exercised in both spoken and written communication and therefore are important. Hedges are identified by uncertainty in the language which can be clarified by considering the statements like “I took my lunch at 1 PM”, “I took my lunch at around 1 PM”, “I took my lunch at 1 PM I think”. We observe that in first statement there is no uncertainty whereas in second and third statements uncertainty is marked by phrases like ‘at around’ and ‘I think’. Here the phrases which are signs of uncertainty are called hedges. Both of these hedges are a way of saying that the answer is approximate and it may not be exactly correct. A hedge in linguistics is defined as a mitigating word used to lessen the impact of an utterance. Whether used intentionally or unintentionally, hedges may be exercised in both spoken and written

communication and therefore, hedges are vitally important in it. Hedges help writers to indicate more precisely how the cooperative principle¹ is observed in assessments.

The notion of hedging was brought into light by Lakoff², which means: words which make things more or less fuzzy. For example, words and phrases like 'I think', 'perhaps', 'might' and 'may be' etc. which are used to qualify categorical affirmations. A hedge can be defined as a linguistic tool which imply either: a lack of full commitment to the truth of a statement, or a longing not to express that commitment categorically. Hedges bring tentativeness and flexibility in communication, and their proper use in academic or scientific writings is crucial. Hedges help writers to express propositions with more nicety in areas often characterized by rapid reinterpretation. The question of the significance of hedging was explored by Liu and Tree³. The authors suggested that hedges might call attention to the information that has been stated so that it might be well remembered by listeners. At the same time, hedges may quantify information as unreliable and so the information might not be restated by listeners later. Hedging, therefore, is an important means of attesting to the degree of fidelity or reliability of a claim and accurately stating uncertain statements with appropriate care. Hedges imply that a proposition is based on the author's presumptive reasoning, rather than his specific knowledge. In such assertions, it is expected from readers to understand that the proposition made by the author is true. Another benefit of employing hedging in writing concerns with the writer's desire to anticipate the possible negative consequences of being proved wrong and the eventual overthrow of a claim^{4,5}. Hedging enables writers to be open to different perspectives on their statements, to present unproven claims with caution, and to let their audiences interact with them.

2. A Brief Literature Review

We find detailed mention of the usage of hedges in literature. Yu⁶ states that most of the hedge studies deal with academic or scientific writings. This includes various classes such as Economics^{7,8}, Science Digest⁹, Medical discourse^{4,10-12}, articles related to Molecular Genetics¹³, and News-writing^{14,15}. There are evidences of theoretical work on modality¹⁶ also. On the other hand, Corpus studies focused on modal verbs are based on non-academic resources^{17,18}. Researchers tried to identify hedges as generalized commenting tools¹⁹, modal verbs²⁰, and numerical expressions⁸. Salager-Meyer in his work determined explanatory category of hedges⁴. A hedging database has been developed by exploiting the taxonomy of hedges given by

Yu⁶ and the same has been used to compare writings of authors in English literature.

In the present work we propose to study the usage of Hedges by feminist authors of 19th and 20th century. This shall enable us to find out the inventory of hedges required in feminist writing. In future single period continuous probability demand model is applied to find the inventory of hedges required. In section 3 we discuss methodology of present research, section 4 elaborates our findings and section 5 is about conclusion.

3. Methodology

In this section we are discussing methodology of present research work. We have considered novels of eminent feminist authors of 19th and 20th centuries and counted hedges used by them. For the same purpose we exploited the data base of hedges used in works of comparison of writings of authors²¹. The data base of hedges has categorized hedges into Modal, Mental, Pragmatic Marker, Quantificational, Tag Questions, Subjunctives and Depersonalization hedges. We refer²² for details of categories and subcategories of hedges. Considered novels in the present work are 'The Subjection of Women' by John Stuart Mill in 1869, 'A Room of One's Own' which was written in 1929 by famous novelist Virginia Woolf, 'The Second Sex' in 1949 by Simone de Beauvoir, 'The Feminine Mystique' in 1963 by Betty Friedan, 'The Female Eunuch' by Germaine Greer in 1970, 'Sister Outsider' by Audre Lorde in 1984, 'Gender Outlaws' by Kate Bornstein in 1994 and 'Feminism is for Everybody' by Bell Hooks in 2000. Usage of hedges is considered as demand. The variation in demand is considered as the difference of usage of hedges between 1869 and 2000.

Single period continuous probability demand model provides us the inventory of various hedges supposed to be used by authors' in future feminist writings. In 1869 John Stuart Mill who is an English philosopher, political economist and civil servant published an essay 'The Subjection of Women', in which Mill argues that people should be able to vote to defend their own rights and to learn to stand on their two feet, morally and intellectually. This argument is applied to both men and women. In September 1929 Virginia Woolf published an essay 'A Room of One's Own'. In October 1928 Virginia delivered two lectures at Newnham College and Girton College and 'A room of One's Own' is based on these two lectures. In her essay, Woolf uses metaphors to explore social injustices and comments on women's lack of free expression. In 1949 Simone de Beauvoir published a book 'The Second Sex'. In this book Simone discusses the treatment of women in present society as

well as throughout all of history. 'The Feminine Mystique' is a book by Betty Friedan, widely credited with sparking second-wave feminism in the United States. 'The Female Eunuch' is a 1970 book by Germaine Greer that became an international bestseller and an important text in the feminist movement. Greer's thesis is that the "traditional" suburban, consumerist, nuclear family represses women sexually, and that this devitalizes them, rendering them eunuchs.

'Women, Race and Class' is a 1981 book by the American academic and author Angela Davis. It contains Marxist feminist analysis of gender, race and class. 'Sister Outsider' written by Audre Lorde, a writer who focuses on the particulars of her identity, black woman, lesbian, poet, activist, cancer survivor, mother, and feminist. 'Gender Outlaws' was written by Kate Bornstein. In Gender Outlaws, Bornstein, together with writer, raconteur, and theatre artist S. Bear Bergman, collects and contextualizes the work of this generation's trans and gender queer forward thinkers, new voices from the stage, on the streets, in the workplace, in the bedroom, and on the pages and websites of the world's most respected mainstream news sources. 'Feminism is for Everybody' written by Bell Hooks in 2000. In this engaging and provocative volume, Bell Hooks introduces a popular theory of feminism rooted in common sense and the wisdom of experience.

We have employed single period continuous probability demand model to find inventory of hedges required. Numbers of hedges used by authors have been considered as demand.

We have taken probabilistic demand (hedges) as continuous and the probability distribution function is written as

$$\int_{D=0}^{\infty} f(D) dD = 1$$

where $f(D)$ = continuous probability density function indicating the probability for small interval of demand D , dD = differential of demand D . The cumulative probability function is given as,

$$F(Q) = \int_{D=0}^{D=Q} f(D) dD$$

Implying that $F(Q)$ is probability that demand lies between 0 and Q .

The optimum quantity to stock Q^* is the point where

$$F(Q^*) = \frac{C_2}{C_1 + C_2}$$

It is assumed that the demand distribution is uniform distribution between a and b units

$$f(D) = \frac{1}{b-a}$$

$$F(Q^*) = \int_{D=a}^Q \frac{dD}{b-a} = \frac{Q-a}{b-a}$$

$$\frac{Q-a}{b-a} = \frac{C_2}{C_1 + C_2}$$

where C_2 is cost of over stocking and C_1 is cost of under stocking, here no cost is incurred in maintaining stock of hedges therefore we assume that $C_1 = C_2$ therefore we have

$$(1) \quad \frac{Q-a}{b-a} = \frac{1}{2}$$

We calculate the optimum number of various hedges Q (inventory of hedges required in future) from equation (1) (Appendix A.1)

4. Results

For $C_1 = C_2$, we have calculated optimum number Q (inventory) of various hedges (See appendix A.1)

We find that inventories required of hedges like Model(Q_1), Mental (Q_2), Pragmatic Marker (Q_3), Quantificational (Q_4), Tag questions, Subjunctives and Depersonalization (Q_5) are 1646.5, 528, 10143.5, 3492.5 and 35 respectively.

Inventory of all hedges required in future Q is found to be 15845.5

5. Conclusion

In this paper we have applied inventory model in field of literature. We have taken hedges in different books used by their authors as demand and find the inventory of hedges required in future in feminist writings. Large value of the inventory of hedges required shows the significance and importance of study of hedges in feminist writings.

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Appendix A.1

s. No	Book	Hedges													Grand Total
		Model (32)					Mental (19)	Pragmatic Marker (105)	Quantificational (82)				Tag questions, subjunctives and depersonalization (8)		
		Epistemic (15)	Deontic (3)	Dynamic (3)	Evidential (11)	Total			Simple (47)	Polar Positions (26)	Negation with Intensifier (9)	Total			
	The Feminine Mystique	572	252	947	161	1932	601	10009	3185	685	15	3885	57	16484	
2	Sister Outsider	166	159	408	67	800	375	4764	1393	271	8	1672	47	7658	
3	A Room of One's Own	208	57	381	31	677	160	2579	958	188	6	1152	8	4576	
4	The Female Eunuch	569	297	374	92	1332	325	6772	1995	390	11	2396	20	10845	
5	Gender Outlaws	207	61	561	50	879	350	4798	1485	321	7	1813	52	7892	
6	The Second Sex	557	557	557	557	557	557	557	557	557	557	557	557	2785	
7	A Room of One's Own	268	88	312	55	723	172	3048	766	169	5	940	27	4910	
8	Feminism is for everybody	64	46	257	34	401	159	1853	819	145	4	968	8	3389	
9	Women, Race and Class	145	51	330	49	575	122	3317	1008	157	9	1174	18	5206	
	Total	2756	1568	4127	1096	7876	2821	37697	12166	2883	622	14557	794	63745	
	Optimal Number(Q)	316.5	200	936	194	1646.5	528	10143.5	3058	415	19.5	3492.5	35	15845.5	