

# Exploring the Use of Hedging in Argumentative Essays by Vietnamese IELTS Learners: A Corpus Analysis and Instructor Insights

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One of the notable distinctions between Vietnamese learners and native English speakers lies in their approach to argumentative essays. Vietnamese learners tend to employ assertive language, often backed by personal anecdotes and hypothetical scenarios. Academic writing, on the other hand, necessitates the use of hedging and cautious language to effectively convey opinions. To investigate this disparity among IELTS learners, a corpus analysis was combined with interviews with experienced instructors to shed light on Vietnamese IELTS learners' use of hedges. This involved analyzing three distinct corpora: essays from Vietnamese L2 learners of IELTS, compositions by L1 college students, and model IELTS essays penned by Chinese authors. Insights were also gathered through interviews with seasoned IELTS instructors. The findings indicated that Vietnamese students tend to overuse hedges compared to model essays and native speakers. Additionally, these learners have a more limited repertoire of hedges and tend to overuse them in their writing, which could potentially weaken their arguments. This could be due to cultural influences on Vietnamese L2 writing, a lack of exposure to academic writing, or persuasive essays. Instructors also highlighted that the IELTS curriculum does not explicitly teach hedging, leading to learners being unfamiliar with the concept and possibly misusing it.

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