Chapter 2

Theoretical Bases

In this chapter, I provided theories about concept of hedges, types of hedges and functions of hedges. Furthermore, there will be two related studies in order to support the study. All the theories helped me in answering the study question.

**Review Underlying Theory**

The theory that is applied in this study is theory of hedges, types of hedges and functions of hedges. This explanation helped me and readers understand more about the use of hedges.

**Definition of Hedges**

The concept of hedges is different from one to another. In the present research, people mainly view hedges as concepts of pragmatics. According Schroder, H and Zimmer (2000,p.89) In pragmatics, the concept of hedges is linked to phenomena, mitigation, vagueness, and modality.

In addition, Wishnoff (2002,p.40) suggested that hedges are politeness strategies when they mark claim, or any other statements. She also points out that hedges can be realized in many different linguistic forms. She gives examples of the use of conditional statements, modifiers, verb choice, framing statements that indicate the weight a statement should have or the degree of doubt involved, and even statements of personal opinion.
In addition, hedging referred only to expressions such as *kind of, sort of* or *rather* which could be used to, for example, modify a degree of membership (Markkanen and Schröder 2000, p.20). An example of this would be a phrase such as 'a rose is *kind of* a flower', in which the hedge *kind of* modifies the relationship between roses and flowers in general.

In conclusion, hedging is linguistic forms which modify the speaker’s certainty or uncertainty or toning down of utterances or statement in order to reduce riskiness of what people says depending on the communicative context, such as *I think, I’m sure, you know, sort of, maybe, kind of, such as and perhaps*.

**Types of Hedges**

I used the theory based on Salager-Meyer classification (1997) called Taxonomy of hedges. He points out that hedges are mostly found in the following linguistics items; modal auxiliaries, modal lexical verbs, adjectival, adverbial, and nominal modal phrases (probability adjectives, nouns, adverbs), approximators of degree, quantity, frequency and time, introductory phrases, certain “if” clauses, compound/complex hedges. Each type of the hedges will be explained below.

a. Modal Auxiliary verbs, the most tentative ones being: *may, might, can, could, would, should*. The example of the use of modal auxiliary presented in the following:

- Such a measure *might* be more sensitive to change in health after specialist treatment.
- Concerns that naturally low cholesterol levels *could* lead to increased mortality from other causes *may* well be unfounded.
- Advances in technology **could** allow exploration of the anatomical basis of subjective fatigue.

b. Modal lexical verbs (or the so called speech act verbs used perform acts such as doubting and evaluating rather than merely describing) of varying degree of illocutionary force: **to seem, to appear (epistemic verbs), to believe, to assume, to suggest, to estimate, to tend, to think, to argue to indicate, to propose, to speculate**. The examples:

- Our analyses **suggest** that high doses of the drug can lead to relevant blood pressure reduction.

- These results **indicate** that the presence of large vessel peripheral arterial disease may reflect a particular susceptibility to the development of atherosclerosis.

- In spite of its limitations, the study **appears** to have number of strengths.

- Without specific training, medical students’ communication skills **seem** to decline during medical training.

c. Adjectival, adverbial, and nominal modal phrases

1. probability adjectives : e.g. possible, probable, un/likely

2. nouns : e.g. assumption, claim, possibility, estimate, suggestion

3. adverbs : e.g. perhaps, possibly, probably, practically, likely, presumably, virtually, apparently. For example :

- Septicemia is **likely** to result, and this might threaten the patient’s life.
- The setting of the neural mechanisms responsible for this sensation is possibly altered inpatients with chronic fatigue syndrome.

- This is probably due to the fact that Greenland Eskimos consume diets with a high content of fish.

d. Approximators of degree, quantity, frequency and time. They consist of approximately, roughly, about, often, occasionally, generally, usually, somewhat, somehow, a lot of. For example:

1. Approximators of degree

- Clearly, I have a kind of access to my emotions too much that others do not

- My point in this problem is that perhaps I never will

2. Approximators of quantity

- Fever is present in about a third of cases and sometimes there is neutropenia

- My experience to work began around second grade.

3. Approximators of frequency

- Persistent subjective fatigue generally occurs in relative isolation

- Sometimes in society men are assumed in higher position than women

4. Approximators of time

- At least, one of my brothers will continue his study to be a doctor.

- We have never met for several years.
e. Introductory Phrases, such as: *I believe, as far as I/we know, to our knowledge/ standpoint, it is our view that, we feel that*. The examples:
   - We *believe* that the chronic fatigue syndrome reflects a complex interaction of several factors, there is no simple explanation.

f. Certain “If” Clauses, such as: *if true, if anything*. For example:
   - If true, then our study contradicts the myth that fishing attracts the bravest and strongest men.

g. Compound/ Complex Hedges. These are phrases made up of several hedges, the commonest forms being:
   1. A modal auxiliary combined with lexical verb with a hedging content. (e.g. *it would appear*)
   2. A lexical verb followed by a hedging adverb or adjective. (e.g. it seems *reasonable/probable*). Such compound hedges can be double hedges (it seems reasonable/probable, this may suggest that, it seems likely that; *it would indicate that, this probably indicates*); treble hedges (it seems *reasonable to assume that*); quadruple hedges (it would seem *somewhat unlikely that, it may appear somewhat speculative that*).

Functions of Hedges

I used theory concentrating on the single function of hedges, instead of multiple ones (Jennifer coats, 1996) in order to categorize hedges words used in J.K Rowling with Oprah Winfrey Show. The functions of hedges be explained below.
a. **The expression of doubt and confidence**

People use hedges to express doubt. The basic function of hedges is to show that speakers do not feel sure to what they are saying. They express doubt and it shows that they lack confidence in the truth of the proposition expressed in that utterance. For example, when Meg says 'I think she's got a body hair problem'. It is to signal that she is not totally confident about the truth of the proposition she’s got a body hair problem. *I think, maybe, you know, I don’t think, may, might* are kind of hedges to communicate the speaker’s uncertainty.

However, the hedge probably is closer to confidence than to doubt. For example, when Susan says ‘well, I probably told them about the story’. Therefore it shows confidence than Susan says, ‘well, I think I told them about the story’. Based on English dictionary probably means almost certainly; as far as one knows or can tell.

b. **Sensitivity to others’ feelings**

In this part, hedges can be used not just to modify the force of the propositional content of an utterance, but also to take account of the feelings of the addressee, that is the person or people being talked to. When speaker speaks to addressee, not only propositions that can be concerned but also attitudes to addressee. It is called interpersonal function. The term *sort of, kind of, really, could, possibly, perhaps, might, I suppose* are examples of hedges that express caring to others’ feelings. For example, when there is conversation between two girls talking about tom’s new house. Moreover, the
speaker doesn’t want to give negative connotations of tom’s new house. Another example is, when we want someone to do something we say, ‘could you help me to close the door ?’ using the hedges could will express politeness and protect someone’s feeling, instead of ‘close the door’. Those will give different meaning to the speaker also addressee. In addition, in English, hedges are extremely useful in terms of protecting negative face, it help us to avoid imposing on people. Hedges will help the expression of controversial views by not taking too strong a line or too critical. Therefore, by using hedges, speaker can protect the unflattering description to the addressee.

c. Searching for the right word

In communication, people usually went to give good respond especially to the people that we rarely talked with. So, here, hedges can be useful devices for signaling speaker’s to search for a word, or having trouble finding the right words to say what speaker’s mean. The term sort of, kind of, really, you know, a bit of are the hedges that can be use to pause for time while speaker searches and finds the right word. For example, when Gwen tries to describe a girl that she met yesterday, she says, ‘she was sort of a bit of an ill-disciplined’. In that situation, Gwen is searching for an appropriate word to describe the sort of wild teenager that she is imagining. Moreover, she is also being careful to protect herself in case her remark turns out to be unacceptable to addressee. People eventually use the word that may not be
perfect choice. Thus hedges is useful for speaker to give an idea to find the proper word to the addressee.

d. Avoiding playing the expert

It has already been the stereotypes between men and women that men’s ways of talking are competitive talk, while women show cooperative talk in the same sex communication. In addition, in findings of a range of studies suggest that women and men bring different conversational strategies to the workplace. The use of hedges in this part is a strategy to avoid the appearance of playing the expert. Men seems to be more competitive when talk to the same sex. In contrast, women avoid the role expert in conversation because they want to minimize social distance between participants, therefore hedges is an important way to show non expert in the same conversation. The word *short of, you know, think, well, whatever, thing* are example of hedges in avoiding playing the expert. For instance, when Jen discusses with Meg about her luck for joining famous basketball team in her school, she says, ‘I think I can join that team because of your information’. Jen was very proud because the one who can join that team as an expert. However, she doesn’t want Mega to assume that she is an arrogant person. She also avoids sounding like an expert. Hedges shows proposition sound less authoritative, in order to maintain social closeness between speaker and participants. Furthermore, maintaining social closeness is important principle in friendly talk between women.
In this study, I used all those theories Salager-Meyer’s of taxonomy hedges, Coates about functions of hedges, in order to answer the one research question as can be seen in chapter one. Some steps to analyze the data presented in chapter three as the methods of the study.

**Review of related studies**

I reviewed one previous study that related to my study from the same field about hedges. The previous studies were performed by Nugroho Sudjiman, 2008, *Hedges occur in ‘Michael Jackson’ interview of Oprah Winfrey Show.*

In his study, he formulated two research questions. First, function of hedges do the hedges words belong to, second: function of hedges that predominantly occur in the talk show, by using those questions, he found that there are many function of hedges that appeared in Oprah Winfrey Show. Applying theory of Jennifer Coates (1996) the function categorized into four. Also, his study is adding types of hedges by Evans (2007).

Based on his analysis, it was found are 156 functions of hedges that occurred in Michael Jackson interview of Oprah Winfrey Show. Regarding to the types of hedges used in the talk show, it was found 8 types of hedges were identified and one type of hedges could not found. The most frequent function was searching for the right word, while the second was sensitivity to others feelings, followed by expressing doubt and confidence and avoiding playing the expert as the least used function. Based on his findings, it was assumed that the
use of hedges could help the speaker and the addressee to have good understanding and corresponding.

Between my study and his research there are similarities and differences. The first similarity between this study and the related study is the both of the study hedges word used in Oprah Winfrey Show. Secondly, I used the similar function of hedges proposed by Jenifer Coates (1996). The functions that are used are to express of doubt and confidence of the speaker, to sensitivity to other’s feelings, to search for the right word, and to avoid playing the expert.

While the difference, the first is the used of American talk show in his thesis. I focused only on J.K Rowling’s utterances, while his study took hedges of Oprah Winfrey, Michael Jackson, and Elizabeth Taylor utterances. Secondly, in this study is about types and function of hedges, while his study just focuses on the functions of hedges word.