

# **HEDGES AND BOOSTERS IN PRESIDENTIAL DEBATE**

**THESIS**



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HEDGES AND BOOSTERS IN PRESIDENTIAL DEBATE

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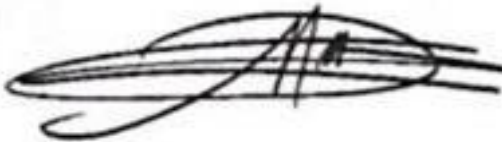
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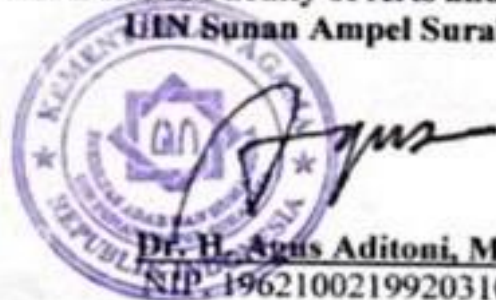
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that they make, reduce dubious claims or potentially claimed risks, and convey the right collegial attitude to listeners. In speaking or in speech, hedges are used to obscure a statement that deemed inappropriate to talk or to give a courtesy effect.

In pragmatics, research on various types of hedges mainly associated with doubt, obscurity, politeness, uncertainty, and indirect. The terms hedge and hedging mostly refer to a large class of lexical and syntactic features of texts that have the purpose of reducing modifying and propositions. In the 1990s, research on hedging emerged to explain the use, meaning, and function of politeness, obscurity, and mitigation in academic writing and other types of discourse (Hinkel, 2005). The concept of a hedges does not only include modifying words or phrases in proposition but also changing of commitment someone to the propositional value, several researchers have begun to think it is necessary to distinguish between the two types of hedges. Writers assert their opinions, judgments, and commitments to the propositional content of the text and their readers via the use of hedges and boosters, modifying the truth values of all proposition. Hedging devices mitigate the force or strength of expression by expressing temporary nature and potential.

In contrast, boosters, increasing strength in speech or utterance, and make more reliable statements. Boosters reflect on features that express the writer's strong confidence for a claim and assurance and affirms a proposition with confidence (Zarza, 2018). Based on Hyland (1998) argue that boosters used to express faith, and confirm a proposition with conviction, represent strong claims about circumstances. Boosters identified as writing and conversation discourse

features that have the function to strengthen or enhance the effect of a sentence or whole proposition. In discourse, it has the functions of exaggerating the real state of affairs, reinforcing the truth value of propositions, or emphasizing section or all of the class (Hinkel, 2005). Besides that, these linguistic devices are significant phenomena in the construction of rhetorical style. The part of the rhetorical elements is used by scholars to achieve their communicative goals (Varquez & Giner, 2009).

Many investigators have recently turned to analyze hedges and boosters. It is because hedges and boosters are a critical interactional strategy used in communicating; this strategy can make communication run effectively. Both are also essential in academic discourse to lie in their contribution to a suitable rhetorical and interactive way, delivering active and epistemic meanings. These two linguistic tools can express positive politeness by making the listener's face positive, assuring agreement with the listener, their commitment and admiration with a statement. Otherwise, the use of negative politeness directed towards the hearer's negative face; by emphasizing avoidance to impose on him or her to minimize awkwardness or embarrassment (Granqvist, 2013).

There are some previous studies of boosters and hedges with a different subject. The first is in academics writing such as using of boosters persuasion in academic discourse (Vazquez & Giner, 2009), a corpus-based analysis of boosters and hedges in English academic articles (Takimoto, 2014), comparison of hedges in Ph.D. dissertation and M.A thesis in ELT (Atmaca, 2016), boosting and hedging in the rhetorical structure of English newspaper (Zarza, 2018). On the

other hand, hedges and boosters in academics writing have been extensively studied in Indonesia, such as boosters and hedges in research articles of undergraduate students (Salichah, Irawati, & Basthomi, 2015), hedges used by Indonesian ELT students in spoken and written discourse (Asfina, Kadarisman & Astuti, 2018), hedges used in scientific EFL writing (Widiawati, 2018) and hedging in students research proposal of the English Teacher Education Department UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya (Hani'ah, 2019).

Besides hedges and boosters in written discourse, there are several previous studies analyzed hedges and boosters in political discourse. Rashady (2012), using hedges in both American presidents 2008, the researcher analyzed three videos of presidential debates between John McCain and Barack Obama. The researcher focused on investigating how hedging devices functioned as a political discourse strategy based on Meyer, Hyland, and Martin-Martin's theory. He discovered that hedging devices present different functions hang on the purpose or motive of the speaker. The frequency of use specific hedges devices shows to promote the effectiveness of a speaker's argument significantly. As claimed by Rashady's research, the most hedges used in the debates is a modal auxiliary verb. He stated that the speakers used the modal auxiliary verb very well. They can differentiate between points they mostly fixed, and least set and needed when they speak about their plans for their country, America.

Then, Rabab'ah and Ruman (2015) analyzed hedges in the speeches of King Abdullah II of Jordan. They analyzed twenty-five speech of King Abdullah II randomly, as the result of this study that King Abdullah II mainly used hedges

device in his speech, that is modal auxiliary, the word is "can." In this research, they used theory-based Meyer's (1997) taxonomy. Based on this research, the researcher concludes whether that is the second language. Politicians always use hedges as their rhetorical devices to perform the rhetorical function and various pragmatics. In this speech of King Abdulla II of Jordan contains five features of hedges, such as express politeness, mitigate claims, express a lack of full commitment to their proposition, and so on. However, this study is merely focused on hedges.

The persuasive device in Geroge Ridpath's written by Fernandez and Campillo (2012), the researchers analyzed hedges and booster. This study took in written discourse that is in political writing from a journalist, George Ridpath, who could influence public opinion and be good at rhetoric. The researchers put eight-volume samples to analyze. The researchers argue that boosters and hedges are critical devices in the construction of George Ridpath's rhetorical style. The results of this study indicate that hedges and boosters in Ridpath's political writings play an essential role in shaping public opinion, moving the mind and heart, when disseminating information and ideas is highly dependent on pamphlets, newspapers, and magazines.

Hidayati and Dalyono write further research (2015) they analyzed the used and function of hedges and boosters in the speeches of three Indonesian ministers, Hatta Radjasa, Jero Wacik, Armida Alisjahbana based on Hyland (1998) theory. The speeches are about government policy regarding rising fuel prices. The most hedges and booster used by the minister is adverb and modality. This study show



hedges and boosters only used in two ministers that are in Armida Alisjahbana and Hatta Radjasa, then Jero Wacik did not use hedges and boosters at all in his speech. Based on the research, the most frequently used hedges for their speech is Armida Alisjahbana, and the most commonly used booster in this speech is Hatta Radjasa. From the explanation, there are functions of hedges and boosters in the statement, and there are still some functions that did not include in the data.

The last comes from Mentari (2018), who analyzed hedges in the debate which used Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump's first presidential debate. In this study, she investigated the types and functions of hedges in those speeches. To analyze Clinton and Trump's first presidential debate, she used the theory of types hedges based on Salager Meyer (1997) and the theory of function hedges by Rabab'ah and Rumman (2015). Besides that, she also aimed to provide more knowledge about hedges in politics and to give a contribution to some parties such as lecturers, students, other researchers, and people in general references to improve knowledge about hedges. However, in that study, she only explains to students, other researchers, and people in public without giving an example about hedges to the lecturers.

Based on the previous studies above, the researcher concludes that many previous studies analyzed about hedges and boosters focused on written discourse, such as research articles or research proposal. Besides that, there are also several studies analyzed hedges and boosters in spoken discourse, particularly in politics. Only a few types of research of hedges and boosters analyze the presidential debate. It might come the same as Mentari (2018), who also analyzed presidential

debate, but she only focused on hedges without analyzing boosters, and her topic is different from this study. However, no research conducted an analysis of hedges and boosters in the second and third presidential debates between Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump. The third presidential debate had been the last Trump-Clinton presidential debate, as well. The second presidential debate is quite different from the first or third or final debate. In the second debate forum, the audience joined in the debate. However, only a handful of spectators chosen, and they could immediately ask questions for their presidential candidates and were quickly answered spontaneously by them alternately within only two minutes.

Thus, this present research will take hedges and booster in Trump-Clinton's second and third presidential debates. It aimed to investigate types of hedges and boosters use by Trump and Clinton in the second and third presidential debate also to examine the function of hedges and boosters use by Trump and Clinton in the second and third presidential debate based on the theory of Salager-meyer (1997), Rabab'ah and Rumman (2015) and Hinkel (2005). Besides that, research about hedges and boosters in political discourse is significant because boosters and hedges are devices that are frequently used by politicians to articulate their arguments or speech to the public. By exploring hedges and boosters, the researcher is in a place to express the mask of linguistic politicians that they can represent the "actual" political message conveyed by politicians to the public (Hidayati & Dallyono, 2018).

Therefore, the researcher analyzes hedges and boosters in politics, especially in presidential debates between Trump and Clinton. Generally,





































































## Datum 14

Hillary: "These are very important values to me because this is the America that I know and love, And I **can** pledge to you tonight that this is the America that will serve if I'm so fortunate enough to become your president." [11.02]

Based on the example above shows hedges modal auxiliary verbs. The use of "*can*" in Hillary's statement when arguing with Trump, softened the strength of her speech. If there is no "*can*," it will make her promise to serve America accurately. Therefore, the word hedges can help the statement not too overstated. The utterance above shows a kind of uncertainty, which Hillary softens her claim when she promises to serve America well.

## Datum 15

Hillary: "I have a plan that has been analyzed by independent experts who said that it could produce 10 million new jobs. By contrast, Donald's plan has been analyzed to conclude it **might** lose jobs." [39.15]

The moderator asked the presidential candidate about creating jobs and the growth of the American nation. The utterance above is Hillary's answer, which she uses the form of hedges "*might*" it means there is a lack of confidence or doubt in her statement that says Donald's plan to lose the job. Hillary's words are not strong enough with the use of hedges in them. Therefore, Hillary reduces her claim by showing this form of uncertainty.

## Datum 16

Hillary: "That's what my mission **will be** in the presidency. I **will** stand up for families against powerful interests against corporations. I **will** do everything that I can to make sure that you have good jobs with rising incomes, that your kids have good educations from preschool through college." [01.34.37]









































## Datum 41

Trump: “And irredeemable. I **will** be president for all of our people. And I **will** be a people that will turn our inner cities around and will give strength to people and will give economics to people and will bring jobs back.”  
[01.09.54]

Based on the example above, the function of Trump's utterance is avoiding direct criticism, mainly when predicting the future. In the statement, "*I will be a president for all of our people. And I will be a people that will turn our inner...*" he uses modal auxiliary verbs "*will*" when he argues about to be the next president in the future. Here, his function uses a form of hedges "will" to reduce criticism because the prediction of the future is not yet specific. Political speeches, especially those delivered before the election, discuss many future predictions.

## 4.1.3.1.5 Requesting The Listeners' Involvement

According to Rabab'ah and Ruman (2015), hedges devices that used to implicate listeners in what speakers are talking about, like introductory phrases. Such methods include *we feel that you know it, we know, etc.* That is because only this characteristic approves the speaker to invite the listeners into the statement conveyed since introductory phrases made up two linguistic units, namely pronoun and verb.

## Datum 42

Trump: “Obamacare is a disaster. **You know** it, **we know** it. It's going up at numbers that nobody's ever seen, worldwide.” [27.37]

Some hedges, such as introductory phrases are used to listen to what the speaker is talking about. Like "*we know,*" "*you believe,*" et cetera. As shown in the datum above, which is the utterance from Trump that uses introductory phrases,

























verbs, while Trump is only 87 times using it. Both of them use hedges when the rhetoric in the debate presidential. As Salager-Meyer (1997) suggests, hedges modal auxiliary verbs are more widely used. By using modal auxiliary verbs, it means to show the lack of knowledge, help to avoid direct criticism and uncertainty. On the other hand, the finding revealed that modal lexical verbs are the lowest frequency used of hedges. There are only seven modal lexical verbs in the second and third presidential debates.

Moreover, the second question is the types of boosters used by the two candidates during the first and second debates. The researchers found all three types of boosters in the rhetoric of both candidates. The results show types of universal and negative pronouns 63 times, amplifiers 79 times, emphatics 42 times. In contrast, Hillary Clinton has universal and negative pronouns 47 times, amplifiers 58 times, and emphatics only 27 times. Then, the researchers concluded that Trump used the booster more frequently in his utilities than Hillary Clinton. As Basthomi., et al., (2015) boosters as a term of those lexical items employing which the speakers or writers can provide strong confidence for an assertion to their arguments.

Besides, the functions of hedges and booster used by the two candidates in the third question have been answered. The hedges function of the two candidates is not too contrasting where there are five of the hedges functions. Both candidates use hedges in rhetoric that serves to mitigate claims by showing some kind of uncertainty, expressing a lack of full commitment, expressing politics and searching for being accepted to the listener that might be contrasting, avoiding





for reducing or increasing the strength of representations. Audiences can pay attention to the actual messages delivered by presidential debates.

However, the use of boosters is more influential than hedges, especially in the pre-debate debate. the more use of boosters in rhetoric emphasizes information that can persuade audiences. Boosters also create direct engagement with audiences. Therefore, using boosters is more effective in winning debates, especially presidential debates. Based on the findings, Trump uses more boosters in the debates, and he has won the presidential debates. So, the researcher concludes that Donald Trump is easier to captivate the audience's voice by using boosters in his debate. He uses boosters to express confidence to share information and reinforce the truth value of propositions. Besides that, boosters are a significant phenomenon in the construction of rhetorical style. Therefore, the audiences are more confident with Trump's words than Hillary, and Trump has more votes in the election. Donald Trump wins and becomes the current president.

Based on the findings above, the researcher tends to compare the present study with the previous study. The first study is from Hidayati and Dalyono (2015). They analyzed the use and function of hedges and boosters in the speeches of three Indonesian ministers about government policy regarding rising fuel prices. However, not all three ministers have booster and hedges, and there is one minister who does not use this device at all, it shows that the data is still incomplete. While, in this present research, all the data contained hedges and boosters. On the other hand, Fernandez and Campillo (2012) analyzed hedges and booster in political writing from a journalist, George Ridpath. The researchers put

eight-volume samples to be analyzed. However, this research does not explain in more detail the nominal or the amount of difference between hedges and boosters that are used by Ridpath. While, in this present analysis, the researcher explains the nominal details of the differences in hedges and boosters used by the two presidential candidates and shows the type or function of these devices that are most often used.

The researcher includes the contributions of this research about hedges and boosters in political discourse is important. Because boosters and hedges are devices that are frequently used by politicians to articulate their arguments or speech to the public. By exploring hedges and boosters, the researcher is in a place to express the mask of linguistic politicians so they can express the “actual” political message conveyed by politicians to the public, and people may pay attention to the messages delivered by presidential candidates. While in society, we can pay attention to the ethics of communication when using hedges and boosters.

Furthermore, this present research relates to communication ethics in the Qur'an. The ethics of Islamic communication is a guide for Muslims in conducting communication, both in intrapersonal, interpersonal communication in daily interactions, preaching verbally and in writing, as well as in other activities. In various literature on Islamic communication, we can find at least six types of speech or talk styles (*qaulan*) which are categorized as rules, principles, or ethics of Islamic communication, namely:













times. Here is the most frequent hedges function during the presidential debate. Then, the function of expressing politeness and searching for being accepted in Hillary's hedges function as much 87 times and Trump 74 times. Next, Hillary 35 times while Trump 27 times uses the function of avoiding direct criticism. In the function of expressing a lack of full commitment used by Hillary 22 times, and Trump is 27 times. The latest, requesting listener's involvement is the lowest frequency of function of hedges.

Moreover, there is three function booster in both of presidential candidate, those are exaggeration and inflate impression, as amplifiers and as emphatics. Function booster as amplifiers is the most frequently used by both candidates, which is Trump used 79 times while Hillary 58 times. In the function of exaggeration and inflated impression, Hillary used 47 times and Trump 63 times. Last, function booster as emphatics by Trump is 42 times while Hillary only 27 times.

The result in the second and third debate between Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump, which tends to use more hedges when arguing during all debate, is Hillary Clinton as much as 255 times. She tends to use hedges when delivering her rhetoric, and she manages to provide uncertainty proposition and softening her statement to avoiding direct criticism. While Donald Trump only uses 225 times hedges in the presidential debate. On the other hand, the one who tends to use boosters during the debate is Donald Trump. He is using boosters as much as 184 times to expressing conviction and affirm a proposition with confidence, shows a





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