Translating Hedges
*An Study of the Translation of Hedges from English to Swedish in an Academic Text*

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Abstract
This paper discusses the translation of hedges from English to Swedish in an academic text. Hedging is defined as the use of expressions which modify the level of strength and/or precision in a statement. The aim of the study is to investigate the frequency of different categories of hedges in an academic text and to discuss the challenges encountered in the translation process. The primary source used in this study is a popular science textbook. By translating a number of pages from this text, the translation of hedging expressions is exemplified and analysed. Hedges belonging to categories such as adverbs, lexical verbs, and modal auxiliary verbs are brought up for discussion. The analysis is supported by translation theory as well as corpora and parallel texts in Swedish. The research method is a combination of a quantitative and a qualitative approach. Quantitative data presenting the overall frequency of hedges and the categorisation of hedges in the source text, is complemented with a qualitative discussion about translational options and challenges. Hedging is identified as a common feature of the current source text. The most frequently used hedges are the adverb perhaps and the auxiliary may, together constituting nearly ¼ of all hedges in the source text. The discussion illustrates the translator’s process in determining the most appropriate translation in different contexts. The vast majority of hedges were transferred to the target text through literal or word-for-word translation to maintain the stylistic traits of an academic text, but a few examples of omission are also analysed. Although most hedges were transferred, the discussion also shows that the most important factor to consider in the translation process is that the target text preserves the meaning of the source text and that a freer, or sense-for-sense translation, may also be motivated on occasion.

Keywords: academic discourse, equivalence, hedging, sense-for-sense, word-for-word.
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1. Introduction
The translation of a text from one language into another is a fascinating process. However straightforward the work may seem to an observer, there are many pitfalls in the translation process that a skilled translator has to be aware of, and be able to deal with. One issue for the translator is deciding whether to use a semantic approach, defined by Ingo (2007:87) as dealing with the specific elements in a text which carry meaning, or a pragmatic approach, which Ingo (2007:126) describes as focusing on the communicative function of a text. The translator’s dilemma is that a translation should never come across as being exactly that, a translation, but at the same time it needs to stay true to the source text in terms of aim, meaning, style and content.

Translators must be in command of an array of different research tools and methods available to make necessary background research and fact checking. They must also possess great knowledge of their languages, both source and target, and be closely familiar with the source and target cultures in order to make adequate adaptations when necessary, as illustrated by the following extract from the translation used in this study:

(1) Animal-goddesses depicted on jewellery appear elsewhere in early Celtic art. The recent great find of torcs from Snettisham in Norfolk includes one decorated with a goddess of beasts. Scenes like these must represent myths which are entirely lost to us but which were meaningful symbols within the context of religion in Iron Age Europe.


This example brings attention to translational issues such as how to translate, clarify or explain specialist terminology (torcs), and instances where it is necessary to make different types of adaptation (early Celtic art, recent, Snettisham in Norfolk, Iron Age Europe). More importantly, (1) includes an example of hedging, which is the topic of this paper. According to Mauranen (1997:115), a hedge can be identified as an expression which modifies the level of strength and/or precision in a statement. In (1), it is the modal auxiliary verb must which functions as a hedge. By adding must to the statement, the level of certainty is weakened. This example, along with other types of hedges, will be discussed further in the analysis.

Hedging expressions can pose a challenge to the translator. The identification of hedges is not always straightforward, and what words are perceived as hedges in any
given context is ultimately subjective. When dealing with hedges, the translator needs to take the style and meaning of the source text into consideration while still making sure that the target text fits naturally into the target culture. Hedges are worth studying from a translational perspective as they may be treated differently, and used more or less frequently, in different languages.

1.1 Aim
The aim of this study is to investigate the frequency of different categories of hedges in an academic text and to discuss the challenges encountered in their translation. The hedges that will be discussed belong to the following categories: adverbs, lexical verbs, modal auxiliary verbs, phrases stating limitation, “easily overlooked hedges”, and false hedges. Is hedging used frequently enough for it to be identified as a genre-specific trait of academic discourse in English as well as in Swedish? Are hedges generally transferred from the source text to the target text, and if so, what translation strategies are most appropriate in doing so? What types of hedges are most common in academic writing?

1.2 Material and method
The source text (henceforth ST) and primary material for this translational study is a popular science textbook – *Celtic Goddesses. Warriors, Virgins and Mothers* by Miranda Green, published in 1995 by British Museum Press. Dr Green is Professor of Archaeology at Cardiff University, and an authority on Celtic religion, mythology, and iconography (Green, 1995: back sleeve).

The main aim of a textbook is to inform its reader on a particular topic. It has what Ingo (2007:127) calls an informative function, which means that the pragmatic aspect is put first: the translator’s main task is to ensure that the communication with target text (henceforth TT) readers works as well as it did with ST readers by conveying the necessary information. According to Hellspong & Ledin (1997:207f, 237f), the style of an informative text is usually rather formal, with formal vocabulary and without the use of informal stylistic traits such as contractions. The author is distanced from his/her readers and not visible in the text in the first person. An informative text is usually also perceived as objective, as there is no visible author whose voice comes through in the
text. The use of hedging is one way for the author to convey this objectivity, by
distancing his/her claims from a personal to a more general level. Instead of saying “I
think” or “I believe”, more formal and impersonal phrases like “it has been claimed
that” or “it appears that” are used. These defining traits are true of the ST used in this
study.

The targeted ST and TT readers are English and Swedish speaking university
students of theology, archaeology or history, or people with a specific interest in Celtic
religion and culture. These people will read the book to gain information about the Celts
and their cultural and religious traditions.

Secondary material was also used in this study. It first and foremost contains texts
about hedging, but also about translation methods. The ST has not been translated using
one specific translational approach, but dictionaries, Swedish and English corpora,
Swedish texts about the Celts, and literature about translational method have been used
as reference material and support for translational choices.

The translation of pp. 160–173 of Green’s book forms the basis for the discussion
about hedging. The examples included in this paper were chosen to represent the most
common and/or notable examples of hedging found in the ST. The analysis combines a
quantitative and a qualitative method, presenting numbers of occurrence of specific
hedges as well as analysing specific translational options. The quantitative discussion
illustrates the general frequency of hedges as well as the frequency of particular hedges
in the ST. It also presents numbers on how many hedges were transferred to the TT and
how many were omitted. As the material has a limited range, results cannot be
generalised on a larger scale. However, they are complemented by a qualitative
discussion which comments on specific translational choices and the way in which the
hedges influence the style of the text. In this discussion, Munday’s (2008:19f) concepts
of word-for-word (literal) and sense-for-sense (free) translation have been used, as well
as two of Vinay & Darbelnet’s (Munday, 2008:57f) oblique (free) translation
procedures, namely transposition and equivalence.

2. Background

2.1 Hedging
According to Markkanen & Schröder (1997:V) and Clemen (1997:235), hedging was
first identified as a linguistic phenomenon in the mid-1960s. However, it was linguist George Lakoff (1972:195) who first defined hedges more specifically as “words whose meaning implicitly involves fuzziness – words whose job is to make things fuzzier or less fuzzy.” In this paper, a hedge is defined as a word or phrase which expresses caution, hesitation or uncertainty regarding the truth value or level of precision in a statement.

According to Schröder & Zimmer (1997:253), hedging research has gone from a focus on semantics in the 1970s, to a pragmatic focus in the 1980s. Initially, hedging seems to have been regarded as a primarily negative phenomenon, expressing imprecision and fuzziness, but over time it has come to be perceived as a means of expression which authors use purposefully to express politeness and/or uncertainty. Historically, research on hedging has dealt mainly with two aspects, according to Mauranen (1997:115) and Hyland (1998:9), namely writers’ reasons for using it, and the different means of expressing hedging. The numerous ways of expressing hedging will be discussed in detail further on in the analysis.

Hedges originate in the author’s intentions with his/her text. The problem in the identification and translation of hedges is that the author’s intentions are rarely known to the translator. One may speculate, however, that Green, the author of the ST, needs to use hedging as a precautionary measure, as the ST deals with the belief systems of the ancient Celtic civilizations in central Europe and on the British Isles more than 2,000 years ago. Any conclusions drawn from archaeological finds, myths, or texts written by contemporary Greek or Roman authors, are speculative and subject to interpretation. These conclusions can therefore not be said to be definite or unquestionable, and it would be hazardous for Green to present them as such.

Another reason for Green to use hedging may be that it is customary in this kind of academic text. There is wide recognition of hedging as a feature of academic and scientific writing:

Hedging is central to academic writing as it expresses possibility rather than certainty and collegiality rather than presumption. Scientific claims are rarely made without interpretive statements and these involve both assessments of probability and judgements concerning the impact of linguistic choices on readers. (Hyland, 1998:viii)

Apart from Hyland, researchers such as Mauranen (1997:116), Hellspong & Ledin (1997:189f), and Varttala (2002:143) acknowledge hedges as a genre-specific trait in academic discourse. The field of scientific research needs to use hedges due to its very
nature: predictions are uncertain, results preliminary, and findings modified over time. As Hyland (1998:90) points out, researchers cannot make claims which are inadequate or false. Hence, they use hedges to reduce the risk of losing face if proven wrong.

Hedges appear in almost 54 per cent of all sentences in the ST. This finding is supported by Hyland (1998:53), who states that hedges appear in between \( \frac{1}{3} \) and \( \frac{1}{2} \) of all sentences in academic texts. Thus, the many hedges in the ST could be seen simply as Green’s way of adhering to the style of the academic text genre. However, due to the nature of the research presented in the ST, it probably has more to do with the uncertainty of interpretations of different archaeological findings, in combination with an unwillingness or inability to make assertive claims. To make definite claims of truth when dealing with the interpretation of ancient cultural and religious practices seems hazardous to say the least, and the difficulty in interpreting archaeological evidence can be seen throughout the ST.

Using Hyland’s (1998:253f) conclusion, hedges allow writers to put forward their propositions with a certain degree of reservation about content, or concerning the extent of personal commitment they wish to invest in them. They also allow writers to express a particular attitude to their readers in order to attract their interest and meet readers’ expectations of modesty and negotiation. Hyland (1998:79) states:

\[
[...]
\text{hedges are rhetorical means for projecting due caution, modesty and humility when making statements, and their removal is a major linguistic means of conferring greater certainty on propositions. These strategies are therefore central to the whole enterprise of science, [...].}
\]

2.2 Translation strategies
For a translator of non-fictional texts there are numerous aspects to consider when dealing with hedges. First of all, hedges need to be properly identified in the ST before one can move on to consider whether they should be transferred to the TT. Hedging can be expressed through a vast array of linguistic means: modal auxiliary verbs (may), adjectives (possible), adverbs (perhaps), modal lexical verbs (appear to), nouns (a claim), if-clauses (if goddess she is), and compounds (seems probable). According to Hyland (1998:3), words or expressions from these categories function as hedges when they are used to bring attention to the reduced strength of an utterance. However, no words or expressions are inherently hedges. Instead, as Hyland (1998:244) points out, whether or not a word or expression should be considered a hedge is ultimately
determined by context.

Once hedges have been properly identified as such, the next step in the process is determining how to transfer them to the TT, and whether or not it is necessary to do so in the first place. Translation theory provides some hints regarding this. However, there seem to be no clear rules on how hedges should be handled in the translation process. Munday (2008:19f) uses the terms word-for-word and sense-for-sense to represent literal and free translation. The boundary between the two is not clearly defined, but in this paper a literal translation is defined as a translation which follows the ST both structurally (sentence structure), lexically (choice of words) and pragmatically (communicative function), while the primary concern of a free translation is to convey the message of the ST, regardless of style and form.

Hedges and other linguistic features are treated differently depending on which translational approach is used. In a word-for-word translation, all elements in the ST are transferred to the TT, while this may not be the case in texts which allow for greater translational freedom, i.e. sense-for-sense. In this context it is relevant to bring up Ingo’s (2007:154) pragmatic discussion. It is centred around the concept of bruksmotsvarighet, which is a synonym to Vinay & Darbelnet’s concept of equivalence, as cited in Munday (2008:58). In using this translational approach, a translator should first and foremost transfer the meaning or message of the ST to the TT, and not necessarily make direct translations of all semantic components. According to Ingo (2007:133), a translator using a pragmatic approach should process the text and make necessary adaptations to make sure that the TT fits the target culture with regards to both form and content. From this pragmatic perspective, it would be possible to omit hedges as they are usually not the words which carry the primary meaning of a text.

As reader acceptance is an important factor in the academic accreditation process, scientific writers must consider not only the plausibility of their claims, but also their effect on readers. But how does the translator achieve the same effect on TT readers as the original author did on ST readers? This aspect is discussed by Cassirer (2003:33), who states that as it is virtually impossible to know what effect authors aim to achieve when writing their texts, it is equally impossible to compare the effect on ST readers with the effect on TT readers. The only way of doing that is to conduct a reader-response study where readers get to study both the ST and the TT and compare them. As Cassirer (2003:125f) points out, how written words, especially those that like hedges can be considered vague in nature, are interpreted, is ultimately dependent on the frame
of reference of the readers. Thus, the translator needs to consider and try to replicate not only the effect the author aimed to achieve with his/her text, but also the way in which TT readers will understand and receive it.

The main challenge in the translation of the current ST was how to deal with the large number of hedges. Should they all be transferred to the TT and if so, how are they best translated? Based on the previous discussion one might argue that when translating an academic text, all its linguistic features, including hedges, should be transferred to the TT in order to maintain its genre-specific traits. This will be discussed further in the analysis.

3. Analysis

Table 1: Number of hedges in ST, categorization, transference frequency, and translation strategy used

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hedges transferred to TT</th>
<th>Translated word-for-word</th>
<th>Translated sense-for-sense</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of words in ST</td>
<td>5,644</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of hedges in ST</td>
<td>171</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adverb hedges</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lexical verb hedges</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modal auxiliary verb hedges</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phrasal hedges</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjective hedges</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If-clause hedges</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compound hedges</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pronoun hedges</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The translation of a selection of these hedges will be further discussed in the analysis. The examples were chosen from the categories with the highest frequency of hedges, namely adverbs, lexical verbs, modal auxiliary verbs and phrases stating limitation. Adjectives and if-clauses are discussed in the context of “easily overlooked” or false hedges. Compounds and pronouns were consciously left out of the analysis as they are used on only four occasions in the ST and therefore not to be considered representative or typical of the ST.
The author’s frequent use of hedging becomes obvious immediately when reading the text:

Snakes are carnivorous; they are hunters, and they kill violently, by a poisonous bite or by constriction. Their predatory nature perhaps gave rise to negative, fearful perceptions of the snake, particularly if the danger to humans were fully recognised. The snake is essentially an earthbound creature, gliding close to the ground with a rippling, water-like motion, able to insinuate itself in and out of minute cracks or holes in rocks. Maybe this behaviour created a link in people's minds between the snake and infernal symbolism. Fertility-imagery was also associated with the serpent: the female gives birth to a large number of young at once; the male has a multiple penis; and of course the shape of the reptile may have endowed it with phallic symbolism. Finally, the practice of skin-shedding was seen as an allegory for regeneration and rebirth. So death, the underworld, fertility, healing and renewal could all be symbolised by the image of this one beast.

The association between serpents and the goddesses seems to have been principally concerned with the symbolism of fecundity, healing and regeneration.

Seven hedges are found in (2), which should be regarded as a high number in a text extract this short, containing only 179 words. With this example, I want to illustrate that it is impossible to read the ST without noticing the many hedges. It also shows the variety of hedging expressions used in the ST. We will now take a closer look at some of these hedges and the strategies used in their translation.

3.1 Hedging strategies and their translations

3.1.1 Adverbs

There are many different ways for a writer to express hedging. Hyland (1998:130f,135) states that of the major grammatical classes, adjectives, adverbs and nouns are used to express hedging in more than 50 per cent of cases in scientific research articles. The use of hedging nouns is non-existent in the ST, and only 10 adjective hedges have been found, but adverbs are used to express hedging all the more frequently. A total of 67 adverb hedges were identified in the ST. All of these were transferred to the TT and all
but two were translated with corresponding Swedish adverbs. The two exceptions are discussed in (15) and (16) below.

3.1.1.1 Perhaps and maybe

The adverb *perhaps* appears 17 times as a hedge in the ST, but the synonymous adverb *maybe* appears on only one occasion. A few examples of how *perhaps/maybe* were translated are presented below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Translational approach</th>
<th>ST</th>
<th>TT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(3) [p. 162]</td>
<td>[…] she holds the great dish towards the sky, as if she is <em>perhaps</em> receiving her supplicants' offering of blood or wine.</td>
<td>[…] hon håller den stora skålen mot himlen, som om hon <em>kanske</em> mottar offergåvor i form av blod eller vin från de bedjande.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4) [p. 169]</td>
<td><em>Maybe</em> this behaviour created a link in people's minds between the snake and infernal symbolism.</td>
<td><em>Kanske</em> ledde detta beteende till att människorna förknippade ormen med underjorden.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In (3) and (4), *perhaps* and *maybe* are translated *kanske*, which was chosen as the most neutral and most frequent of the possible solutions. *Kanske* renders more than 976,000 hits in the Swedish corpus Korp, and must therefore be considered the most natural Swedish equivalent as synonyms such as *eventuellt* receives only 97,232 hits. The concept of *equivalence* is defined as a linguistic key term in translational method by Jakobson, cited in Munday (2008:37), where he discusses how equivalence in meaning can be achieved in different languages. According to Jakobson, there is no full equivalence between words (or so-called code-units) in different languages, so the translator’s task is to substitute the source language message with an equivalent message in the target language. This pragmatic approach has been kept in mind when translating the many *perhaps* in the ST. The key issue is not whether or not the expressions chosen as translations of *perhaps* are its full equivalents, but that the message of the ST is fully transferred to the TT.

According to synonymer.se [www], other possible translational options for *perhaps*, some of which have been used elsewhere in the text although not as frequently as *kanske*, are *möjligen*, *möjligtvis*, *eventuellt*, *måhända*, and *kanhända*:
Translational approach

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Translational approach</th>
<th>ST</th>
<th>TT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(5)</td>
<td>[...] his size <em>perhaps</em> suggestive of his inferior, human status [...]</td>
<td>[...] <em>eventuellt</em> antyder hans storlek hans underlägsna, mänskliga status [...]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[p. 165]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(6)</td>
<td>The beast stands beneath a tree which is <em>perhaps</em> symbolic of the animal's forest-habitat.</td>
<td>Djuret står under ett träd som <em>möjligtvis</em> symboliserar dess naturliga livsmiljö.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[p. 167]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

However, none of these synonyms are as common as *kanske*. As stated above, the one that comes closest is *eventuellt* with approximately 97,000 hits. The main reason for using some of these synonyms occasionally was to lessen the feeling of repetitiveness due to the high frequency of *perhaps* in the ST. Another option which was considered is the adverb *nog*, also common in Swedish and rendering more than 666,000 hits in Korp. However, judging from the examples presented in Korp, *nog* is more often used in informal contexts, thus considered less appropriate in this kind of academic text. The translations in (3)–(6) are literal, but with slight differences in connotations between the chosen words. *Connotation* is defined by Ingo (2007:109) as associative content, and complements *denotation*, i.e. the basic meaning of a word.

In his discussion of how words change in frequency over time, Lindquist (2009:59ff) presents statistics regarding the use of *perhaps* and *maybe*. According to his study of the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA), *perhaps* has a clear advantage over *maybe* in academic writing, the ratio being 262 to 28 tokens per million words. This finding is reflected in the frequency of *perhaps* and *maybe* in the ST, *perhaps* being used 17 times and *maybe* only once. A reason why academic writing favours *perhaps* to *maybe* could be, according to Lindquist (2009:62), that the modal auxiliary verb *may* in combination with the verb *be*, is used instead of *maybe* to express epistemic meaning, i.e. to what extent something is likely. *May + be* is used more frequently in academic writing than in other subcorpora.

The high frequency of hedges in the ST, particularly *perhaps*, signals a certain hesitation or reluctance to state absolute truths or facts. This becomes especially evident in passages where numerous hedges are found:
The light and dark aspects of the snake's symbolism are perhaps manifest also in its appearance with the Romano-Celtic mother-goddesses, especially in the Rhineland. These Celto-Germanic maternal triads are sometimes associated with the image of a snake curled round a tree, symbolism which resembles that of the serpent and Tree of Knowledge encountered by Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden of the Old Testament. On the reverse of one Rhenish altar to the local mother-goddesses, the Aufaniae, a great tree, perhaps an oak or willow, stretches its branches to the sky, its trunk encircled by a snake. The image may be that of the Tree of Life, guarded by the serpent and reflective, perhaps, of the link between the upper and lower worlds: [...]
she shows how the English expression *may solve* is translated simply *löст (solves)* in German, thus representing the indirect vs. direct approaches she considers typical of English and German. As Swedish and German are similar in many aspects and belong to the same language family, this difference in the use of hedging may be true of English vs. Swedish as well. Based upon this argument, hedges can be omitted from the TT to better follow the writing conventions in the target language culture. On the other hand, without the use of hedging researchers need to provide strong evidence for their claims, which can be difficult as pointed out above.

When discussing genre-specific traits, it is useful to compare the ST to Swedish texts on the same subject, but these are hard to find. Although there are several similar texts about the Celts available in Swedish, most of these have been translated from other languages, most notably French or English. A good example is *Druidens död. En arkeologisk thriller* by Ross & Robins. When comparing the chapters dealing with Celtic religion and archaeology, similar hedges as the ones found in Green’s book are easily identified:

(8) *Den hade fallit i bitar, men elegansen hos den enda bevarade handen tydde på en hög social ställning hos offret. Andra tecken visar på en offerdöd.*

(9) *Dessa kan ha avlägsnats under något skede av offerriten, antagligen efter det att han fått sin coup de grâce.*

However, hedges found or missing in texts translated to Swedish from another language may be a result of literal translation just as well as pointing to the genre-specificity of Swedish academic texts. Access to the originals would be necessary to make comparisons in order to draw any conclusions about genre-specific traits.

I have had two Swedish original texts at my disposal to compare the ST to: Harrison’s article about the Celts in the Swedish online encyclopedia *Nationalencyklopedin* [www], and Görman’s book *Nordiskt och keltiskt. Sydskandinavisk religion under yngre bronsålder och keltisk järnålder*. These texts use hedging in much the same situations as the ST, i.e. interpretations of archaeological finds or speculations about Celtic rituals and society:

(10) *Gravfynd tyder på att styrande funktioner innehades av jordägande stormän.*

(11) *Av dessa föremål framgår att djuren ifråga vanligen hör samman med kult av solen.*
As Hyland (1998:90) states, hedges are an integral component of scientific writing, and judging from (10) and (11), this seems to be true of these types of texts in both English and Swedish. It may well be as Kranich (2011:77) claims, that English uses hedging to a greater extent than other languages, but as the examples above show, the use of hedging is frequent in Swedish academic texts as well, although the percentage is possibly not as high as the 54 per cent found in the ST. This would, however, support a translational approach where most, but not all hedges are transferred to the TT.

3.1.1.2 Other adverbs

Apart from perhaps/maybe, a number of other adverbs are used as hedges in the ST, most notably probably and sometimes, appearing 5 and 10 times respectively:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Translational approach</th>
<th>ST</th>
<th>TT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(12) [p. 165]</td>
<td>Word-for-word</td>
<td>[…] and the date is now regarded as probably second or first century BC.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(13) [p. 171]</td>
<td>Word-for-word</td>
<td>These Celto-Germanic maternal triads are sometimes associated with the image of a snake curled round a tree, […]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The translation of the hedges in (12) and (13) is literal as they have suitable and conventional equivalents in Swedish. Sometimes is translated with the equally neutral ibland, which contains the connotation “more seldom than often”. It receives more than 323,000 hits in Korp and must therefore be considered common and conventional. Probably is translated sannolikt, which implies a fairly strong possibility and generates more than 57,000 hits in Korp. This is further supported by NE.se, which uses sannolikt in the description of exactly the same object as the ST, namely the Gundestrup cauldron:


According to Hauck (2009:479), probably can be paraphrased as there is the possibility that and suggests a chance greater than 50 per cent, which seems reasonable to me. A common synonym to sannolikt is förmodligen, which generates more than 79,500 hits in Korp. The choice of sannolikt instead of förmodligen in (12) was based on its use in the parallel text and the fact that sannolikt has fewer syllables and therefore creates a
slightly smoother TT sentence.

Several other adverbs are used as hedges less frequently in the ST. One example is especially interesting:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Translational approach</th>
<th>ST</th>
<th>TT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sense-for-sense</td>
<td>So the meeting between Finn and Sava may not have been <em>entirely</em> fortuitous, although clearly the hero had no part in her enchantment.</td>
<td>Så mötet mellan Finn och Sava kanske inte var en <em>ren</em> tillfällighet, även om hjälten uppenbart inte var delaktig i hennes förtrollning.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In (15), the ST adverb hedge has not been translated with an adverb in Swedish. Instead, *entirely* has been translated with the adjective *ren*, because it is a nice solution to translate the whole ST expression *entirely fortuitous* with the collocation *en ren tillfällighet*. “Ren tillfällighet” receives 495 hits in Korp, and the corpus shows the expression being used in contexts similar to the one in (15). The meaning of the ST sentence, that the event described was not a sheer coincidence or something that happened by accident, is transferred to the target language and expressed through *equivalence* in Vinay & Darbelnet’s use of the term. According to Vinay & Darbelnet as cited in Munday (2008:58), equivalence is used when the same situation is described in different languages by different stylistic or structural means, and this method is particularly useful when translating fixed expressions such as idioms and proverbs, as seen in the example above.

To illustrate the variety of adverb hedges in the ST, a few additional examples should be commented on:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Translational approach</th>
<th>ST</th>
<th>TT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sense-for-sense</td>
<td>Hunting, sacrifice, war and fertility are <em>seemingly</em> present.</td>
<td>Jakt, offer, krig och fruktbarhet <em>tycks</em> alla vara representerade.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Seemingly* in (16) is the other of the two adverbs which was not translated with another adverb, but with the verb *tycks*. This can be seen as an example of Vinay & Darbelnet’s translation procedure *transposition*, as presented in Munday (2008:57). Transposition is the process of exchanging one part of a sentence for another without changing the sense. Transposition is a common translational change, and works in many different ways:
verb to noun, adverb to verb, etc. The translational choice is supported by the article about the Celts in NE.se, where *tycks* occurs frequently (see further in 3.1.2).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Translational approach</th>
<th>ST</th>
<th>TT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(17) [p. 167] Word-for-word</td>
<td>In addition, there are rare instances of images which depict goddesses wearing antlers, although this is usually the prerogative of male divinities.</td>
<td>Dessutom finns några få bilder av en gudinna med horn, trots att detta vanligtvis är ett privilegium förbehållet manliga gudomar.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(18) [p. 169] Word-for-word</td>
<td>This is complex and contains messages which are both positive and negative, based partly on observation of the behaviour of the snake in the wild.</td>
<td>Denna är komplext och innehåller budskap som är såväl positiva som negativa, delvis baserade på iakttagelser av vida ormar beteende.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Usually* in (17) is translated *vanligtvis* to express a relatively frequent occurrence. *Partly* is translated *delvis* in (18), and has the connotation “only in part, not the majority of”.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Translational approach</th>
<th>ST</th>
<th>TT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(19) [p. 171f] Word-for-word</td>
<td>In the Celtic system, however, particular birds were considered sacred because they somehow epitomised the personae of the divinities with whom they were associated.</td>
<td>I det keltiska systemet betraktades dock vissa fåglar som heliga eftersom de på något sätt personifierade karaktärerna hos de gudomar de förknippades med.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(20) [p. 173] Word-for-word</td>
<td>[…] presumably brought to the temple by hopeful or grateful pilgrims […]</td>
<td>[…] förmodligen förda till templet av hopfulla eller tacksamma pilgrimer […]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Somehow* in (19) expresses uncertainty regarding method or manner and is translated *på något sätt*. *Presumably* in (20) is translated *förmodligen*, expressing a relatively high level of probability. The translation of the hedges in (17)–(20) is literal, and the hedges have been translated with expressions containing the same connotations of (un)likelihood or (in)frequency and chosen to be the best *equivalents*, or in Ingo’s (2007:154) words, *bruksmotsvarigheter*, of each term, based on their frequency in Korp.

This section has illustrated the frequency and variety of adverb hedges in the ST, and it has exemplified and discussed the translational choices of some of these. Another important group of hedges is lexical verbs, which will be discussed in the next section.
3.1.2 Lexical verbs

Lexical verbs is a group which covers all verbs except the auxiliaries (discussed in 3.1.3). Hyland (1998:119) states that lexical verbs such as suggest, indicate, and predict are the most common means of expressing mitigation. The ST contains 34 lexical verb hedges (suggest, appear to, perceive, regard, imply, associate, indicate, seem to, see as, evoke, resemble, consider). Of these, 32 were transferred to the TT. All but one were translated with verbs, and the only exception is discussed in (26).

The modal lexical verbs appear to and seem to occur as hedges 10 and 5 times respectively:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Translational approach</th>
<th>ST</th>
<th>TT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(21) [p. 161]</td>
<td>Word-for-word</td>
<td>The Classical attitude to both women and animals appears to have been different from that of the Celts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(22) [p. 170]</td>
<td>Word-for-word</td>
<td>In a shrine whose main power seems to have been to heal eye-afflictions, the torch may reflect light after the darkness of disease and clear vision in place of defective sight.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tycks and verkar are the translations chosen in (21) and (22). It would also have been possible to use förefaller. However, verka is chosen as it receives almost 360,000 hits in Korp, a big difference from the 22,595 generated by tyckas, and the 26,978 by förefalla. The choice of tycks is supported by the article in NE.se which shows tycks to be a conventional hedge in Swedish:

(23) [p. 1] [...] delvis p.g.a. att den äldsta latènetiden (400-talet f.Kr.) uppvisar en kultur vars sociala bas tycks ha liknat hallstattkulturens.

(24) [p. 2] [...] kelter från väster tycks ha erövrat Böhmen [

The expressions appear to and seem to present a hesitant possible interpretation on behalf of the author. Symbols and practices of ancient peoples are to be interpreted through our limited understanding of their culture and religion, so a hesitant guess seems to be a suitable way of doing it. As Hyland (1998:253f) states, researchers use so called content-oriented hedges to express reservations concerning the content of their propositions, to protect themselves from possible criticism and to help them save face if their claim is refuted. This can be compared to reader-oriented hedges, which are used
with the reader in mind, expressing politeness or inviting the reader to a discussion. As Kranich (2011:78) states, English tends to use reader-oriented hedges, while German (and possibly Swedish) prefers content-oriented hedges.

According to Hauck (2009:480), the use of expressions of uncertainty or probability makes a person more reliable and in possession of greater persuasive power over time compared to people who tend to express certainties and are then proven wrong. It proves that one is not inclined to draw hasty conclusions and express certainty prematurely. This aspect is further developed by Meyer (1997:21), who draws attention to the paradox of hedging strategies. In speech, hedging signals weakness, but in academic discourse, it can do the opposite and actually work to strengthen an argument. In line with this reasoning, most of the hedges in the ST were transferred to the TT.

Other lexical verbs are used as hedges in the ST:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Translational approach</th>
<th>ST</th>
<th>TT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(25) [p. 161f]</td>
<td>Word-for-word The stags may be the victims of a hunt or a sacrifice (or both): the presence of armed men implies the former, the presiding goddess the latter.</td>
<td>Hjortarna kan vara offer för en jakt eller en offerritual (eller båda delar): närvaron av beväpnade män antyder det förstnämnda, den närvarande gudinnan det sistnämnda.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In (25), *implies* is translated literally as *antyder*. There are no other translational options that express the same hesitant conclusion. The whole sentence has a strong feeling of uncertainty due to the fact that it contains three hedging expressions: *may*, *or both*, and *implies*. The use of *may* is discussed in detail in section 3.1.3.1, and the expression *or both* is an obvious hedge, which protects the author from being accused of making a false statement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Translational approach</th>
<th>ST</th>
<th>TT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(26) [p. 164]</td>
<td>Sense-for-sense Both the torc and one of the bracelets are decorated with iconography which is suggestive of imagery associated with a goddess of birds: […]</td>
<td>Både halsringen och en av ar-ringarna pryds av bildkonst med kopplingar till en fågelgudina: […]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In (26), *associated with* is translated with the prepositional phrase *med kopplingar till*. This is the only instance where a lexical verb hedge has not been translated using a corresponding verb in Swedish. This approach is another example of Vinay and Darbelnet’s procedure *transposition* (compare ex. 16), cited in Munday (2008:57),
where a word/expression from one category is replaced by a word/expression from another category in the translation (i.e. verb to noun, adverb to verb, etc). The sentence has been restructured and made less circumstantial by omission of the adjective hedging suggestive of, also present in the ST sentence. As the sentence already contains a verb hedge, the adjective hedge was omitted. This strategy can be seen as an example of Ingo’s (2007:124) concept implicitation (implicitgörande), where words or expressions are consciously left out of the translation if the semantic content can be read between the lines.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Translational approach</th>
<th>ST</th>
<th>TT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(27) Word-for-word</td>
<td>[...] its black colour and its reputed cruelty towards other birds</td>
<td>[...] dess svarta färg och påstådda grymhet gentemot andra fåglar [...]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.1.3.1 May

The use of one particular modal auxiliary verb, *may*, is frequent in the ST:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Translation approach</th>
<th>ST</th>
<th>TT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(28) Word-for-word</td>
<td>The stags <em>may</em> be the victims of a hunt or a sacrifice (or both): [...]</td>
<td>Hjortarna <em>kan</em> vara offer för en jakt eller en offerritual (eller båda delar): [...]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(29) Word-for-word</td>
<td>The imagery of fertility is enhanced by the phallic symbolism of the male attendant or suppliant, who <em>may</em> even have represented the dead man himself: [...]</td>
<td>Bilderna av fruktbarhet förstärks av den falliska symboliken hos den manliga följeslagaren eller tjänaren, som till och med <em>kan</em> ha representerat den döde mannen: [...]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*May* is, without comparison, the most frequently used modal auxiliary verb hedge in the ST, and it is one of the most frequently used hedges overall, occurring a total of 25 times. This finding is supported by Hyland (1998:116), who states that *may* and *might* are the most commonly used modal auxiliaries and considered prototypical hedges, appearing equally frequently in all domains of scientific research writing. Hyland (1998:106) goes on to say that *may* and *might* can be used interchangeably to indicate a fifty-fifty assessment of possibilities and can be paraphrased *I believe/perhaps*. However, in my opinion, *might* seems to signal weaker possibility than *may*. In both examples above, *may* has been translated literally by using the corresponding modal auxiliary *kan*. However, *kan* is also translated with the more obviously similar modal auxiliary *can*. According to Meyer (1997:37), *can* and *may* are very similar, but not entirely synonymous. In his opinion, *may* can always be replaced by *can*, but not vice versa. *May* implies alternativity, while *can* has a more general meaning. As suggested by Hyland, replacing *may* with *might* as well as *I believe* and *perhaps*, is possible in the examples above:

| (30) The stags *might* be the victims of a hunt or a sacrifice (or both): [...] | The stags, *I believe*, are victims of a hunt or a sacrifice (or both): [...] | The stags are *perhaps* the victims of a hunt or a sacrifice (or both): [...] |
| (31) The imagery of fertility is enhanced by the phallic symbolism of the male attendant or suppliant, who *might* even have represented the dead man himself: [...] | The imagery of fertility is enhanced by the phallic symbolism of the male attendant or suppliant, who, *I believe*, even represented the dead man himself: [...] | The imagery of fertility is enhanced by the phallic symbolism of the male attendant or suppliant, who *perhaps* even represented the dead man himself: [...] |
However, I disagree with Hylands’s conclusion that *may, might, I believe* and *perhaps* all indicate a fifty-fifty possibility. *May* and *perhaps* are neutral, but in my opinion, *I believe* indicates a higher level of certainty than the other three, a possibility greater than 50 per cent. *I believe*, in contrast to the other three expressions, includes a personal pronoun which serves to strengthen the argument: *this is something I consider to be true*. I also believe that *might* signals greater hesitation than *may*, as stated above. This is supported by Hyland (see below).

In spite of the fact that *may* and *might* are considered synonymous, *may* appears more than twice as often as *might* in academic writing according to Hyland (1998:106). This is supported by the frequent occurrence of *may* in the ST, whereas *might* is not used at all. *May* is also the only modal auxiliary verb which appears more frequently in academic research writing than in other genres. When working with the translation of the ST, I considered if there was in fact any difference between how one should translate *may* and *might*. The neutral *may* most often became the equally neutral *kan* in the Swedish translation. According to Hyland (1998:117), *might* can be regarded as a more “remote” form of *may* which expresses a higher degree of conditionality or tentativeness. According to Hyland (1998:118), this is further indicated by the fact that *might* often occurs in combination with other tentative verbs: *might speculate, might be suggested*. I did not, however, find any example of this in the ST.

In all places where *may* appears as a hedge in the ST, it has been transferred to the TT. One of the main reasons for choosing to keep the numerous hedges expressed through *may* was that hedges belong to this kind of academic research writing, an aspect which has been discussed previously in this paper (see section 2). Hence, a decision to omit hedges in the TT would alter the style of the text and make it less genre-specific, something which did not seem right as it is important for translations to stay true to the style of the ST. Even though Kranich (2011:77) argues that English uses hedging more frequently than German, and possibly Swedish, the Swedish parallel texts support the frequent use of hedges.

### 3.1.3.2 Must

Interestingly, the ST contains two examples of the modal auxiliary verb *must* used as a hedge. They will be presented and discussed in this section.
According to Meyer (1997:33), *must* is an unusual hedge since there is a more cautious way of expressing the necessity implied by *must*, and that is by using the modal auxiliary *should*. However, no examples of *should* as a hedge were found in the ST. In (32), the hedge *must (have been perceived)* has been omitted in the translation. This is actually one of only six instances where the ST hedge has not been transferred to the TT. In my opinion, there are no strong enough reasons to transfer the hedge in (32) to the TT. Even without the hedge, the reader will understand that the landscape is not sacred in its very nature, but that it was perceived as such by the Celts. This is what the sentence would look like without the hedge:

(33) This led inevitably to a respect and reverence for the creatures inhabiting the sacred landscape.

I would argue that the understanding of the message is not impaired if the hedge is removed. The unhedged statement comes across as very strong and confident, but the message is still communicated to the reader. Omitting 6 of 171 hedges to promote the flow and legibility of the TT does not alter the style of the text or make it less typical to its genre. In these instances where the ST sentences are unnecessarily tedious, and nothing important is lost if the hedges are left out, it is possible to omit them and still remain true to the style of Swedish popular science texts. The degrees of tentativeness or assertiveness which the ST author wishes to convey by using hedges are still signalled in the text as the majority of hedges were transferred to the TT. The applied translational approach is discussed by Ingo (2007:124, 286f) in terms of *semantic omission* and *implicitation* (*implicitgörande*). Semantic omission, i.e. to leave out meaningful components in the ST in the translation, almost always results in a loss of information. However, in the process of implicitation, as discussed in (26), words or expressions can be omitted when the message is otherwise implied in the sentence.
The hedge in (34) was used to illustrate the whole concept of hedging in section 1. It is not obvious that *must* is in fact a hedge here. At first, sentences containing *must* come across as expressing a high level of certainty, as *must* has strong assertive connotations, and are therefore easily disregarded in the search for hedges. However, the interpretation of *must* as a hedge becomes more evident when looking at the sentence when *must* has been removed:

By comparing the sentences we can see that *must* should be interpreted as a hedge in this context, as the level of certainty is unexpectedly higher if it is omitted. *Must* being used as a hedge has been discussed by Coates (1983:45f), who states that *must* in its epistemic function is often used in hedging. According to Coates (1983:41), epistemic modal auxiliary verbs such as *must* are subjective, and express the speaker’s/writer’s opinion or judgment about a statement. *Must* expresses confidence, but signals less certainty than an expression without *must*.

The translational choice in (34) is *torde*, but *borde* and *måste* were also considered. *Måste* was ruled out because of its imperative connotations, which did not work well as an expression of hedging. To distinguish differences in meaning between *torde* and *borde* is less straightforward. The conclusive information was found in a web search at *Institutet för de inhemska språken* [www]. According to this site, both words can be used to express probability, but *torde* is distinguished by having the additional connotation “should appropriately”, which works well in this context.

In connection to the discussion of how *must* is easily overlooked as a hedge, it is interesting to discuss other words with the same function, as well as words which work the other way around and are falsely identified as hedges. This will be discussed in 3.1.5.
This section analysed the uses and translations of the modal auxiliary verb hedges *may* and *must*. Hedging can also be expressed through phrases indicating limitations in method or knowledge. This will be the topic of the next section.

### 3.1.4 Phrasal hedges

A slightly different type of hedge than the ones previously discussed in this paper, is pointed out by Hyland (1998:141). These hedges consist of phrases where an author openly states limitations of the method used or admits to having inadequate knowledge. This type of hedging phrase is to be found on 18 occasions in the ST, and they were all transferred to the TT due to their strong hedging quality. A few examples will be analysed below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Translational approach</th>
<th>ST</th>
<th>TT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sense-for-sense</td>
<td><em>We cannot know whether or not</em> the females and their animals represented in the earlier European iconography were shape-changers or not.</td>
<td>Vi vet inte om kvinnorna och djuren som avbildas i den tidiga europeiska bildkonsten var skepnadsskiftare eller inte.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In (36), the phrase *We cannot know whether or not* hedges the entire statement as Green signals having insufficient knowledge to make an actual claim. In the TT, the expression has been slightly modified to *Vi vet inte om*, instead of the literal *Vi kan inte veta om*. The chosen translation expresses a slight difference in nuance compared to the ST expression: *we do not know* vs. *we will never be able to know*. The reason for making this change is that it is unnecessary to state with full certainty that this is something that will never come to be known.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Translational approach</th>
<th>ST</th>
<th>TT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Word-for-word</td>
<td><em>It is clearly extremely difficult to offer any close interpretation of the scene on the Strettweg wagon, but the imagery does suggest certain themes and beliefs.</em></td>
<td>Det är självklart mycket svårt att göra en korrekt tolkning av scenen på Strettwegvägen, men bildspråket antyder vissa teman och trosuppfattningar.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In (37), the hedging expression *It is clearly extremely difficult* is translated literally as *Det är självklart mycket svårt*. This hedge, although expressing reservations, is not as
strong as the one in (36), but opens up for a possible interpretation, which is also presented further on in the sentence.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Translational approach</th>
<th>ST</th>
<th>TT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(38)</td>
<td>Sense-for-sense</td>
<td>The identity of the Reinheim goddess, if goddess she is, <em>can never be known</em>, […]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The hedge in (38), *can never be known* has been slightly modified and is translated *kommer aldrig att bli känd*. The literal translation *kan aldrig bli känd* signals withholding information, that we know something that we do not want others to know. *Kommer aldrig* is an equivalent to *will never*, which simply expresses future tense, while *kan aldrig* implies a lack of will to share information that is known.

The use of the same type of phrasal hedges can be seen in Swedish parallel texts, which signals their conventionality in academic writing, regardless of language:

| [p. 164] | Sense-for-sense | The identity of the Reinheim goddess, if goddess she is, *can never be known*, […] | Reinheimgudinnans identitet, om hon verkligen är en gudinna, *kommer aldrig att bli känd*, […] |

(39) | Relationen mellan denna kultur och keltiska språk är dock oklar: även om många latènefolk var keltisktalande, behöver inte alla ha varit det. |

(40) | En ursprunglig totemism har således inte varit möjlig att påvisa. |

This section has discussed the practice of expressing hedging through the use of phrases stating limitations. In the next section, there will be a discussion of “easily overlooked” and falsely identified hedges.

### 3.1.5 Easily overlooked and false hedges

In this last section of the analysis, we will reconnect to the discussion in section 3.1.3.2 about words that are easily overlooked as hedges. One word which similarly to the modal auxiliary verb *must* is easily missed as a hedge is the adjective *certain*. Like *must, certain* has a strong connotation of certainty and is thus easily disregarded in the search for hedges:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Translational approach</th>
<th>ST</th>
<th>TT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(41)</td>
<td>Word-for-word</td>
<td>Sava and Oisin, with their continuing deer-associations, bear <em>certain</em> resemblances to other mothers and sons […]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The adjective *certain* in (41) is translated with the adjective *vissa*. Possible alternatives according to synonymer.se [www] include the adjectives *särskilda* and *speciella*. However, the use of *vissa* in this context is supported by Korp, which produces more than 520,500 hits in a search on the adjective *viss*. Many of the examples given in Korp include *viss(a)* used in similar contexts as in (41): *sker vissa förändringar, i vissa delar av, i vissa fall, till en viss grad*, etc. *Särskild* and *speciell* generate approximately 109,500 and 214,700 hits respectively in Korp, which makes *viss(a)* the most conventional of the three. Another possible translational option would be to use the pronoun *flera*. It produces more than 570,000 hits in Korp. However, there is a slight but important difference in meaning between *vissa* and *flera*, which makes *vissa* a more suitable choice in this context. *Vissa* can be used as a literal translation of *some*, meaning “a few; not many”. *Flera* on the other hand, is a literal translation of *several*, meaning “more than a few; a significant part of”. In my interpretation of the sentence in (41), *vissa* is the word with the most appropriate connotations. The choice of *vissa* is further supported by Swedish parallel texts. In the article about the Celts in NE.se, *vissa* appears frequently:

(42) [...] varvid det keltiska inflytandet ökade genom vissa, av oss hittills okända invandringar.
(p. 2)

(43) *Vissa* oppida tjänade som tillflyktsorter, andra var även boplatser för jordbrukare.
(p. 5)

I would argue that even though it is not obvious, *certain* should be considered a hedge in (41). *Certain* can be replaced with *some/a few/a number of*, which more clearly shows the hedging function. The level of certainty increases if *certain* is omitted (compare ex. 35): *bear resemblances* is a stronger statement than *bear certain resemblances*. Based upon this observation, *certain* should be identified as a hedge in the above context as hedges serve to weaken the certainty of statements.

An interesting point to discuss in relation to words that are easily overlooked as hedges due to their assertive nature, is that there are also words which work the other way around, i.e. which are easily mistaken to be hedges when they are not. When analysing and studying hedges, it is very easy to become over-zealous, finding hedges where they actually do not exist. This emphasizes Hyland’s (1998:244) point, brought up in section 2.2, that no words have an inherent hedging function, but that whether or not they are to be perceived as hedges is due to context.
The word *if*, mostly identified as a conjunction according to the Oxford English Dictionary (OED), can easily be mistaken to be a hedge in all instances. This must be due to the hesitant and uncertain connotations of the word. In certain contexts, *if* does express hedging, but this is not always the case. The word *if* appears 14 times in the ST, but it has a hedging function in only eight of these instances. Hedging *if*-clauses consist of several words, and therefore stand out as obvious hedges in the ST, expressing a strong level of reservation or hesitation. Four of the hedging *if*-clauses contain *as if*, and the other four only *if*. Compare the examples below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Translational approach</th>
<th>ST</th>
<th>TT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(44) [p. 164]</td>
<td>The identity of the Reinheim goddess, <em>if goddess she is</em>, can never be known, [...]</td>
<td>Reinheimgudinnans identitet, <em>om hon verkligen är en gudinna</em>, kommer aldrig att bli känd, [...]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word-for-word</td>
<td>[...] the behaviour of a thwarted lover, who tried to ensure that <em>if</em> Sava would not accept him, she should never have a husband.</td>
<td>[...] en meningslös hämndaktion från en försmådd älskare som ville försäkra sig om att Sava aldrig skulle kunna gifta sig <em>om</em> hon nekade honom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(45) [p. 168]</td>
<td><em>if</em> goddess she is</td>
<td><em>if</em></td>
</tr>
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</table>

*If* in (44) and (45) has been translated literally with the corresponding Swedish *om*. In (44), *if* is a hedge, expressing reservations as to the interpretation of the image described. However, in (45), *if* is not a hedge, but an implication of a stipulation and its result (*if Sava...so...*). When reading the text quickly or in an active search for hedges, it is easy to mark all occurrences of *if* as having a hedging function. As mentioned in section 1, Green tends to use hedges when interpreting archaeological finds. In (44), the *if*-clause hedges the whole content of the statement: If, and only if the proposed conditions are true, which may very well not be the case, then they may mean a certain thing. The hedge signals that the entire proposition is highly uncertain. A cult-image of a woman has indeed been found in Reinheim, this is a fact. But the interpretation of the image is uncertain; it may depict a goddess, but it could just as well be another female, whose identity is unknown. The statement offers an interpretation of a hypothetical scenario, which may be of no relevance at all if the condition of the claim is proven to be false. The decision to translate the ST *if*-clause *if goddess she is* with the TT *if*-clause *om hon verkligen är en gudinna*, was made to make the translation slightly more straightforward than the ST.
4. Conclusion

The aim of this study was to investigate the frequency of different categories of hedges in an academic text and to discuss the challenges encountered in their translation. By presenting a number of examples from a popular science textbook, different ways of expressing hedging have been discussed from a translational point of view. The discussion was supported by quantitative data and the translational choices were analysed and motivated using corpora, dictionaries and parallel texts. The study shows that adverb hedges are by far the most common ones in the current ST, and lexical verb hedges and modal auxiliary verb hedges also appear frequently. Phrasal hedges, adjective hedges and if-clause hedges are less common, but still appear frequently enough to be regarded as significant traits of the ST. The conclusion is that hedges appear frequently enough to be identified as a genre-specific trait of academic discourse in English as well as in Swedish. The use of hedges in Swedish academic writing is supported by parallel texts.

The vast majority of hedges were transferred from the ST to the TT, only six out of a total 171 were omitted. The translation strategy most often used was word-for-word or literal translation. On a few occasions, a sense-for-sense or free translation seemed more appropriate, and Vinay & Darbelnet’s procedures transposition and equivalence were then used. The study also reveals that the identification of hedges is ultimately subjective and that some hedges are easily overlooked due to their assertive nature, while other words may be falsely identified as hedges. This motivates extra carefulness by the translator, to make sure that only real hedges are transferred to the TT.

As the findings of this study are based on limited material, it is difficult to draw any general conclusions on how hedging should be treated in the translation process. An area of further research might be to conduct larger quantitative studies as to the difference between the use of hedging in English vs Swedish. It would also be helpful with further theoretical work regarding how to deal with hedges generally in the translation process.
5. References

Primary source


Secondary sources


Kranich, Svenja. 2011. To hedge or not to hedge: the use of epistemic modal expressions in popular science in English texts, English–German translations, and German original texts. Text & Talk 31/1:77–99.


**Internet resources**


