HEDGING IN THE BOOK OF PROVERBS OF THE HOLY BIBLE

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ABSTRACT:

For some reasons and purpose, being realized or not, almost all writers use hedging in their writing. Hedging is widely used not only in secular but also in spiritual writing. This study is intended to investigate the use of hedging in one of the Holy Bible books, that's the Book of Proverbs, which was believed written by King Solomon, the wisest king of Israel in about in about 970-930 BC. Using a qualitative method, the study found there are eight types of hedges occurred in the Book. From the most to the least frequent, they are: modal auxiliary 85 times (62.50%), agentless passive 33 times (24.26%), full verbs 7 times (5.15%), conditional sentences 3 times (2.21%), adjective twice (1.47%), noun and passive infinitives each once (0.74%).

1   Introduction

The Book of Proverb seeks for the purpose of the human life. The writer of the Books tried to use his wisdom to understand the riddle and the uselessness of the life. He then shared his wisdom trough the book and persuaded his reader to live in fear of God. Thus instead of structuring information in straightforward manner, the writer of the Book of Proverbs often engage in processes of negotiation and persuasion. Hillyer mentioned that the Proverbs advises to live in fear and respect of God and to realize that finally everybody should give the responsibility unto Him [6].

In accordance with these processes (negotiation and persuasion), in context where the writer of the Books of Proverbs tried to present another view of the life which is difficult to be understood by the human logic, King Salomon may wish to formulate his statement cautiously, adhering to the central virtues of humility, and caution. For instance in some verses of the Books, it seems that King Salomon did not want to say that something *is* the case, but instead he said that something is *possibly* the case, or that it *might* be the case. In chapter 3 versus 18 (3:18) of the Book, for example, instead of saying "that God manifest the sons of men", King Solomon wrote "that God *might* manifest them"

There have been many widely study on the use of hedging in secular, but is very limited on the spiritual writing. The result of the latest studies on hedging, for instance, have indicated that the student of S1 and S2 program used a wide range of hedging in their thesis related to their awareness of linguistic features that they used [1]. Considering the magnitude of these findings, it is necessary to do a further research on the other genre of religious writing, to find out what kinds of hedging and how they are used in such kind of genre.

The logic of this study is based on functional approach to language as proposed by Searle [2] and Levinson [7], that is, the choices of the words, metaphors, and grammatical structures.

2   Formulation of the Problem

Based on what has been described above, the research questions are formulated as follows:

1.   Are there any hedges in the Books of Proverbs?

2.   If any, what types of hedging are they?

3   Methodology

The study is descriptive and qualitative in nature since this study does not use statistical calculation to measure the validity or reliability. Qualitative study in nature is conducted inductively, meaning that the study begins from data collected from the field and analyzed [3]. Descriptive method, because this method characterized by attempting to describe characteristics and events that exist [5].

Since the purpose of the study is to find out the use of hedging in a religious writing genre, then the object of the study investigation is the Book of Proverbs of the Holy Bible. The reason for choosing the Holy Bible because it is one of the popular religious writings which is widely read by Christians. The Book of Proverbs was chosen because it contain many wise advises from the King Salomon.

To analyze the hedging used in the Book of the Proverb of the Holy Bible, I took the steps below:

1.   I identified hedges words, phrases, and clauses based on indicators provided by Hyland [4].

2. I sought to classify the hedged words in terms of their grammatical forms given by Hyland [4].

3. Those hedges units were put into tables to show how they are distributed in percentages. By calculating their frequency of hedges, it would be easy to look at the tendencies of the subjects in using hedging.

4. I interpreted the data in relation to the subjects' proficiency in using hedging; there are certain types of hedging which are more complex than others.

4   Related Literature Review

The words 'hedge' and 'hedging' can be broadly defined as referring to a barrier, limit, defense or an act or means of protection of defense. In a linguistic context, hedging may then be interpreted as a feature that attempts to statements or linguistic feature that speakers or writers use to protect their statement.

In the narrowest definition, 'hedges' is equated with 'the expression of tentativeness and possibility' [4]. Therefore, the most commonly accepted, types of realization for 'hedge' are those that select an epistemic modality structure, e.g., 'a possible interpretation of this finding may be that…'

The idea of hedged performatives, as it were, became one of widening the concept of hedges. Levinson considered the effect that modal and semi-modals have on the illocutionary acts of utterances denoted by a performative verb in performative sentences such as *I must advise you to remain quiet.* The modal *must* used in the sentence gets the speaker off the hook, relieving him or her from some kind of responsibility [7].

The concept of hedged performative has widened in another way when hedges were taken to be modified of speaker's commitment to the truth-value of whole proposition, not just the category membership of a part of it. Thus, for example, Searle in his categorization of metadiscourse types considers the use of hedges as showing a lack of full commitment to the propositional content of an utterance [2]. In other words, hedges (*e.g. perhaps, seem, might, to a certain extent)* are seen as modifying the truth-value of the whole proposition, making statement less precise.

As motivation for using of hedges, much of the discussion has concentrated on their use in spoken discourse, and the most frequently mentioned motivating factor is politeness, as defined by Levinson [7]. In their view, hedges are primarily used for negative politeness in face-saving, in which they are put to elaborate use.

Types of Structure that Represent Hedging

Hedged

1. He **may** be ill

2. He **must** be a friend of hers

3. He **will have** finished by now

Unhedged

1. He **is** ill

2. He **is** a friend of hers

3. He **has** finished by now

Types of Hedged Statements

1. **Modal Auxiliaries** (*may* or *might, can* or *could, shall* or *should, will* or *would, ought to,* and *must*).

   Example; Smoking *may* or *might* cause cancer.

2. **Epistemic Nouns** (*possibility, probability, a supposition, hypothesis, assumption, conjecture*).

   Example;   There is a (strong or slight or remote) *possibility* or *probability* that smoking causes cancer.

3. **Verbs**

   - **Epistemic Lexical Verbs** (*suggest, appear, indicate, predict, believe, conclude, assume, propose, seem*)

   - **Epistemic Judgment Verbs** (*feel, think, reckon, guess, estimate, tend, speculate, suspect, calculate, imply*)

   - **Epistemic Evidential Verbs** (note, report, deduce, show, attempt, seek)

     Example; It *seems* unnecessary to discuss a new model here.

4. **Conditional Sentences (if Clause)**

   Example; *Smoking leads to cancer, if certain other variables are present.*

5. **Epistemic Adverbs**

   - **Adjunct/Downtoners**: "lowing effect on the force of the modified verbs"

   - **Disjuncts**: "eventually the PS II pool would become *virtually* depleted…"

6. **Epistemic Adjectives** [*(un)likely, possible, apparent, probable, approximate, consistent (with), similar, significant*].

7. **Passive Infinitives**

   Example;   it is to be hoped…

   Summarizing these figures, It can be stated that…

8. **Agentless Passive (Passive without a 'by')**

Example; Selection error *must be regarded* as a defect.

An Overview of the Book of Proverbs

The Book of Proverbs is the twentieth book from the 39 books on Old Testament (OT) in the Holy Bible. Christian theologians believe it was written by Solomon, the third king and wisest of Israel kingdom, in about 970-930 BC. Proverbs consists of 12 chapters and 222 verses. Each chapter has different number of verses. The table below shows them:

Chapters	Number of Verses
1	18
2	26
3	22
4	16
5	20
6	12
7	29
8	17
9	18
10	20
11	10
12	14
TOT	**222**

The Book of Proverbs teaches about the close relationship between religion and everyday life. While the general tone of the book is dominantly rational, the importance of reverencing and trusting the Lord is stressed throughout the book. This "fear of the Lord" is one of the main definitions of religion in the Old Testament. Far from there being an unbridgeable gap between religion and the secular world, Proverbs shows the result, in noble character and harmonious, happy homes, when the whole of life is brought under God's control. A danger exists when the moral elements are taken in isolation from the religious foundation which is assumed throughout. Then the pursuit for happiness or success can become selfish, inward looking, and ultimately self-defeating.

Proverbs belongs to a literature works. It contains sharp practical application of wisdom covering many facets of life. At the time the Proverbs was written, wisdom was originally connected with skills, manual as well as intellectual, and it was considered to be the gift of the God. There are about ten themes found in the Book of Proverbs, they are: the reward to the righteous and the end of the ungodly (10:2, 11:3-9), the fool, the simple, the lazy which is often contrasted with the industrious (10:4-5), wisdom (13:13-14), justice (17:8,23), neighborliness (19:4,6,7), riches and poverty (21:6, 22:14), and family life (12:4, 19:14).

The Book of Proverbs is composed of many distinct lessons on wisdom, most of which are introduced by "my son" or something similar. Some of the lessons are: Solomon's invitation to avoid evil companions in chapter 1: versus 8-33 (1:8-33), the rewards of wisdom (2:1-22), the necessity for discipline (3:11-20, 5:1-23), the perils of sexual prostitution and the wisdom of faithfulness within the marriage relationship (5:1-23).

King Salomon used some epigrammatic expression of some aspects of practical wisdom by examples, warnings or precepts, advices, invitations [8]. In giving those (examples, warnings or precepts, advices, invitations), King Solomon tried to teach wisely, humbly, politely and cautiously. Then, he realized or not, he used hedges. To teach that "two are better than alone", King Solomon wrote "*If two lie together, then they have heat: but how **can** one be warm alone?*" (4:11). To stress on the greatness of wisdom, he said "*This wisdom have I seen also under the sun, and it **seemed** great unto me*" (9:13).

5 Finding and Discussion

The result of my study shows that there are eight types of hedges were found in the Book of the Proverb of the Holy Bible. The table below shows them:

Types of Hedges		Example		Chapter:Verse
1	Modal Auxiliary	a.	All things are full of labour; man <u>cannot</u> utter it	1:8
		b.	It is that which <u>shall</u> be… that which <u>shall</u> be done	1:9
		c.	I <u>will</u> prove thee with mirth.	2:1
		d.	He <u>may</u> carry away in his hand	5:15
2	Full Verbs	a.	And I gave my heart to <u>seek</u> and search out by wisdom	1:13
		b.	Whoso <u>keepeth</u> the commandment shall <u>feel</u> no evil thing	8:5
		c.	it <u>seemed</u> great unto me	9:13
3	Adverbs	a.	turneth <u>about</u> unto the north; it whirleth <u>about</u> continually	1:6
		b.	the mourners go <u>about</u> the streets	12:5
		c.	yet <u>surely</u> I know that it <u>shall</u> be well with them that fear God	8:12
4	Adjectives	a.	There is an evil which I have seen under the sun, and it is <u>common</u> among men.	6:1
		b.	There was a <u>little</u> city, and <u>few</u> men within it	9:14
5	Nous	a.	Who knoweth the <u>interpretation</u> of a thing?	8:11

6	Conditional Sentences	a. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow	4:10
		b. if two lie together, then they have heat: but how can one be warm alone?	4:11
		c. And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him	4:12
7	Agentless Passive	a. all things that are done under heaven	1:12
		b. the boldness of his face shall be changed	7:21
		c. the doors shall be shut	12:4
8	Passive Infinitives	a. it may be said	1:10

Meanwhile, the most frequent types of hedges from the most to the least frequent are shown in the following table:

	Types of Hedges	Number	Percentage
1	Modal Auxiliary	85	62.50 %
2	Agentless Passive	33	24.26 %
3	Full Verbs	7	5.15 %
4	Adverbs	4	2.94 %
5	Conditional Sentences	3	2.21 %
6	Adjectives	2	1.47 %
7	Nouns	1	0.74 %
8	Passive Infinitives	1	0.74 %
	T O T A L	136	100 %

From the table, it can be observed that the highest frequency of hedging types in the Book of Proverb is *modal auxiliary* (62.50%), followed by *agentless passive* (24.26%), while the lowest frequency are *noun* and *passive infinitives* (each 0.74%).

Subtypes of Hedges in the Book of Proverb

Modal Auxiliaries

Modal Auxiliaries	The Clauses	Chapter: Verse
a. Will	1. I will prove thee with mirth.	2:1
	2. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow.	4:10
	3. Better is a poor and a wise child than an old and foolish king, who will no more be admonished.	4:13
	4. but the abundance of the rich will not suffer him to sleep.	5:12
	5. for that is the end of all men; and the living will lay it to his heart.	7:2
	6. I said, I will be wise	7:23
	7. Surely the serpent will bite without enchantment; and a babbler is no better.	10:11
	8. The words of a wise man's mouth are gracious; but the lips of a fool will swallow up himself.	10:12
	9. for all these things God will bring thee into judgment.	11:9
b. Shall	1 it is that which shall be… that which shall be done	1:9

2	neither shall there be any remembrance of things… that shall come after	1:11
3	the days to come shall all be forgotten	2:16
4	the man that shall be after me	2:18
5	he shall be a wise man… he shall be a wise man	2:19
6	therein shall he leave it	2:21
7	it shall be for ever	3:13
8	God shall judge the righteous	3:17
9	who shall bring him to see what shall be after him?	3:22
10	who shall bring him to see what shall be after him?	4:12
11	the second child that shall stand up in his stead	4:15
12	they also that come after shall not rejoice in him	4:16
13	He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver	5:10
14	naked shall he return to go as he came, and shall take nothing of his labour	5:15
15	so shall he go	5:16
16	For he shall not much remember the days of his life	5:20
17	and his name shall be covered with darkness	6:4
18	man what shall be after him under the sun?	6:12
19	God shall come forth of them all	7:18
20	God shall escape from her; but the sinner shall be taken by her	7:26
21	Whoso keepeth the commandment shall feel no evil thing	8:5
22	For he knoweth not that which shall be: for who can tell him when it shall be?	8:7
23	neither shall wickedness deliver those	8:8
24	it shall be well with them that fear God	8:12
25	it shall not be well with the wicked, neither shall he prolong his days	8:13
26	that shall abide with him of his labour	8:15
27	he shall not find it… God shall bring every work into judgment	8:17
28	For the living know that they shall die	9:5
29	He that diggeth a pit shall fall into it; … a serpent shall bite him	
30	Whoso removeth stones shall be hurt therewith; and he that cleaveth wood shall be endangered thereby.	
31	a man cannot tell what shall be; and what shall be after him	
32	for a bird of the air shall carry the voice, and that which hath wings shall tell the matter.	

shall (continued)

No.	Text	Reference
33	thou knowest not what evil shall be upon the earth	10:8
34	there it shall be	
35	the clouds shall not reap	
36	thou knowest not whether shall prosper, … or whether they both shall be alike good	10:9
37	for they shall be many	
38	the keepers of the house shall tremble, and the strong men shall bow themselves	10:14
39	the doors shall be shut in the streets, … and he shall rise up at the voice of the bird, and all the daughters of music shall be brought low	10:20
40	Also when they shall be afraid of that which is high, and fears shall be in the way, and the almond tree shall flourish, and the grasshopper shall be a burden, and desire shall fail	11:2 / 11:3 / 11:4 / 11:6
41	Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it	11:8
42	God shall bring every work into judgment	12:3 / 12:4 / 12:5 / 12:7 / 12:14

		No.	Text	Reference
c.	Can	1.	All things are full of labour; man cannot utter it	1:8
		2.	That which is crooked cannot be made straight: and that which is wanting cannot be numbered	1:15
		3.	for what can the man do that cometh after the king?	
		4.	For who can eat, or who else can hasten hereunto, more than I?	2:12
		5.	so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end.	2:25
		6.	nothing can be put to it	3:11
		7.	how can one be warm alone?	
		8.	who can tell a man what shall be after him under the sun?	3:14
		9.	Consider the work of God: for who can make that straight	4:11
		10.	That which is far off, and exceeding deep, who can find it out?	6:12
		11.	for who can tell him when it shall be?	7:13
		12.	a man cannot find out the work that is done under the sun	7:24
		13.	A fool also is full of words: a man cannot tell what shall be; and what shall be after him, who can tell him?	8:7 / 8:17 / 10:14
d.	May	1.	Is there any thing whereof it may be said, See, this is new?	1:10
		2.	that he may give to him that is good before God. This also is vanity and vexation of spirit.	2:26
		3.	he may carry away in his hand	
		4.	neither may he contend with him that is mightier than he	5:15 / 6:10
		5.	Where the word of a king is, there is power: and who may say unto him, What doest thou?	8:4
e.	Should	1.	till I might see what was that good for the sons of men, which they should do under the heaven all the days of their life	2:3
		2.	I should leave it unto the man that shall be after me	2:18
		3.	There is nothing better for a man, than that he should eat and drink, and that he should make his soul enjoy good in his labour	2:24
		4.	And also that every man should eat and drink	
		5.	Wherefore I perceive that there is nothing better, that a man should rejoice in his own works	3:13
		6.	Better is it that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay.	3:22
		7.	wherefore should God be angry at thy voice	
		8.	to the end that man should find nothing after him	5:5
		9.	why shouldest thou destroy thyself?	
		10.	why shouldest thou die before thy time?	5:6
		11.	It is good that thou shouldest take hold of this	7:14

			7:16
			7:17
			7:18
f. Might	1.	till I <u>might</u> see what was that good for the sons of men	2:3
	2.	that God <u>might</u> manifest them and that they <u>might</u> see that they themselves are beasts.	3:17
	3.	neither may he contend with him that is <u>mightier</u> than he.	6:10
	4.	Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy <u>might</u>.	9:10
g. Must	1.	then <u>must</u> he put to more strength	10:10

Having calculated the number of modal auxiliaries used as hedging in the Book of Proverbs, I could present them in the table below:

	Modal Auxiliaries	Percentage
1	Shall	49.41 %
2	Can	15.29 %
3	Should	12.94 %
4	Will	10.59 %
5	May	5.88 %
6	Might	4.71 %
7	Must	1.18 %
	T O T A L	100%

From the table it is obvious that the highest frequency of modal auxiliary used as hedging in the Book of Proverbs is *shall* (49.41 %), followed by *can* (15.29 %). While the lowest is *must* (1.18 %).

Full Verbs

Full Verbs		Example	Chapter: Verse
a. Epistemic Lexical Verbs	1.	it <u>seemed</u> great unto me	9:13
b. Epistemic Judgment Verbs	1.	Whoso keepeth the commandment shall <u>feel</u> no evil thing	8:5
	2.	a wise man <u>think</u> to know it	8:17
c. Epistemic Evidential Verbs	1.	And I gave my heart to <u>seek</u> and search out by wisdom	1:13
	2.	I applied mine heart to know, and to search, and to <u>seek out</u> wisdom	7:25
	3.	Which yet my soul <u>seeketh</u>, but I find not	7:28
	4.	a man labour to <u>seek</u> it out	8:17

The percentage of those three kinds of full verbs can be seen clearly in the table below:

Full Verbs	Percentage
1	Epistemic Evidential Verbs	57.14 %
2	Epistemic Judgment Verbs	28.57 %
3	Epistemic Lexical Verbs	14.29 %
	T O T A L	100%

Among the three kinds of the full verbs appeared in the Book of Proverbs, the *Epistemic Evidential Verbs (seek)* got the highest frequency (57.14%), *Epistemic Judgment Verbs (fell* and *think) got 28.57%,* while *the Epistemic Lexical Verbs (seem)* only 14.29 %.

Adverbs

Adverbs		Example	Chapter: Verse	Percentage
a. Approximate Adverb	1.	turneth <u>about</u> unto the north; it whirleth <u>about</u> continually	1:6	75%
	2.	the mourners go <u>about</u> the streets	12:5	
	3.	yet <u>surely</u> I know that it shall be well with them that fear God	8:12	
b. Adverb of Indefinite Frequency	1.	For <u>oftentimes</u> also thine own heart knoweth that thou thyself likewise hast cursed others	7:22	25%

The writer of the Book of Proverbs, King Solomon, did not use many adverbs to hedge. He only used four adverbs for hedging; *approximate adverb* 3 times (75%), those are: *about* (twice) and *surely*. The rest is *adverb of indefinite frequency*, that is *oftentimes* (25%).

Adjectives

Adjectives		Example	Chapter: Verse	Percentage
Adjective of Indefinite Frequency	1.	There is an evil which I have seen under the sun, and it is <u>common</u> among men.	6:1	33.33%
	2.	There was a <u>little</u> city, and <u>few</u> men within it.	9:14	33.33%

There is only one kind of adjective used as hedging in the Book of Proverbs. That is *Adjective of Indefinite Frequency*, which uses *common, little* and *few*. Each appears once (33.33%)

Noun

Noun	Example	Chapter: Verse	Percentage
Epistemic Nouns	Who knoweth the	8:1	100%

	interpretation of a thing?		

King Solomon only once used noun for hedging, that is *interpretation* which belongs to *epistemic nouns*.

Conditional Sentences

Conditional Sentences	Example	Chapter: Verse	Percentage
Open Conditional	1. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow	4:10	33.33%
	2. If two lie together, then they have heat: but how can one be warm alone?	4:11	33.33%
	3. And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him	4:12	33.33%

The conditional appeared three times in hedging in the Book of Proverbs. Those three belong to open conditional which combine *if….will….*, *if…can…* and *if…shall…* Each appears once (33.33%).

Agentless Passive

Passives	Example	Chapter: Verse
Agentless Passive	1. all things that are done under heaven	1:12
	2. all the works that are done under the sun	1:14
	3. crooked cannot be made straight: and that which is wanting cannot be numbered	1:15
	4. which hath been already done	
	5. in the days to come shall all be forgotten	2:12
	6. A time to be born	2:16
	7. nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it:	
	8. the oppressions that are done under the sun: and behold the tears of such as were oppressed	3:2
		3:14
	9. who will no more be admonished	4:1
	10. He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver	
	11. his soul be not filled with good	4:13
	12. his name shall be covered with darkness	5:10
	13. which is done is that which shall be done	6:1
	14. which hath been is named already	6:3
	15. the boldness of his face shall be changed	6:4
	16. all words that are spoken	
	17. neither shall wickedness deliver those that are given to it	6:10
	18. they were forgotten	7:21
	19. the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil	8:1
	20. his days be prolonged	8:8
	21. all things that are done under the sun	8:10
	22. as the fishes that are taken in an evil net, and as the birds that are caught in the snare; so are the sons of men snared in an evil time	8:11
		8:12
	23. and his words are not heard	9:3
	24. The words of wise men are heard	9:12
	25. Whoso removeth stones shall be hurt therewith; and he that cleaveth wood shall be endangered thereby	9:16
	26. If the iron be blunt	
	27. the stars, be not darkened	9:17
	28. the windows be darkened	
	29. the doors shall be shut …, all the daughters of musick shall be brought low	10:9
		10:10
	30. the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken	
	31. which was written was upright	12:1
	32. nails fastened by the masters of assemblies, which are given from one shepherd	12:3
		12:4
	33. my son, be admonished	
		12:6
		12:10
		12:11
		12:12

King Solomon used *agentless passive* very frequently for hedging in the Book of Proverbs. It appears 33 times in many verses from the first until to the twelfth chapter.

Passive Infinitives

Passives	Example	Chapter: Verse
Passive Infinitives	it may be said	1:10

The hedging using *passive infinitives* only happens once in the first chapter verse 10.

6   Conclusion

Based on the research findings, the study comes to conclude that hedges occurred in the Book of Proverbs of the Holy Bible. From the 222 verses of the book, there are 136 hedges which occurred in many verses in the whole 12 chapters of the book.

The study also found that there are eight types of hedges were found in the Book of the Proverb of the Holy Bible. From the most to the least frequent, they are: *modal auxiliary* 85 times (62.50%), *agentless passive* 33 times (24.26%), *full verbs* 7 times (5.15%), *conditional sentences* 3 times (2.21%), *adjective* twice (1.47%), *noun* and *passive infinitives* each once (0.74%).

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Biographies

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