

Hedging System Of Modal Auxiliary On English As Foreign Language (EFL) Journal Papers

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Abstract

The study of hedging phenomenon is updating, indicating that the essence and interest take the attention among the researchers especially in the researchers from Indonesia. This research aimed to examine hedging system of modal auxiliary on English as Foreign Language (EFL) research papers. The present study investigated hedges system of research papers from the fields of EFL journal papers. It comprised 15 articles written by Indonesian writer-researchers taken from TEFLIN. The papers uploaded to lancsbox 6.0, corpus software. The analysis is not relied on the software only, but also manual checked to see the context in measuring the hedging. This study Applied quantitative method, the data analysis reveals major results. The results show that EFL researchers utilized more hedges by 64 pttw. Hedges employed in the form of Modal auxiliary appeared as the most frequent hedge occurred in discipline. To conclude, EFL researchers of Indonesia is employing hedges to accommodate the claims.

Keywords: *EFL, Hedges, Journal Papers, Modal Auxiliaries*

INTRODUCTION

Academic writing is characterized by the objective representation of knowledge, where authors try to place his/her new scientific work into the existing bulk of the research, drawing on interpersonal and ideational resources. However, it has been universally accepted, that communicating new knowledge in a genre (e.g., of the research article) meets the requirements of a disciplinary discourse and its readership is a complex task (Livytska, 2019).

The investigation of hedging in academic writing has been massively growing, the study of hedging phenomenon is updating, indicating that the essence and interest take the attention among the researcher. Lakoff stated that "words whose job is to make things fuzzier or less fuzzy". Employing the hedging is handling the level of certainty in a statement (Lakoff, 1973). In another words, hedging is the words that used to make an argument less definite. We may think about the words perhaps, probably, almost, and so on, which can be categorized as hedging. The way to give the stance contributes to the position of the authors (Abdollahzadeh 2011; Hyland, 2012; Geyer-Klingenberg et al. 2018; Mercer, Marco, and Kroon 2004; Thiebach, Mayweg-Paus, and Jucks 2015; Uysal 2014) One of them is to soften the claim. This technique plays a pivotal role as it makes distance between the writer who did the research (writer researchers) and absoluteness of the claim, advocating the flexibility to promote a claim without making it as categorical ones (Kotnarowski, 2015). Therefore, the variety of hedges incidence is worth to take into account in this present study. Using EFL papers as soft science to be compared to harder science like Medicine, the hedge phenomenon is important to investigate to figure out whether all soft sciences are the same in terms of hedging.

Researchers present their work in the form of journal articles. It is required to write academically including in delivering a claim. In a research paper, the writer can convince the reader to accept their research by emphasizing their confidence of the work in the form of booster. Yet, It is also essential to know how to put the claim on a paper to give the audience or the reader space for a discussion. This can be applied by using language strategy. Therefore, it is required to apply hedge in an academic writing to moderate the claim.

There are some studies conducted in relation to the use of hedging in social interaction both in ESL and EFL contexts. These studies revolve around the importance of maintaining solid communication by maintaining the use of proper hedging according the existing norms of society. To begin with, a study of Salichah et al (2015), explored the use of Hedges and Booster in Undergraduate Students' Research Articles (Indonesian students) in one field namely English department. Wang and Tatiana investigated the hedging in applied linguistics and EFL journal papers (750 research articles of 15 leading journals) using WordSmith tools 5,0 with 4. 831. 500 running words (Wang, S. P., & Tatiana, 2016). Then result of study show that Anglo-American writers, however, prevail over their use of hedging devices, being consistent with the findings of

previous analogous research (Varsanis, 2020).

Then results showed that modal auxiliaries are the most frequently used in the corpus. Epistemic verbs of can, would, and may were the most frequently used ones for both groups of writers (Abdollahzadeh, 2011). The results of the study showed that the discussion parts of Applied Linguistics research papers written by male and female native English research writers were more hedged than those written by their Iranian counterparts (Weisi & Asakereh, 2020). Results of the study indicate that reader-oriented hedges constitute the main pragmatic type of hedges in RAs in the field of applied linguistics, recognizing the need for reader's ratification of the author's claims and politeness conventions of academic discourse per se (Livvytska, 2019).

To conclude, the studies above resulted those different fields and nativity showed different incidence of hedge. This present study focused on Indonesian writer-researchers to explore more about Indonesian familiarity of hedge and to discover phenomenon of hedge usage in different fields.

Analyzing on how writer-researchers employ hedge in their work is paramount. It appears beneficial to figure out the variety in delivering a claim and to examine the familiarity towards hedge of Indonesian researchers. Comprehending the proper use of hedging could help the academic practitioners especially Indonesian as Non-Native speaker of English. The fruitful of this study would be gained both teacher of academic writing to design the materials and students to be more aware and practical in employing hedges to place their claims in suitable way. Avoiding widen research and unlimited investigation, it is necessary to scope the topic examined. The limitation to some points, as follow by discipline, this research is educational research specifically under the topic of academic writing and by object, the focus of this study is addressed to Indonesian writer- researchers' papers in international journal publications in fields of EFL and Medicine. The analysis used Hyland's hedges (Hyland et al, 2012).

Finally, the study of hedging remains worth to conduct especially in terms of Non-Native speaker context, for instance Indonesia. In addition to its unfamiliarity among the students, the study of hedge towards Indonesian researchers' articles is still required to conduct. The result could contribute. In pedagogical implication of academic writing in Indonesia. In addition, investigating the use of hedging in discipline is paramount as well for example EFL papers. As Wang et al (2016) found that the results reveal that modal auxiliary hedging (44.9%) is found more than the other types, while the noun category is the least used (2.17%). However, the use of different syntactic features (personal or impersonal) when combined with epistemic lexical terms appeared to influence different interpretations of lexical hedging mainly regarding the politeness strategy. Therefore, this present study is expected to fill the gap in terms of investigating one discipline namely modal auxiliary in which this social science (EFL discipline) has unique incident.

METHOD

Research Design

This research used quantitative method as an effort to investigate the problem. Where the problem is what underlies the researcher to take data, determine variables and which are then measured by numbers so that analysis can be carried out in accordance with applicable statistical procedures (Creswell 2012; Creswell 2014; Kothari 2019; Kumar 2018; Leavy 2017; Norman K. Denzin 2018). The current research utilizes the paradigm of research design with reference to research tools appropriate according to the goal. As such, corpus-based research.

Sample and Data Collection

The present work uses research articles corpus as the sample. It comprised 15 articles written by Indonesian from English as Foreign Language taken from TEFLIN journal (15 papers) with 111751 of running words.

The research utilized Lancsbox 6,0 (2020), the data obtained from 15 research articles was imported to this software by in the form of PDF. The study used the features in this tool as it gives the complete help to spot the hedge and to analyze the occurrence by using KWIC to see the concordance and double click it to check it manually.

The process to measure hedges in a corpus requires sequence process. The real occurrence would not be the data to put as raw frequency. The manual double check to its context was done. Data was selected through these following steps: (1) Visiting indexed scopus or scimago journal from Indonesia to find Indonesian author easily, (2) Opting EFL journal articles from TEFLIN for EFL category, (3) Identify the nativity based on the author's name and name of university or institutions, (4) Topic is not set except for EFL, not to include research under the theme "hedging/hedge/booster/meta-discourse and modal auxiliary or any related as it can be recorded and counted by software then (5) Inserting to Lancsbox 6,0 (2020).

Analyzing of Data

The data was analyzed using corpus software for the first step. The frequency appeared on the software would necessarily be taken to measure as raw frequency. It is due to the defining of hedge. The software records all the words searched on the provided column. Therefore, it is required the use of whelk to see the word on its context. The data was found by using whelk feature of lancsbox 6,0 and typing the searched words. The words were investigated based on the categories like as modal auxiliary. The data was next copied to Microsoft excel to measure the hedge. The qualified words as hedge were counted and named as raw frequency. The corpora is different in terms of size. It is required to make it balance by normalizing the frequency. There are corpus tools provides normalized frequency or relative frequency automatically but it can be also measure by this following formula by Gries (2020) (per ten thousand words/pttw).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Hedges system of research articles on EFL

Using corpus lunchbox 6, 0 and double checking to its context, the hedges appeared in academic research papers of EFL was investigated. As mentioned before, there is sequence process to measure the raw frequency of the corpora. The occurrences number on software did not necessarily mean the exact frequency due to hedging context. It is impossible to put the occurrence result of software to measure the hedges. As seen in the picture, the word “about” is not always a hedge; the uncertain number or approximation.

All the data on corpora were processed by double checking to its context to ensure the hedging. After done the process, the next is to normalize the raw frequency. Corpora has slightly different numbers of running words. Therefore, the data is not able to process in the form of raw frequency; it is required to be normalized to result proper calculation and the balance. The frequency of hedges was measured per ten thousand words. The data was then categorized namely Modal Auxiliaries.

This following table shows the normalized frequency (NFq) per ten thousand words (pttw) in EFL journals.

Table 1 Overall Hedges Normalized Frequency

Hedges	EFL
Modal auxiliaries	34,8 pttw
Total	34, 8

Based on the table 1 Modal auxiliaries are used 34, 8 times per ten thousand words of EFL papers. It indicated that the use of modal auxiliaries is almost equal in that fields.

After analyzing the normalized frequency, the relative frequency is taken into account as well. This is to measure the percentage of relativity or the possibility occurrence of every category in one corpus (%). This can be described by the following graph in using of EFL papers.

This following table displayed the overall incidence of hedge. It is noticeable that the hedge found in EFL papers in which modal auxiliaries appears as the most frequently category used in that fields namely modal Auxiliaries category.

Distribution of hedge system in research papers of EFL

Although EFL use hedge more frequent in general, there is slightly EFL category. Hedge is one of the features of academic writing. It is used to downtown the claim. Without hedging, all the result of a study might look undiscussed. Hedge in a research paper is required to be employed to advocate the tentativeness in terms of delivering the claims. The present results concerning EFL, then, can be taken as a reflection of such tentativeness, the higher overall incidence of hedging in the EFL research papers apparently often relating to the theoretical uncertainties concerning the discipline.

This present result is in line with Takimoto stated that natural science is “more fact-oriented” and “more-impresional”, therefore it is used fewer hedge for objectivity . While social science and humanities paper can be interpreted more or less abstract. By this nature, it is required hedge to facilitate the tentativeness. In his study, the most common incidences are in category of adjective and adverbs in natural science and noun and verbs in social science. This present study is quite different with Takimoto’s study in which the highest incidence after modal auxiliaries of both corpora are verbs, adverbs, and others in EFL while noun and adjective in Medicine (Takimoto, 2015). Furthermore, apart from the investigation result of the present papers reveals that hedge found on EFL papers, modal auxiliaries appear as the most frequently category used in both fields. In line with other research confirmed that content-oriented hedges able the writers of the research articles both negotiate the precision of their claims and, at the same time, convey a distant attitude to them, showing greater or smaller degree of reliability (Livytska, 2019).

Regarding the nativity, it would not be a proper claim that said modal auxiliaries appears as the most frequent because of the NNS is lack in recognizing the other type of hedge. Another study that supports this present work is the study of Wang and Tatiana investigated linguistics and EFL papers with random authors resulted that modal auxiliary are the most frequent incidence in corpus data. It indicated that modal auxiliaries have interesting phenomenon.

In brief, it can be concluded hedge in form of modal auxiliaries occurred frequently is not based on the discipline nor a nativity. It is also indicated that hedge has its own interesting phenomenon in a certain data that is important to investigate more. In both corpora, there are 9 of modal auxiliaries detected such as can, could, will, would, may, might, should, cannot, must. In this case “can appeared as the highest hedge used in these disciplines. This result in line with the study of Ahmadpour et. al found that can as the most frequent in both NS and NNS of nurse (one discipline). It can be assumed that medical papers (either nurse or medicine) have similarity in using hedge especially the modal auxiliary “can” (Ahmadpour et al., 2017).

Can

Rapport can be built through teacher-student conference as well as occasional ice-breaking activities at the writing period (EFL 10)

From the example above, it shows that instead of saying the claims in from of present tense like as “ we conduct...” or it “navigates” the use of can could soft or express politeness to the audience. Moreover, as mentioned by Hyland (1998) could expressing tentative possibility.

Could

The Internet and digital technology could obviously support these digital natives to acquire new knowledge and skills (EFL 14)

Will, would, must

Hyland stated that will as prediction is similar with must. While would is the predominant means of probability expression in the present time. These words can be used to give prediction and tentativeness from experiment (Hyland, 1996).

A study of Bashir et al that examined will and shall with its function. It resulted that shall is overused while will is the least used hedge. Some of the functions as hedges (conveying a truth value of a proposition) are epistemic meanings: politeness, obligation, precision, duty, intention, and permission. In nutshell, the results indicated that "will" and "shall" are used by legal practitioners more especially lawyers (Bashir et al., 2018).

May

Based on the results of this study, there are some implications that must be highlighted in order to enhance the profession of language teaching in higher education (EFL 13)

Might

Thus, it might be argued that gender has important contribution regardless of the differences in year cohort and field of discipline (EFL 10)

Should

These activities should be engaging for both female and male students so that they could enjoy the teaching and learning of writing (EFL 10)

Cannot

PT is not a new phenomenon for education in both developed and developing countries. Although it cannot be clearly dated when it existed (EFL 3)

The next category is verbs. In the study of Wang and Tatiana shown that the most frequently used in the category of verbs is *suggest*. It is also confirmed by this research that *suggest* occurred in both disciplines as the commonly used devices (Wang, S. P., & Tatiana, 2016). Varttala said that lexical verbs as an even "more exponent of modality than the modal auxiliaries" (Varttala, 2001). As Hyland also stated that epistemic verbs are "the most transparent means of coding the subjectivity of the epistemic source". Certain verbs are used to hedge either commitment or assertiveness.

There are various results of study found that to be interpreted with respect to native speaker–non-native speaker variation, cultural and linguistic differences between English and Chinese, as well as traditions and paradigms of scientific inquiry in the scientific communities (Yang, 2013). Then the terms of culturally preferred rhetorical strategies, epistemological beliefs, lack of facility in English as a second/foreign language, and the nature of supporting evidence drawn on for knowledge claims in different types of academic writing (Hu, 2011).

The use of in consistent with and in general is still rare among the writer-researchers. It might be concluded that this phrase is not familiar either in Indonesia researchers in EFL disciplines. Modal auxiliaries are detected 39 times per ten thousand words or more than 60% while 34,8 times per ten thousand

words of EFL papers or up to 50%. It shows that the use of modal auxiliaries is quite high in the fields. To conclude, Indonesian writer-researchers are familiar with hedge even it is varieties incidence in certain data.

CONCUSSION

Hedges used in journal articles of EFL applied by Indonesian researchers. EFL writers use hedges more frequent used by writers in Indonesian context by 2,4 pttw. Hedges are applied by Indonesian researchers using category like as modal auxiliaries. The most commonly used of hedges in EFL journal articles is in the form of modal auxiliary in which "can" appears as the highest hedge by over 25%. Modal auxiliaries are detected 39 times per ten thousand words or more than 60% while 34,8 times per ten thousand words of EFL papers or up to 50%. It shows that the use of modal auxiliaries is quite high in the fields.

Recommendations that the hedge in an academic writing class and train to produce scientific papers to be familiar with all hedge devices and to explore more about hedges by reading or reviewing journal articles.

There are some recommendations that can be took into account for English teachers especially in teaching academic writing, students, and further researcher: This research is educational research specifically under the topic of academic writing and addressed to Indonesian writer- researchers" papers in international journal publications in fields of EFL journals.

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