

# EXPLORING HEDGES IN EFL LEARNERS' SOME SELECTED UNDERGRADUATE THESIS

## A THESIS

Submitted to English Language Teaching Department Tarbiyah and Teacher Training  
Faculty Syekh Nurjati State Islamic Institute Cirebon  
In Partial Fulfillment of The Requirements of Islamic Scholar Degree in  
English Language Teaching Department



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## ABSTRACT

### **Sri Maryati (14121310362): “EXPLORING HEDGES IN EFL LERANERS’ SOME SELECTED UNDERGRADUATE THESIS” Undergraduate Thesis 2016**

Hedges devices have become a crucial issue in language learning. The study of hedges brings discussion of type of hedges and relates to interpersonal meaning used in EFL learners’ undergraduate thesis. One aspect that is highlighted in the hedges is how to deliver the argument in order to be accepted by the reader within the scope of the making of undergraduate thesis. The term of the hedges plays different types and interaction management in making undergraduate thesis. There are some types of hedges and interaction management that are used by EFL learners.

This research is intended to: 1) identify what types of hedges are commonly used by the students, 2) describe hedges choices relate to interpersonal meaning. This research is based on the fact that in writing undergraduate thesis, writers are still confused about how to convey an argument to be understood and there is no misunderstanding by the reader.

This research applied qualitative research method in analyzing the data since the researcher attempts to explore deeply types of hedges that are used and find the type of interaction on the writing of undergraduate thesis of EFL learners. The data are taken from a stratified purposive sampling (high, medium, low score). They are three data of undergraduate students in 2015. In this research the main instrument is the researcher herself. The researcher uses the theory of Hyland’s taxonomy as the foundations in analyzing the data of this research.

After conducting research, the researcher obtains the results of this research. The research findings of first research question shows that there are two types of hedges that often found. They are modal verbs (43,04%) and lexical verbs (32,91%) primarily on epistemic evidential in lexical hedges. The types found are referred to the level of certainty and uncertainty in presenting arguments. Meanwhile, in the non-lexical hedges the harmonic combination (54,34%) occupies the high position in the use of three data. It means that the authors avoid personal responsibility for validity of the proposition. The research findings of second research question shows that hedges related to interpersonal meaning that used personal attribution. The average writers of the three data use metatext (52%) to guide the reader rather than the use of writer-reader interaction (48%) which focuses on the writer-reader relationship. In conclusion, hedges are important aspects in writing learning that help students to be professional writers.

**Keywords:** *Hedges, EFL Leraner, Metadiscourse, Interpersonal Metadiscourse*

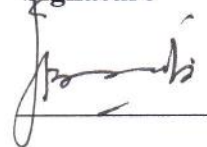







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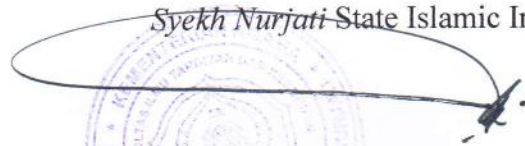
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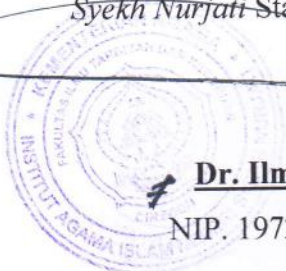
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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

This chapter briefly introduces the nature of present study and theoretical foundation of the research. It begins with research background, limitation of the research, aims of the research, significance of the study, previous research, theoretical foundation, methodology of the research, and research systematicity.

#### 1.1 Research Background

In the process of communication, the usage of language has an important role. Halabisaz et al (2014: 211) defines that language is used to express the knowledge, ideas, behaviors, and experiences of academic discourse. To achieve success in academic writing, the writer should be able to build interaction with the reader. Therefore, Hyland (2005:ix) states that successful writing in English is “reader-friendly”. However, in developing the interaction with readers is very difficult. It is the same as Hyland (2005: 11) said that “managing social relationships is crucial in writing because a text communicates effectively only when the writer has correctly assessed both the readers’ resources for interpreting it and their likely response to it”. Hence, in writing academic and varying degrees use special features to be able to communicate. “This is where the linguistic resource known as “hedges” becomes extremely important to the second language thesis writer as they learn how to adjust the strength of their claims in relation to their audience and communicative purpose.” (Paltidge & Starfield, 2007:52). Therefore, this study analyzes the usage of hedging on EFL learners as an element of interaction that makes the relationship between writer and reader.

According to Yule (1996: 130), hedges (or hedging strategy) are defined as an expression of caution expressed by speakers about how an utterance is interpreted. It means that the speaker needs to give an explanation and take into account the truth that applies if the statement which is said is not actually inappropriate. In this case, hedges is a communication strategy which aims to refine or polite a speech. Hedges have function to withhold the writer’s full commitment to a proposition. E.g: *might/ perhaps/ possible/ about* (Paltridge &



Starfield, 2007: 111 as cited in Hyland, 2001a; Hyland and Tse, 2004a). However, the use of hedging in the level of EFL learners is difficult (Noorian & Biria, 2010). Hyland (1998: 218) explains more about the difficulty of the use of hedges by EFL learners in academic writing that the main difficulty is the fact that they can simultaneously convey a range, of different meanings, not only signaling the writer's confidence in the truth of referential information, but also contributing to a relationship with the reader. This shows hedges in undergraduate thesis writing require more attention to be investigated.

There are many forms in academic writings but the researcher still choose undergraduate thesis as the object of research. Undergraduate thesis is a scientific paper or scientific article that suggests the author's opinion which is based on the opinions of others. Students are able to write an undergraduate thesis when they are considered to be able to integrate knowledge and skills to understand, analyze, describe, and explain problems related to scientific fields (Ikmal, 2014). Therefore, Hyland (1998: 90) adds that how to write undergraduate thesis, the author gain the trust of the reader so the authors expressed the opinion that will be received. It means that the writer should be able to provide strong arguments or precise claims so there is no misunderstanding. Hyland also explains in the writing of undergraduate thesis related to information and persuasion, both will be related to the reader's understanding and acceptance of an argument. It means relate to science writing which involves weighing evidence, drawing conclusions from data, and stating circumstances which allow these conclusions to be accepted; it assesses the claim it makes (Hyland, 1998:6). However, the authors want the language is understood and accepted by the reader. Therefore, researcher analyzes the arguments of the authors in their undergraduate thesis as an indication of the hedges choice.

This research falls within the frame of metadiscourse. Halabisaz et al (2014: 211) as cited in Crismore & Kopple (1988) proves that there is a relationship between hedging and metadiscourse. They believe that the hedges are parts of metadiscourse because they function interpersonally and indicate the modality. Related with interpersonal view, understanding the notion of reader, however, is notoriously elusive (Hyland, 2005:12). Therefore, hedging can be





used to indicate that the speaker does not impose upon the reader's desire or beliefs. Hyland continues that the writer should see the number of readers that is known or unknown, the relative status of participants, the extent of shared background knowledge, and the extent to which specific topical knowledge which is shared. This view explains that EFL learners need to write the parameters that can be understood by the reader.

Furthermore, it is important to know the fact that writing undergraduate thesis does not only present new findings, but also present how propositions or claim are presented in order it can be accepted by others in providing piece of data. In addition, the author is also able to organize the text or text decoding such as who wrote it, for whom, and why (Hyland, 2005:13). It could be called metatext which focuses on essay structure. Then, to find out the location of which will be discussed, metatext helps to guide the reader to locate the focus of the proposition in the text (meaning in wording, structure or production of the essay). Therefore, hedges in metadiscourse contribute to interpersonal meaning is further discussed in this research.

Hedges are not only interesting in the field of linguistics, the previous researchers of hedges also focus on the analysis of sociology, medicine, hard vs. soft sciences even in the money market (e.g., Salager-Mayer 1989; Skelton 1988; varttala 2001; Hyland 2000). It can be concluded that the hedges have an important role in any field that is no exception with linguistics in English that has been researched on cross-linguistic (Saadiya Wudaa Al Quraishy 2011; Samaiea, Khosravianb, Boghayeric 2014; Halabisaz, Pazhakh, Shakibafar 2014. Each of them has been researched on non-native English and native English (for example Iraq and Persian). The results of their research concluded that mostly hedges are used by native English.

Nowadays, there is the issue or real phenomenon which is found in the undergraduate thesis. When writing undergraduate thesis, the author needs a statement that has reason to be accepted by the reader and reflects the good social interaction. However, the ability to express the level of certainty is a very difficult to implement in language learners (Hyland, 1998: 189). Therefore, Hatmaker (2010) says that the use of hedges is very important to be presented as a way to



present the arguments for a variety of reasons. Hyland (1998: 90) says implicitly by indicating if the author does not use hedges, then the claim which he said had a low level. In contrast, if the author uses hedges, he automatically has a strong claim. The claim is said to be strong if the author include sources of evidence or citations from the viewpoint of experts, while the claim is said to have a low level if the author only gives information and persuasion.

Based on the phenomenon described above, it has also been faced by the researcher in this present research. The researcher is difficult in presenting the claim, so in practice the researcher often less communicative. Related to this, the use of hedges is to help managing the tone, attitude, and the information in a document (Harmer, 2010). In addition, this phenomenon represents an important area to explore further about the use of hedges in undergraduate thesis. Accordingly, to fill up the expectations of the academic community, EFL writer can decide to be careful in presenting information rather than making claims without evidence.

Meanwhile, in the English Language Teaching Department IAIN Syekh Nurjati Cirebon this present research is implemented based on collecting data of their first undergraduate theses by looking at the use of hedges in Chapter 1, especially in the Introduction section. In addition, this present study also uses the comparative analysis of hedging forms. It is in order to identify hedging forms of the research data that was analyzed automatically by using Hyland's (1998) approach. The researcher does not only focus on the selection of the hedges which were written by three EFL learners, but also hedges can relate to interpersonal meaning. Therefore, hopefully this research can give the inspiration and contribution for students who are less aware about the knowledge of hedges.

## 1.2 Limitation of Research

In this phenomenon, the researcher has decided to limit topic of the research in order to make it not too broad to be discussed. By determining the limitation, this research is expected easier to be explored, and more focusing to describe as the answers of research questions. Therefore, the researcher wants to limit the scope of problem of this research. Hence, there are some limitations the researcher determines. They are as follows:



- 1) This research presents the real issue to know about why the researcher chooses hedges as a topic. Actually the researcher chooses this research because it relates to the phenomena in this Department at IAIN Syekh Nurjati Cirebon. When the researcher follows the course of research in sixth semester, students in the last grade English Language Teaching Department failed in many undergraduate thesis writing. So, they often participated in the lower classes (6<sup>th</sup> grade). This can happen because they are less able to write undergraduate thesis with communicative. They need a language feature that help the writer to present the argument, so they writing can be acceptable and understood by the reader.
- 2) This research involves an academic writing of EFL learners, especially undergraduate thesis. The data were taken from EFL learners' undergraduate thesis of IAIN Syekh Nurjati Cirebon who graduated on 2015. The researcher took the data that is new, because the format of writing from year to year is changed. It is may improve authorial style. The study is limited to investigate Introduction section in chapter 1. The data taken by the selection score, namely high (Didik Ahmad Fuadi), medium (Muhammad Solukhi), and low (Ade Irna) score. Therefore, researcher took three of data as a representative and also the limitation time of this research.
- 3) This present research focuses on exploring types of hedges which are used in EFL learners at IAIN Syekh Nurjati Cirebon. In the analysis, the researcher focused on the choice of words included in the type of hedges. Furthermore, the researcher also examined the level of communication situations with the use of interpersonal meaning.

### 1.3 Research Questions

Based on the identification of the phenomenon on the research background of this research, the researcher formulates the research questions of this research are as follows:

- 1) What types of hedges used in EFL learner?



- 2) How does such hedges choices relate to interpersonal meaning?

#### 1.4 Aim of the Research

Based on the research questions of this research, the researcher determines the aims of this research are as follows:

- 1) To identify what type of hedges are commonly used by the students.
- 2) To describe hedges choices relate to interpersonal meaning.

#### 1.5 Significant of the Research

The significant of this research can be viewed from two different sides, they are theoretically and practically. Theoretically, this research gives a valuable finding to the field of linguistics, especially to develop academic writing in undergraduate thesis for EFL learner. Practically, this research hopes that an analysis of hedging can be useful for the development of learner and EFL writers as well as to teachers of college academic writing. Furthermore, this study gives explanation of hedging phenomenon to the reader for persuading that study of hedges is important in making academic writing, especially undergraduate thesis.

#### 1.6 Previous Research

The researcher takes three previous studies to know how far the area of perception has been researched and what kinds of gaps are them. Firstly, Saadiya Wudaa Al Quraishy (2011) researched about hedges in scientific academic research papers of EFL learners. Secondly, Samaiea, Khosravianb, Boghayeric (2014) researched about the use of Frequency and types of hedging in Introduction's Research Article (RA) of EFL learners. Thirdly, to research Halabisaz, Pazhakh, Shakibafar (2014) researched about hedges in EFL learners to make claims about the writing of a thesis. The three previous studies researched about hedges in EFL learner, actually in academic writing.

Firstly, hedges and EFL learner previously investigated by Saadiya Wudaa Al Quraishy (2011). The research focused on the use of hedging devices in scientific academic research papers of Iraqi learner of English Foreign Language. The findings of analyzing their research papers after instruction indicate that the experimental group shows statistically significant increases in the use of hedging





devices in research papers. The result there is a highly significant difference between the achievements of the subjects of the experimental group who were instructed the various types of hedges and subjects of the control group who did not receive instruction. Iraqi EFL learners have difficulty in interpreting and using hedging devices appropriately in their academic research papers, because no systematic attention is given to the use of these devices in their textbooks in covering the topic and the lack of instructions given by teachers which might play a great role in increasing the Iraqi EFL learners' use of these types of devices in research papers.

Secondly, another research showed by Samaiea, Khosravianb, Boghayeric (2014). They investigated hedges in EFL learner Persian and native English about the use of Frequency and types of hedging in Introduction's Research Article (RA), they use a lot of modal auxiliaries, evidential main verbs, adjectives and nouns in RA than Persian. The result showed that there was a significant difference between natives & non-natives items of using hedges in abstract of linguistic theses written by English and Persian writers, the study indicate that English writers are more tentative in putting forward claims and in rejecting or confirming the ideas of others than Persian writers.

Thirdly, in contrast to research Halabisaz, Pazhakh, Shakibafar (2014), they investigated hedges in EFL learners across English and Persian to make claims about the writing of a thesis through Crompton's taxonomy based (Chi-Square and SPSS version 16). The results showed there are some difference between English and Persian, the average application of hedges mostly done by native English. Although in previous study they research in the area of EFL learner, but they do not see the meaning in the selection of assessing interpersonal hedges.

The previous studies above, in investigating hedges touch the area of EFL learners and academic writing. Hence, when another research focused on hedges in Research Article, this current research is more focus on hedges in Undergraduate thesis actually in Chapter 1, especially used in relation to interpersonal meaning. However, based on recent studies, hedging has many different in EFL learner about the writing of the hedges marked contrast to the



culture of learners. In fact, in some courses, students vary in the strategies and attitudes to knowledge that they adopt (Paltridge & Starfield, 2007:7). However, these studies have failed to recognize that hedges have differences in interpersonal meaning. Actually, information on hedges knowledge is very important, because it contributes to the practice of the reasons listed evidence and opinions.

## 1.7 Theoretical Foundation

In this part, the researcher presents overall theoretical foundation of this research. It includes the definition of metadiscourse, interpersonal metadiscourse, personal attribution (metatext and writer-reader interaction), the definition of hedges and types of hedges (hedges lexical and non-lexical hedges), and hedges in EFL learner.

### 1.7.1 Metadiscourse

The writers take the advantages of metadiscourse markers to interact with readers and reflect themselves as rhetorical devices (Salek, 2014:55). Adel (2006:16) says that metadiscourse model inspired by SFG (Systematic Functional Grammar) which has three functions of language, such as language as exchange (interpersonal), as message (textual), and as representation (ideational). However, metadiscourse either fulfills the interpersonal functions for example by having the action with addresses.

As mentioned earlier, Halabisaz et al (2014: 211) as cited in Crismore & Kopple (1988) proved that there is a relationship between hedging and metadiscourse. It means because hedging devices contribute to the means for directing readers to how they should understand, evaluate and respond to propositional information. Hyland (1998:51) says that from metadiscourse perspective, hedges represent clear attempts to negotiate academic knowledge. They indicate the writer's acknowledgement of the disciplines' of interpersonal conventions and build writer-reader relationship.



### 1.7.1.1 Interpersonal Metadiscourse

Interpersonal meaning is one of part of metadiscourse. In the case, metadiscourse embodies the idea that communication is more than just the exchange of information, goods or services, but also involves the personalities, attitudes and assumptions of those who are communicating (Hyland, 2005: 3). Automatically, interpersonal meaning also addressed the issue of communication between writer and reader. Hyland (2005: 26) argues that the interpersonal function is the use of language to encode interaction, allowing us to engage with others to take on roles and to express and understand evaluations and feelings.

As already explained earlier, the hedges had a relationship with metadiscourse. By looking at how the authors build a relationship with the their audience, then the author should be able to control the level of personality in their text, claiming compactness with readers, evaluating their material, and knowing the other views (Halabisaz et al [2014: 211] as cited in Hyland [2004 : 133-1334]). Furthermore, related with this research, interpersonal metadiscourse is based on the theory of Adel (2006) which metadiscourse markers have a role in creating a cohesive text. Salek (2014: 60) explains that to be interactive, not only using the connector in the text, but also be able to interact with the reader.

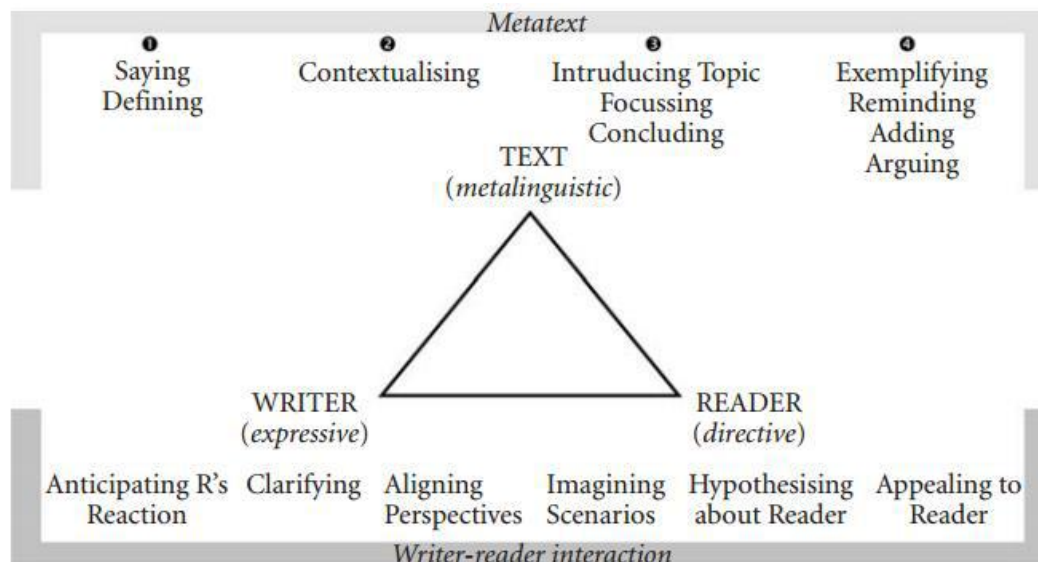
The theory of Adel (2006) about meteadiscourse refers to reflexive linguistic expressions which are evolving text and linguistic forms and reference to the writer persona. Writer persona presents her/himself and how she/he constructs the relations with the imagined reader. Therefore, the theory of Adel uses personal and impersonal metadiscourse. However, in this study the researcher discusses personal attribution to see the relationship with hedges. Hence, Adel (2006) divides metadiscourse to discuss personal attribution into two categories, namely metatext and writer-reader interaction.

#### 1.7.1.1.1 Personal Attribution

Personal attribution may reveal writers' perceptions of their own role in the research and their relationship with expected readers as well as the scientific-academic community (Martin-Martin). Adel (2006:14) says simply to explain the personal attribution refers to the use of pronouns (I, we, and you) or noun (writer,



reader) to indicate the involvement of writers with readers. The use of this strategy is to seek cooperation and solidarity with the expected stress readers and their disciplines (Martin-Martin). Personal metadiscourse has two categories, namely metatext and writer-reader interaction.



**Figure 1:** Functions of personal metadiscourse in relation to the text (metalinguistic function), the writer (expressive function) and the reader (directive function) by Adel (61: 2006)

1) **Metatext**, according to Adel (2006: 218), ‘metatext’ guides the reader through the text and comments on the use of language in the text. The focus is on the structure, discourse actions and wording of the text. The function of the metatext is trying to guide the understanding of the reader in order to anticipate and protect themselves from potential criticism. In addition, the metatext can also be used to connect ideas/build arguments. Metatext has consisted of two categories: code and the text.

**Table 1:** Adel’s taxonomy of personal metadiscourse functions: Metatext

Types	Discourse Function	Example
C	<b>Defining:</b> Explicitly comments on how to interpret terminology	<i>What do we mean by ....then?</i>
O	<b>Saying:</b> Involves general <i>verba dicendi</i> such	<i>What I am saying is...</i>





D E	as <i>say, speak, talk</i> or <i>write</i> , in which the fact that something is being communicated is foregrounded	<i>A question I ask myself is...</i>
T E X T	<b>Introducing the Topic</b> gives explicit proclamations of what the text is going to be about, which facilitates the processing of the subsequent text for the reader.	<i>In the course of this essay, we shall attempt to analyse whether ...</i>
	<b>Focussing</b> refers to a topic that has already been introduced in the text: announces that the topic is in focus again, or it narrows down.	<i>I will only discuss the opponents of...</i>
	<b>Concluding</b> is used to conclude a topic.	<i>In conclusion, I would say that...</i>
	<b>Exemplifying</b> explicitly introduces an example.	<i>As an example of..., we can look at...</i>
	<b>Reminding</b> points backwards in the discourse to something that has been said before.	<i>As I mentioned earlier,...</i>
	<b>Adding</b> overtly states that a piece of information or an argument is being added to existing one(s).	<i>I would like to add that...</i>
	<b>Arguing</b> stresses the discourse act being performed in addition to expressing an opinion or viewpoint. Verbs used are performatives.	<i>The ...which I argue for is...</i>
	<b>Contextualising</b> contains traces of the production of the text or comments on (the conditions of) the situation of writing.	<i>I have chosen this subject because...</i>

For more explanation about verba dicendi in saying, verba dicendi is a word that expresses speech or introduces a quotation (wikipedia) (e.g *refers to...*,



is, terms..etc.). There are other verba dicendi to express additional meaning according to Za (2012):

- a) **State** adds formality. Example: *(X) states that is simply not true.*
- b) **Declare** and **Proclaim** adds formality and implies official announcement. Example: *As declared by (X), Our streets are now more safe than ever.*
- c) **Assert** refers to the confidence. Example: *(X) assert that our product is the best in the market.*
- d) **Allege** is used when asserting is done without a proof. *“It may look safe, but there are more dangers than meet the eye,”* alleged the security guard.
- e) **Indicate** and **suggest** add a tentative and/or indirect quality: *“You should also check the financing of their other company,”* suggested Clark.
- f) **Maintain** implies defensiveness: *“I still think it is a bad idea to use a cell phone when in the plane,”* maintained the pilot when confronted with recent findings.

Adel (2006: 125) states that the position of metatext in metadiscourse is very important, “the orienting aspect of metatext is particularly important in initial positions, such as introductions and section beginnings”.

**2) Writer-Reader Interaction,** Adel (2006:184) states that ‘Writer-reader interaction’ is described as metadiscourse that is used by the current writer to interact with her imagined reader in ways that create and maintain a relationship with the reader. This allows the writer to influence her reader by addressing him directly in various ways. In this discussion the writer-reader interaction has four categories.

**Table 2:** Adel’s taxonomy of personal metadiscourse functions: Writer-reader interaction.

Type	Discourse Function	Example
P	<i>Anticipating the Reader’s Reaction</i> pays special attention to predicting the reader’s	<i>I do realise that all this may sound...</i>
A	reaction to what is said, e.g. by explicitly	<i>You would be very</i>



R T I	attributing statements to the reader as possible objections or counterarguments conceived by him.	<i>surprised at...</i>
C I P A	<b>Clarifying</b> marks a desire to clarify matters for the reader; motivated by a wish to avoid misinterpretation. Negative statements are common.	<i>I am not saying... I am merely pointing out that...</i>
N T S	<b>Aligning perspectives</b> takes it for granted that the reader takes the writer's perspective. The reader's agreement is presupposed.	<i>If we [consider/compare]...</i>
	<b>Imagining Scenarios</b> is a 'picture this' type of encouragement that (often politely) asks the reader to see something from a specific perspective. It allows writers to make examples vivid and pertinent to the reader	<i>If you consider... You can perhaps imagine...</i>
	<b>Hypothesising</b> about the Reader makes guesses about the reader and his knowledge or attitudes.	<i>You have probably heard people say that...</i>
	<b>Appealing to the Reader</b> attempts to influence the reader by emotional appeal. The writer persona conveys her attitude with the aim of correcting or entreating the reader.	<i>I hope that now the reader has understood...</i>

### 1.7.2 Hedges

The concept of "hedges" and its usage as linguistic term can be tracked back to 1972 by George Lakoff. According to Lakoff (1972: 195) that hedges refer to words that "make things fuzzier or less fuzzy". Lakoff believes that the hedges in terms of semantics which explains the words "kind of", "sort of" or "rather", but he further developed the theory of hedges in pragmatic terms which could explain about politeness or mitigation, as well. In this case, the use of hedges can be successful by presenting claims carefully, precisely, and humility.



The success of claim depends on the selection of linguistics, to make such claims look strong and acceptable.

The words of “hedge” and “hedging” in the Oxford English Dictionary defined as a barrier, limit, and defense or it means used to protect or defend oneself. It is possible to limit one’s responsibility toward what is said and thus to avoid embarrassing situations in case one is found to be wrong (Vartalla [2001:18] as cited in Zuck and Zuck [1985]). Strategies for the use of hedges called hedging. This definition is explained further by Hyland (1998: 1) as cited in Zuck and Zuck (1986) which refers to hedging as the process whereby the author reduces the strength of a statement. But, hedging is not strategy to obfuscate or confuse, it does more than a convention of academic style (1998: 1). In this case the hedging is a communication strategy that aims to refine or convey more polite words.

Hedging phenomenon commonly known as the ability to speak, give advice, orders, questions or statements. Hence, hedges or hedging have a relationship with rhetoric. Samaie, Khosravian, Boghayeri (2014) asserts that the hedges contribute to rhetorical. Rhetoric is a skill to manage the word which is used for communication processes with the specific purposes (persuasion). It shows that hedging can persuade the reader.

### 1.7.3 Types of Hedges

Hyland (1998:103) explains there are two types of hedges. They are lexical and non-lexical hedges.

#### 1.7.3.1 Lexical Hedges

Lexical hedges refer to the lexico-grammatical analysis of the most common of realizing modality. In lexical hedges, there are five types of hedges that are discussed, namely the capital auxiliary verbs, lexical verbs, adjectives epistemic, epistemic adverbs, and noun.





### 1.7.3.1.1 Modal Auxiliary Verbs

Modal auxiliary verbs associated with the notion of modality, and modality associated with hedging, especially in the kind of epistemic modality which refers to the opinion and attitude of the author and express about the level of certainty or uncertainty (Hyland, 1998: 44). However, modality has two types namely deontic and epistemic, which is epistemic modality expresses the writer's opinion or beliefs of the truth of what said, while epistemic deontic action indicates the author's ability. Hyland (ibid) also continuing that hedging is one of the main aspects of epistemic modality associated with personal judgment based on lack of knowledge. These words indicating modality that are *would, may/might, could/can, should/shall, cannot, will must/need, ought to*. Example:

- (1) Researchers *may* have found a cure for influenza
- (2) You *must* leave now

(Vartalla, 2001:27-28)

On the data (1) modal of “may” is used in epistemic, it indicates tentativeness towards the information presented, which may also be seen as a hedge. While the data (2) indicates deontic, which shows a command clause (you are obliged to) to go. From these examples, the use of “merger” which is a combination of deontic and epistemic also occur. It is also referred to the type of hedges. Example:

- (3) An accident of this kind *can (may)* sometimes happen.

(Vartalla, 2001:114)

Data (3) indicates that the word of “can” may indicate epistemic or deontic, it could happen because of the word of “can” actually has the deontic power, but there is an emphasis word “sometimes” is emerging that can be replaced also with the word of “may”. In terms of analysis, mergers are difficult to understand (Vartalla: 114).



### 1.7.3.1.2 Lexical Verbs

Lexical verbs express mitigation, and the author uses this type for reasons to avoid pressure because the information presented may not be accurate. Lexical verbs have two types that are epistemic judgment verbs, and epistemic evidential.

- a) **Epistemic Judgment Verb** has a speculative level (tentative assessment) and deductive (refers to the speculative which has drawn conclusion). These words that indicating epistemic judgment verbs *propose, suggest, although suggested, it has not been demonstrated, believe, speculate, suspect, calculate etc.* Example:

- (1) We *believe* that the major organizational principle of thylakoids is....
- (2) We *conclude* that the fluorescence quenching seen....

(Hyland,1998:122)

Data (1) indicates a speculation on a particular phenomenon, while the data (2) are the result of deduction where the writer concludes the reasons of a proposition. Deduction can be called as a conclusion.

- b) **Epistemic Evidential** refers to literature evidence such as quotative (which refers to the report, and note such as *(X) states, says, (X) explains that ...*), sensory (referring to the responses and understand as *seems, indicate, appeared etc.*), and the narrator (refers to the objectives of the study with the results achieved as word of *attempt, seek etc.*) Example:

- (3) *Jofuku et al (1989) deduce that....*
- (4) The hypothesis *seems* plausible because.....
- (5) In these FTIR studies we *attempt to gain insight* into the.....

(Hyland, 1998:124)

Data (3) is part of the epistemic evidential which refers to quotative, because the author refers to previous findings. It can be the speculative and deductive. In addition, the data (4) refers to the category of sensory which refers to the response and understanding. Then the data (5) is part of the narrator in which the author



wants to explain the data further, but he hedges the word “attempt” to clarify the reader.

### 1.7.3.1.3 Epistemic Adjectives

Epistemic adjectives marking the information presented as uncertainty, tentative, or not quite precise (Vartalla, 2001: 134). Epistemic adjectives used to express a degree of variation (adjective of an indefinite degree) as said *most*, *primary*, *etc.* Example:

- (1) In most case, that *significant* interaction occurred among....

(Hyland, 1998:131)

In data (1) use terms of *significant* in scientific writing has taken on a technical meaning, If the author does not use hedges on the target, then the writer’s assessment cannot be measured.

### 1.7.3.1.4 Epistemic Adverbs

Epistemic adverbs hedge the actual situation or hedge the accuracy. Epistemic verb has four categories, namely diminisher (referring to the degree of variation as *primarily*, *highly slightly* etc), minimisher (refers to the degree of frequency as *commonly*, *generally*, *often*, *sometimes* etc), certainty (refers to the certainty and doubt as word of *probability*, *likely*, *etc.*), and sense (refers to judgment of the truth such as *essentially*, *potentially* etc.). Example:

- (1) This appearance of kinase activity correlates *quite* well with...  
 (2) Stating was *generally* confined to the vascular tissues....  
 (3) These EGTA clots are *possibly* comprised of...  
 (4) It can be *potentially* regulated....

(Hyland, 1998:135-138)

From the data above, diminisher (1), minimisher (2), certainty (3) and sense (4) has the same function, the authors are not sure of the claim. The authors do not explicitly declare the arguments presented, it avoids criticism of the reader.



### 1.7.3.1.5 Epistemic Nouns

Vartalla (2001:139) explains that epistemic noun characterized by tentative component or indefinite meaning that makes them useful for hedging purposes. Epistemic nouns divided into three types, the first type is *nonfactive assertive nouns* (e.g. *allegation, contention, proposal, suggestion*) can be used to convey different degrees of tentativeness in reporting findings and writer's view. Example:

- (1) The studies employing survey data usually fail to find evidence supporting the *claim* of relining...
- (2) In order to investigate the *proposition* that perception of the current practice....

(Vartalla, 2001: 140)

The second is *tentative cognition nouns* (e.g. *assumption, belief, estimation, guess, and hypothesis*) which refer to the rationale, subjective views, or limited knowledge of author.

- (3) *Estimates* of absolute numbers the lymphocyte....
- (4) Accordingly, this *notion* was tested in vitro by comparing....

(Vartalla, 2001:142)

The third is *nouns of tentative likelihood* (e.g. *likelihood, prospect*) which indicate degrees of probability.

- (5) Using *probability* models similar to those employed in speech...
- (6) Another *possibility* is related to the personality...

(Vartalla, 2001:143)

### 1.7.3.2 Non-Lexical Hedges

Non-lexical hedges refer to the analysis of clausal elements (non-lexical). In non-lexical hedges there are four types of hedges that discussed, namely *reference*





*to limited knowledge, reference to limitation of model, theory or method, harmonic combination, and other non-lexical hedges.*

#### 1.7.3.2.1 Reference to Limited Knowledge

This category refers to judging claims to know how much confidence the author by knowing knowledge such as the use of the word “know” and “do not know”. It means that this category conditionally distinguishing between true statements and speculative possibilities (Hyland, 1998: 142). Example:

- (1) *We do not know* whether such a week temperature.....
- (2) *We know that* UV-A is.....

(Hyland, 1998:142)

#### 1.7.3.2.2 Reference to Limitation of Model, Theory or Method

This category refers to limiting the full responsibility of the imperfections in the model of research, theory and methods (Hyland, 1998: 143). Example:

- (1) Based on and consistent with the model above....

(Hyland, 1998:144)

The data (1) above refers to theoretical models which is actually like a show or clarify a particular phenomenon.

#### 1.7.3.2.3 Harmonic Combination

This category is often referred to as compound hedges, which describe the combination of modal verbs with other types of modal that express the same level. Harmonic combination has three categories, namely single cluster (refer to one form of modality such as *may* and *possible*; *may*, and *probably* etc), multiple hedges (refer to the two forms of the type of hedges like *sometimes* and *can*, *if* and *can* etc), triple hedges (refer to three types of hedges such forms *can*, *conclude*, and *sometime*, *should*, *know*, and *if* etc.). From the use of these types indicate the author avoids personal responsibility on the validity of proposition. Example:



- (1) It *can possible* for us....
- (2) It now *seems possible* that the oxygen.....
- (3) Thus, *if this scenario is correct*, phytochromes A and B *would appear* to have.....

(Hyland, 1998:151)

The data (1) showed single cluster inter-modal verbs (*can* and *possible*), while the data (2) indicated multiple hedges by showing lexical verbs (*seems*) and modal verbs (*possible*), and then the data (3) showed triple hedges by indicating the reference to limitations of knowledge (*if*), modal verbs (*would*), and lexical verbs (*appear*).

#### 1.7.3.2.4 Other Non-Lexical Hedges

In this hedging strategy, the researcher usually makes his claim upon the assumption of a personality that he or she considers to be an expert in the area of study. This non-lexical form usually begins with the phrase “according to” (Musa, 2014:68). Example:

- (1) *According to Raskin and Weiser (1987: 201)*,...
- (2) *According to Schwartz (1973)*,...

(Musa, 2014: 68)

#### 1.7.4 Hedges in EFL Learners

According to Hyland (1998: 218) hedges devices are complex for novice writers for a number reason. It means that the novice writer indicated to EFL writer. Hyland continue that the main difficulty is the fact they can simultaneously convey a range of different meanings, not only signaling the writer’s confidence in the truth of referential information, but also contributing to a relationship with the reader. Therefore, they find it difficult to communicate.

Hyland (ibid) as cited in Skelton (1988a) and Bloor and Bloor (1991) observe that direct and qualified writing is more typical of EFL learner than native speakers, even of poor adult writers. But, Hyland (1998: 220) also as cited in Hinkel (1997) found that the essays of American, Korean, Japanese, Chinese, and Indonesian student differed in their use of some indirectness markers but no



others, demonstrating that perceptions of Asian students' writing as vague and indirect is only partially justified. Hence, Hyland (1998: 219) also said it is influenced by scientific culture, as in the use of hedges in many researchers say that the use of hedges may occur from L1 transfer.

## 1.8 The Methodology of the Research

In this section, the researcher would arrange methodology of the research in this study. Some of which are as follows:

### 1.8.1 The Time of the Research

MONTH	May				June				July				August		
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3
Collecting the data	■	■													
Analysis Undergraduate Thesis 1			■	■	■	■									
Analysis Undergraduate Thesis 2						■	■	■							
Analysis Undergraduate Thesis 3									■	■					
Finishing thesis writing											■	■			
Thesis Examination and Thesis Revision													■	■	■



### 1.8.2 The Source of the Data

The researcher uses document analysis to analyze the data. Therefore, the source of the data refers to the primary data.

#### 1) Primary Data

According to Ary (2010: 467), primary sources are original documents (correspondence, diaries, reports, etc.), relics, remains, or artifacts. Therefore, primary data of this research is undergraduate thesis of undergraduate students at IAIN Syekh Nurjati Cirebon. Selection of the data is taken by stratified purposeful sampling based on the high, medium, and low scores. In this research, the researcher selects the type of hedges based on the frequency of their writing and see interaction management that are used by the students.

#### 2) Secondary Data

The researcher also uses another data source to get deeper understanding dealing with the field of the research. The secondary sources are acquired in books such as: “*Hedging in Research Articles*” written by Ken Hyland and “*Metadiscourse in L1 and L2 English*” written by Annelie Ädel, journal and website.

### 1.8.3 Research Method

This research uses qualitative research. The method of research in the form of data collection is referred to as content analysis (Ary, et al, 2010:443). The method is used to analyze and identify respondents who used types of hedges in the undergraduate thesis. This present research indicates the content analysis approach because the material used is to collect data from IAIN students who had graduated from the start in 2015 and identify then explain the hedges choice. It must be concluded that “content analysis is a technique that enables researchers to study human behavior in an indirect way, through an analysis of their communications. It is just what its name implies: the analysis of the usually, but not necessarily, written contents of a communication” (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009:472).





#### 1.8.4 The Research Design

This research uses qualitative research approach as the method of research in identifying the types of hedges that are used by students at IAIN Syekh Nurjati Cirebon. The researcher who uses qualitative research helps to understand the study to be studied, by explaining the importance of the research conducted, how the translation of research results (Ary et al, 2009: 586). Therefore, this research aims to identify the types of hedges are chosen by students IAIN Syekh Nurjati Cirebon related to interpersonal meaning of the writer.

In identifying the types of hedges used by EFL learners at IAIN Syekh Nurjati Cirebon, this research uses Hyland's taxonomy. Hyland's taxonomy is at its most valuable in summarizing the major functions that hedges may have in the context of race (Varttala, 2001: 90). As Hyland (1998: 10) in the objectives and methodology are carried out by him is about the writer's attitude, therefore, the selection of this method is very suitable for use in this current study. Varttala (2001:77) also said that the approach is taken by Hyland to describe sociopragmatic of hedging devices using discourse communities. So, Hyland's taxonomy helps to identify what types of hedges used in EFL learner IAIN Syekh Nurjati Cirebon.

#### 1.8.5 Research Setting

The object of research is held in the English Language Teaching Department IAIN Syekh Nurjati Cirebon. The place has become a main research, because the place is appropriate with the phenomenon of this research related to problems in undergraduate thesis at this institute. In accordance with the opinion of Ary et, al. (2009: 424) "qualitative inquiry takes place in the field, in settings as they are found". Looking at the phenomenon occurs, students in the English Language Teaching Department failed in many undergraduate thesis writing. This can happen because they are less able to write undergraduate thesis with communicative. By looking at the phenomenon that occurs, may be able to support this research.

Essentially, there are some basic reasons to take the research in this institute. Firstly, students who had last grade from the end in English Language



Teaching Department many unfinished in undergraduate thesis writing so that many of those who participated in the lower classes (6<sup>th</sup> grade) to complete. Secondly, to investigate the reasons students in IAIN as the data source, the time and cost that support for this research. This study has been considered previously, on time and cost, because this place is where the researcher also studied at this institution. Ary et al (2009: 584) also said that researchers should consider the cost in order to continue the research.

### 1.8.6 Participants

These data are taken by the researcher, selecting three undergraduate theses. The third data is taken by using a “stratified purposeful sampling”. By that sampling, the researcher would classify them based on the type of undergraduate thesis at a different grade of high, medium, and low score. Therefore, undergraduate Thesis is taken by researcher that belong to Dikdik Ahmad Fuadi (DAF) which has a score of A (95.75), Muhammad Solukhi (MS) who has a score of B (84.625), and Ade Irna (AI), which has a score of B- (79.9375) (*see Appendix 2*).

Ary et al (2009: 430) defined that “stratified purposeful sampling attempts to ensure that subgroups are represented so that comparisons can be facilitated”. So, from the three undergraduate theses can be seen whether the high grade uses a lot of hedges so easily understood, or conversely, a medium-grade uses little hedges so that they writing sometimes is not understood. This is taken based on the consideration that can be varied research resulted in the discovery/ varying results as well. This is because as what Ary et al (2009: 494) says that “convey the qualitative reports of participants’ thoughts, feeling, and experience in reviews their own words as much as possible.” Therefore, it is not strange if various kinds of students take some of their samples for interesting results.

### 1.8.7 Data Selection

The researcher decided to use the introduction section for data selection of analysis for two reasons according to Hyland (1998: 26). Firstly, in structure of introduction section clearly demonstrates its rhetorical role. Researcher believes



that in the Introduction section, the author does not only express a problem to be solved, but it builds interest and contributions in the area of the field. Writer distributes her linguistic stating the claim, introduces a topic, and builds a gap this proves that the introduction section deserves to be part of the undergraduate thesis, which should be investigated. In fact, Hyland (1999) asserted that the introduction section of an undergraduate thesis is heavily hedged.

Secondly, investigating the introduction put us in the position to analyze the background to the research. The background of a thesis usually presents a bigger framework that underlies the undertaking of the research, which includes the contexts, reasons, and purposes of the study.

### 1.9 Research Systematicity

In conducting the present study, the researcher adopts the theory of Lodico (2010: 160) in doing the method of qualitative research, there are nine methods are used:

#### 1.9.1 Steps of Research

##### 1) *Identify a Research Topic or Focus*

Topic is typically identified by the researcher based on experience, observation in the research settings, and readings on the topic.

##### 2) *Conduct a Review of Literature*

The researcher reviews the literature to identify information relevant to the study, establish a theoretical framework, and write a research question.

##### 3) *Define the Role of Researcher*

The researcher must decide to what degree she or he will become involved with the participants (high, medium and low score).

##### 4) *Manage Entry Into the Field and Maintain Good Field Relations*

The researcher has clearly defined the research topic or focus, a field of study (for example, a place to conduct the research) must be identified and contacts made to secure permission for the study.

##### 5) *Write Qualitative Sub-questions*



Qualitative sub-questions are designed by the researcher and are based on the topic or research questions identified both at the start of the study and as the study progresses.

6) *Select Participants*

Participants for qualitative research are selected through stratified purposeful sampling.

7) *Collect the Data*

Data collection in qualitative research generally includes document analyses.

8) *Analyze and Interpret the Data*

Data analysis and interpretation are continuous throughout the study, so that insights gained in initial data analysis can guide future data collection.

9) *Disseminate Results*

The researcher shares the findings with other professionals through journals, reports, web sites, and presentations at formal and informal meetings.

### 1.9.2 Technique and instrument of collecting data

In the present research, the researcher uses document analysis as a technique collecting data and the researcher herself as an instrument.

#### 1.9.2.1 Technique

In qualitative research, the use of document analysis techniques to collect data is the best way. This leads researcher to know what they are going to analyze, Lodico et al (2010: 37) says that “a researcher who clearly knows the setting, culture, and the participants gathers this information by using interviews, observations, and some document analyses.” In this current research, participants produce the undergraduate thesis as document. Document analysis may provide a way of gaining access to, for example, a set of events or processes, which you cannot observe (for example, because they have already occurred, because they take place in private) without recourse to verbal descriptions and reconstructions





(Mason, 2002: 108). In this research, documentation is the right thing by taking the data as research documents such as analysis of undergraduate theses.

### 1.9.2.2 Instrument

In qualitative research, the instrument used is a researcher herself. “It is important that the writer give some personal or professional information about him-or herself that might be relevant to the inquiry” (Ary, et al, 2009: 492). Researcher uses Hyland’s taxonomy to see the extent to which the participant to apply the type of hedges are used, through the taxonomy researcher also explains the relationship hedges with interpersonal meaning. The researcher use documentation as technique of collecting data in order to get more valid data.

### 1.9.3 Technique of Analysis Data

The main objectives of the current research are to identify and classify hedges in two undergraduate theses. Another objective to analyze the types of hedges is to describe whether the choice of hedges related to the interpersonal meaning, as Hyland (1998: 14) argues that “an academic hedging thus requires an understanding of how the features of scientific discourse represent and produce disciplinary practice, while contributing to situated forms of argument.” Therefore, this study hopes to provide overview EFL learners in IAIN Syekh Nurjati Cirebon how they have communicative sense in making undergraduate thesis.

By looking the approach in research design through data collection, the technique used to analyze the content is coding. Ary, et al (2009: 454) also says that a powerful way to analyze the data in qualitative research by the coding and looking for recurring themes. Then, Lodico (2010: 35) says that coding involves the examination of the data to look for patterns, themes, or categories that emerge from the data. There are three types of coding in grounded theory for this present research, open coding, axial coding and selective coding. The three types of this coding is combined to give an overview on the data to be analyzed, many researchers refer to using this combination. Ary, et al (2009: 531) describes the coding technique with “the researcher breaks down and categorizes the data into manageable segments (open coding). Then, the researcher puts the data back



together again, making connections among and across categories (axial coding). Sometimes, the researcher has a clear and selective focus is systematically reviewing the data for that specific category (selective coding)". It hopes that using the combination of the three kind questioners could answer the both research questions in hedges choices.

With the purpose of the analysis, the data is collected to be described, classified, and interpreted. In this way, it also refers to a data analysis spiral. Ary et al (2009: 481) as cited in Creswell (2007) says that there are three levels in the approach to analyzing qualitative data, namely: (1) organizing and familiarizing, (2) coding and reducing, and (3) interpreting and representing.

*Stages of Qualitative Data Analysis by Ary, et al (2009:482)*

Stage	Creswell (2007)
Organizing and Familiarizing	Data managing/Reading
Coding and Reducing	Describing
Interpreting and Representing	Classifying interpreting & Representing visualizing.

The use of the analysis is expected to make important contributions in the classification of hedges in undergraduate thesis. Ary also continued that the data analysis and coding used in qualitative, therefore frame the codes have units, categories, and themes (Ary, et al, 2009: 490). Then, this research offers a coding to provide an overview coding of hedges in undergraduate thesis. Here are the codings:

CODING	
Code	Category
Paragraph	P
Sentence	S
Dikdik Ahamd Fuadi	DAF
Muhammad Solukhi	MS
Ade Irna	AI



Modal Verbs	MV
Epistemic Judgment Verbs	EJV
Epistemic Evidential	EE
Epistemic Adjectives	Ep.Adj.
Epistemic Adverbs	Ep.Adv.
Reference to Limited Knowledge	RLK
Reference to Limitation of Model, Theory, or Method	RLMTM
Harmonic Combinations	HC
Other Lexical Hedges	OLH

1. Dilarang mengutip sebagian atau seluruh karya tulis ini tanpa mencantumkan dan menyebutkan sumber :
  - a. Pengutipan hanya untuk kepentingan pendidikan, penelitian, penulisan karya ilmiah, penyusunan laporan, penulisan kritik atau tinjauan suatu masalah.
  - b. Pengutipan tidak merugikan kepentingan yang wajar dari Perpustakaan IAIN Syekh Nurjati Cirebon.
2. Dilarang mengumumkan atau memperbanyak karya ilmiah ini dalam bentuk apapun tanpa seijin Perpustakaan IAIN Syekh Nurjati Cirebon.

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