## Contents

Preface viii

Acknowledgments x

1 On Hedging and Hedges 1
   What is hedging? 1
   What is a hedge? 3
   Why study scientific hedging? 6
   A brief background to hedging 8
   Purpose and methodology 10

2 Towards a context of scientific hedging 13
   Empirical and rhetorical models of scientific writing 14
   Research writing as social action 22
   Rhetorical features of research articles 25
   Disciplinary culture and rhetorical context 34

3 Perspective and hedging in discourse 38
   Linguistic approaches to hedging 39
   Hedging in academic writing 51
   Knowledge claims and scientific truth 56
   Knowledge claims and audience design 62
   Knowledge claims and writer commitment 69
   Conclusion 79
4 Theoretical and methodological considerations
Scientific claims in the construction of knowledge 81
A characterisation of hedging in scientific RAs 90
Data selection and description of the corpora 94
Method of analysis 98

5 Surface features of hedging
Lexical and strategic hedges 102
Modal auxiliaries 103
Epistemic lexical verbs 105
Epistemic adjectives, adverbs and nouns 119
Hedging numerical data 130
Non-lexical hedges 139
Distributional information 141
Conclusion 148

6 A pragmatic analysis of hedging
A polypragmatic model 155
Content-oriented hedges
a) Accuracy-oriented hedges 156
  Attribute hedges 162
  Reliability hedges 163
b) Writer-oriented hedges 166
  Reliability hedges 170
Reader-oriented hedges 177
Hedging in scientific writing 185

7 Examining hedges in scientific discourse 189
Extract 1: Hedging in an introduction 190
Extract 2: Hedging results 193
Extract 3: Hedging a controversial claim 196
Extract 4: Hedging a research article 200
Some comments on the interpretations 214
## 8 Hedging and second language learners

- Hedging in L2 students' academic writing 218
- Advice from the style guides 221
- Hedging in ESP textbooks 223
- Teaching ESP students to hedge 232
- Conclusion 242

## 9 Conclusions and Implications

- Some principal issues of hedging 244
- Hedging in science: proposing some answers 252
- Some implications 258
- Conclusions and directions 261

Notes 265

Appendix: corpus of journal articles 267

References 271

Index 304