**Discourse analysis**

**Hedging, non-commitment, distancing in discourse**

2019 L3 Week 10 Vocabulary

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Read the following text (For ease of reference, number the lines).

Fill in the gaps.

Here is a list of 12 words :

hearsay, objective, substantiated[[1]](#footnote-1), visual, epistemic, distance, witness, soften, mitigation[[2]](#footnote-2), parenthetical, investigate, accurate

Direct evidence can be or auditory. Indirect evidence implies that the source of the speaker's information is of secondary nature and includes reported evidence.

Reported evidence can be information received from a direct witness or can be hearsay information passed on from one person to another and finally to the speaker.

The speaker's degree of (un)certainty is sometimes characterized by expressions such as *I suspect* or *it seems* or modals such as *might* or *must*.

In scientific writing, it is appropriate to ask how one has obtained particular information or whether there exists proof for a certain statement.

The scientific language is , precise, and detached from individual impulse. It aims at informing about an important issue and what particular approach is taken up to that issue. It is an interpretation of facts and findings.

The scientists use hedges to themselves from their propositions; hedges are minimizers which are useful techniques to express of responsibility. Hedges help to build a polite relationship between the scientist and the reader since they strong statements or straightforward opinions and at the same time reduce possible disagreement.

The speaker starts with the doubts or beliefs of one or more scientists. Afterwards, their ideas are with evidence and the uncertainty verbs change into verbs expressing certainty, often accompanied by the adverb of time *now* as in the example *We now know, by looking at meteorites like this one, that the solar system was formed 4,567 billion years ago*.

1. (to) substantiate : " (to) give facts to support a claim or a statement". [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. (to) mitigate : " (to) make less severe, violent or painful". The noun is *mitigation*. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)