CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter presents theoretical framework and review of related studies, which are related to hedges in academic writing. In the first part of this chapter, the writer provides an overview of hedges. Then, explanations about hedges in academic writing and taxonomy of hedges are provided. The theory used to analyze the data is also discussed. In the final section, the writer presents a review of related studies, which are concern with hedges at the end of this chapter.

2.1   Hedges

The term 'Hedge' was firstly introduced by George Lakoff (1972), an American linguist in his paper, 'Hedges: a Study in Meaning Criteria and the Logic of Fuzzy Concept. He used the term to refer to words whose job is to make things fuzzier or less fuzzy. It is concerned with the logical properties of words and phrases. Lakoff (1972) also pointed out the possibility that hedges may interact with felicity conditions for utterances and with the rules of conversation. This description suggests that as a linguistic term, it also refers to the choice of a certain kind of communicative strategy. Hedges are considered as modifiers of the writer's responsibility for the truth-value of the propositions expressed.

According to Lakoff (1972), there are four reasons for speakers or writers to use hedges. First, by hedging, the authors tone down their statements in order to reduce the risk of opposition. This position associates hedges with scientific

imprecision and defines them as linguistic cues of bias which avoid personal accountability for statements. Second, the writers want their readers to know that they do not claim to have the final word on the subject. Expressing a lack of certainty does not necessarily show confusion or vagueness. One could consider hedges as ways of being more precise in reporting results. Hedging may present the true state of the writers' understanding and may be used to negotiate an accurate representation of the state of the knowledge under discussion. In fact, academic writers may well wish to reduce the strength of claims simply because stronger statements would not be justified by the data or evidence presented.

Third, hedges may be understood as positive or negative politeness strategies in which the writer tries to appear humble rather than arrogant or all knowing. Hedging is a rational interpersonal strategy, which supports the writer's position, builds writer-reader (speaker/listener) relationships and guarantees a certain level of acceptability in a community. Once a claim becomes widely accepted, it is then possible to present it without a hedge. Finally, a certain degree of hedging has become conventionalized. The function of hedges now is to conform to an established writing style in English. The writer tries to make the writer's style suitable in the condition in a community by using hedges.

Based on Skelton cited in Sengming (2009), hedges are a means of achieving distance between the speaker and what is said. Hedges are seen as modifying the truth-value of the whole proposition or as avoiding full commitment to the content expressed, not as making individual elements inside it more imprecise. Then, hedge is one of metadiscourse type that can reflect the

writers' attempts to negotiate academic knowledge in order to make their writing become meaningful and appropriate to a particular disciplinary community (Hyland, 2004). The use of hedges is a way of being more precise in reporting results or presenting opinion (Salager-Meyer, 1994; Hyland 1996a, 1998a; Nartey & Yankson, 2014). Hedges may present the true state of the writers' or the speakers' understanding, namely, the strongest claim a careful writer or speaker can make.

2.2   Hedges in Academic Writing

Hedging is the expression of tentativeness and possibility and it is central to academic writing where the need to present unproven propositions with caution and precision is essential (Hyland, 1996c). Rounds cited in Sengming (2009) stated that referring to academic writing, hedges are not used simply to cover one self and to make things fuzzy, but that they can also be used to negotiate the right representation of the state of the knowledge under discussion, that is, to achieve greater preciseness in scientific claims. Based on Myers (1985; 1989), hedges are part of a wider system of politeness designed to redress the threat research claims contain to the "face" of other scientists.

Hyland (1996b; 1997) said that hedging enables writers to express a perspective on their statements, to present unproven claims with caution and to enter into a dialogue with their audiences. The writer should be preparing in negative response of the reader, especially when the writer is not native writer. It will be little difficult to make the writer's claim or statement softer if the language

is the second or foreign language. However, Holmes (1982) said that hedging is a rhetorical device for politeness and consideration for others, and a way of giving others a chance to disagree. The writer should be more careful in using hedge to reduce a chance to disagree from the readers.

There are three main functions of hedging in scientific research article suggested by Hyland (1996c). First, it is used to present claims with greater precision with respect to both the terms used to describe real-world phenomena and the degree of reliability the writer invests in the statement. Second, it is used to signal reservations in the truth of a claim to limit the professional damage, this might result from bald propositions. Both of them relate to the strictly epistemic functions and express doubt in statements. Third, it is used to give deference and recognition to the reader and avoid unacceptable over-confidence. It concerns the writer's contribution to the development of a writer-reader relationship in gaining reader ratification. Hyland (2004) said that the key of successful academic writing is the ability of writers to control the level of personality in their texts, claiming solidarity with readers, evaluating their material, and acknowledging alternative views. When readers understand the information in the academic writing, it means the academic writing is successful in giving the information and the writer also succeeds in presenting her or his data and argument written in the text.

In fact, English is the global language; it means that one of some languages that most learned as second language is English. Even in 1995, nearly 90 per cent of the 1,500 papers listed in the journal Linguistics Abstracts were in English (Crystal, 2003). Then, nowadays it should be spread wider and is used

mostly by students or some language learners to communicate each other, as Oanh (2012) states that English is the main foreign language, a lingua franca, to be strengthened as a means of communication, especially in the field of education and business, along with the maintenance and preservation of the national language(s). Thus, the ability to write effectively in English is therefore a prerequisite for full participation in the international research community (Hyland, 1996b). However, the fact is that even proficient L2 students find hedging their propositions notoriously problematic (Skelton, Bloor & Bloor in Hyland 1996b; Bloch 2010). As the writer and/or the reader, understanding about scientific writing' features is important to assist writer, other reader and ourselves, both native and non-native, to be successful in the research world through academic writing. In sum, scientific writers are oriented both to what they say and to who they are saying it and the type of hedge that are used conveys a choice in how to best negotiate the ratification of their claims (Hyland, 1996c).

2.3   Classification of Hedges

Hedges are very frequently used as a very important field in fuzzy languages (Hua, 2011). Following are classifications of hedging devices by different authors. First, Hyland (1994) classifies hedges into seven types: modal auxiliary verb (*may, might, can*), adjectival and adverbial and nominal modal expressions (*possible, perhaps, probability*), modal lexical verbs (*believe, assume*), if clause, passive form use, impersonal phrases and time reference.

Second, Hyland (1996b, 1998b) improved the categories of hedges and divided hedges into lexical verbs or epistemic lexical verbs (e.g. *indicate, suggest, appear, and propose*); adverbials or epistemic adverbs (e.g. *apparently, probably, essentially, relatively, and generally*); adjectives or epistemic adjectives (e.g. *likely, possible, most, and consistent with*); modal verbs (e.g. *would, may, could*); and Nouns (e.g. *possibility*). Then, there are additional categories from epistemic lexical verbs and epistemic adverbs. Epistemic verbs are divided into judgemental verbs (e.g. *suggest, demonstrate, speculate*) and evidential verbs (e.g. s*eems, appeared, attempt*), whereas, epistemic adverbs are also divided into two, downtoners (e.g. *quite, almost, usually*) (Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech, & Svartvik, 1972) and disjuncts (e.g. *probably, evidently, generally*) (Greenbaum & Quirk, 1990). In addition, Varttala (2001) divides lexical verbs into three: nonfactive reporting verbs (e.g. *propose, imply*), tentative cognition verbs (e.g. *assume, speculate*), and tentative linking verbs (e.g. *appear, tend*).

Finally, Hu and Cao (2011) divide the categories of hedges into four types of hedges: modal auxiliaries (e.g. *might, could, would*), epistemic lexical verbs (e.g. *seem, assume, suggest*), epistemic adjectives and adverbs (e.g. *perhaps, likely, mainly*) and miscellaneous (e.g. *in general, assumption (that)*). Notably, the major formal categories of hedging devices in the taxonomy are essentially consistent with those in the classificatory schemes adopted by Hyland (1996b, 1998b), Holmes (1982, 1988), and Millan (2008). Thus, Hu and Cao's taxonomy is simpler than other but still have the complete categories of hedges. In addition, they also stated that the miscellaneous category comprises, among others, some

common knowledge markers (proposed by Koutsantoni), modal nouns (proposed by Hyland), and the epistemic "that-constructions" (proposed by Hyland and Tse). Therefore, this classification is used to analyze the data in this study.

2.4   Review of Related Studies

Itakura (2013) conducted a study about hedging comparison in the written text. He investigated hedging praise in English and Japanese book reviews and found that praise was hedged more frequently in Japanese book reviews, although syntactic devices per se did not appear to significantly qualify as hedging, a combination of lexical terms and syntactic devices appeared to manifest different interpersonal strategies in each language. The study suggests that the higher frequency of hedging in praise and impersonal syntactic structures found in Japanese book reviews may be related to Japanese norms of politeness and the writers' wishes to remain non-committal as evaluators. On the other hand, in English writing, the lower frequency of hedging in praise and the tendency to use personal syntactic structures may be related to positive politeness and the writers' willingness to take responsibilities as evaluators.

Vassileva's study (2001) examines how Bulgarian English (BE) and Bulgarian differ in showing their commitment and detachment. Her finding is that the degree of detachment was found most evident in English and least noted in BE, with Bulgarians being in the middle point between two of them.

Other study about hedging was conducted by Sari (2008) who analyzed hedging devices used in the introductions of linguistics theses made by English

Department's students in Universitas Airlangga. She found that the hedging devices listed by Hyland (1994) that are mostly found in the introduction section of linguistics theses include auxiliary verb, adjectival and adverbial, modal noun and modal lexical verb.

Halabisaz, Pazhakh, and Shakibafar (2014) investigated the employment of hedges in abstracts of applied linguistic theses written by English and Persian writers. They conducted the comparative study of hedges between native and non-native writers (Iranian), who are students of the same field, applied linguistics. They investigated the hedge in thesis abstracts to understand how the writers of these theses make their claims about their new findings used Crompton's (1997) taxonomy of hedge. They found that native English writers used more hedging devices, while non-natives (Iranian) writers employed less hedge devices in their M.A. abstracts.

According to the studies summarized previously, this study has both similarities and differences. Similar to other studies, this study focuses on hedging devices. Some differences can be recognized as follows. This study analyzes hedges used in Linguistics and Literature theses. It examines one of rhetorical sections, that is, introduction. Then, the use of hedges in both linguistics and literature is compared.