CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides the introductory explanation about the importance of using metadiscourse markers especially hedges to communicate with the reader, the present phenomenon which is related to hedges and some previous studies which deal with using hedges. It also presents statements of the problem, objective of the study, significance of the study and definition of the key terms.

1.1   Background of the Study

Academic writing is one of the writer's ways to communicate to the reader about the writer's ideas and it is important to make the reader interested and believe in what the writer writes about. Academic writing is also the interpretation of the writer because every writer has different style of writing. The background of the writer can affect the way the writer constructs their writing. Thus, writers or researchers from various kinds of nationality, disciplinary or field backgrounds construct their writings differently. One of the most common issues in academic writing for analysis is the cultural background because every community has its own distinctive culture (Hyland, 1997).

Since different background of nationalities, disciplines or fields take the important roles in academic writing, the different use of hedges as metadiscourse markers and their functions also expand through academic writing. Hyland in Hu and Cao (2011, p.2795) believes that metadiscourse consist of "the self-reflective

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expression used to negotiate interactional meaning in a text, assisting the writer to express a viewpoint and engage with the reader as members of a particular community." Thus, it makes metadiscourse an important part in academic writing especially for the writer in the high level of writing. Metadiscourse represents the attitude of the writer toward the text and the reader and also represents the background of the writer community that affects the writer attitude in the writing activity. Then, most writers intend to use metadiscourse as a strategy to manage the interaction between the writers and the readers, especially hedges to present their idea, soften their claim, make the readers understood, and have the same viewpoint about the phenomenon. It is natural for the text to have hedges and different means that express statements directly or indirectly (Taweel, Saidat, Rafayah, & Saidat, 2011). The writers' statements will be appropriate to the context or situation where they want to take the readers into their writing. In addition, hedges also help the readers to understand the text and make the readers comfortable when they read journal or other academic writing that was written in another language (e.g. English).

Channel cited in Taweel et al. (2011) argues that one of the most useful and enduring insights to come out of the recent study of language use is that the speakers and the writers tailor their language to make it suitable to the situation and the linguistic context like gossipy chat, an interview or a story in a popular newspaper. Such strategy to manage interaction or communicate with the readers in academic writing is needed to be learned by students of English as a Second Language (ESL) or English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in university. This is

because university students are required to write some articles or academic writings, especially their undergraduate thesis in English.

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. Thus, disciplinary could influence the use of Hedges. Salager-Meyer in Abdollahzadeh (2011) said that non-native speakers of English have a difficult time when reading or writing academic text in English distinguishing claims that are accepted within a scholarly community from those that are disputed.

Research about hedging has frequently been conducted where English is a Second Language or Foreign Language. Sari (2008) conducted the study about hedging devices used in the introductions of linguistics theses made by English Department's students in Universitas Airlangga who graduated in 2007. 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. Doyuran (2009) conducted a comparative study of hedges and was found that there are various hedging expressions and polypragmatic in the Turkish scientific articles written by students from the fields of geological engineering and linguistics. The number of hedges in linguistic papers is more than in geological engineering papers. However, both of them use hedges as the ways of strengthening arguments by admitting limitations and uncertainties.

Daraselia (2010) in her analysis about the hedging strategies between English, Georgian, and Russian, states that the characteristics of hedging strategies among them are different. Both of English and Russian are introvert, the difference is that English is introvert because the politeness, face system, and the hedging strategies are balanced between ego-oriented and alter-oriented tendencies, however Russian is mostly introvert with ego-oriented tendencies in politeness, face and hedging strategies, in case it is in informal register, ego-oriented and alter-oriented tendencies seem to be more balanced. Then, Georgian is characterized as extrovert with alter-oriented politeness face and hedging strategies, they are expressing empathy by verbal as well as non-verbal communication. According to Safi cited in Taweel et al. (2011), in English, the use of the different tenses of verbs and modals usually stand for probability whereas in Arabic it is possible for the conditional particles and different tenses of verb to stand for probability. Thus, there will be different hedging style among the writers based on their background especially here is English that they use as their First Language, Second Language or a Foreign Language. Then, this shows that hedging devices are important features of effective academic writing and then, they help the writers to present their statements and claims cautiously, accurately and modestly to meet their discourse community's expectations and place themselves in an honorable position as valued members of the respective discourse community. Because of that, the students must be taught how to recognize and effectively use hedging devices in their writing, especially for Non-

Native English Speakers who are probably not familiar with hedges and therefore, find it mainly difficult to hedge their statements appropriately.

Thus, this study is important as it attempts to fill such a gap since research into hedges that compare disciplines in the same department has rarely been conducted. In addition, this study is expected to help the students select what kind of hedges that should be used in their academic writing. Then, this research was conducted at English Department, Faculty of Humanities, Universitas Airlangga Surabaya. The writer focuses the object of analysis on the students' theses of Linguistics and Literature as two majors offered at the English Department. Literature focuses on literary works and the reader, while Linguistics is concerned with the language and its uses.

In order to obtain and analyze the data, the writers decided to use the introduction section of each thesis from the students who graduated in 2013. The introduction section includes the background information about the topic and it is the outline of the writer's idea about what is going to be discussed in the theses. Thus, it contains hedges more in order to present ideas of the writer in the theses. A good introduction tells the reader why the paper is important in terms of the problems to be investigated, the context for the research question, what place this research question has in understanding addictions, and what is original about the endeavor (Bahrani & Soltani, 2012). Then, the aim of this study is to show that different major or discipline in the same department can also affect the use of hedges and hedging strategies.

1.2   Statements of the Problem

In line with the background, there are three research questions raised in this study. All questions related to the use of hedges in introduction section of Linguistics and Literature Theses written by Linguistics and Literature Students at English Department, Faculty of Humanities, Universitas Airlangga.

1. What hedges do Linguistics and Literatures students mostly use when they write the introduction section of their theses?

2. What are the similarities between the hedges used by Linguistics and Literature students in the introduction section of their theses?

3. What are the differences between the hedges used by Linguistics and Literature students in the introduction section of their theses?

1.3   Objectives of the Study

The writer focuses on the use of hedges and hedging strategies in writing the introduction section of Linguistics and Literature students' theses. The writer compares both hedges use in introduction of Linguistics and Literature theses to discover the differences between hedges used by Linguistics and Literature students. The objectives of the study are specified as follows:

1. To identify and classify hedges mostly used in the introduction section of theses written by Linguistics and Literature students who graduated in 2013.

2. To identify the similarities between the hedges used by Linguistics and Literature who have different major in the same department found in the

introduction section of the theses.

3. To identify the differences between the hedges used by Linguistics and Literature who have different major in the same department found in the introduction section of the theses.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The writer hopes that this study will contribute to a better understanding in using hedges in academic writing and can raise new notions in the area of pragmatics and academic writing. Furthermore, the result of this study can provide useful information of how hedges and hedging strategies are used in academic writing, particularly in theses for the readers or the researchers, who are interested in studying and analyzing hedges, especially in pragmatics field. This study can add knowledge that will be needed in academic writing, especially for the students who write paper, take Thesis Writing Design (TWD) or Thesis, for the thesis advisors and also thesis examiners. The writer hopes, by knowing the exact strategies, the readers can use the right hedges in their academic writing. Finally, the result of the study can be used as a reference for further researchers or linguists who are interested in studying similar topic about hedge in academic writing.

1.5 Definition of Key Terms

Hedges   :   Hedges indicate an important distinction between the subject matter and how writers want the readers to

understand their relationship to it and to the scientific community (Hyland, 1997).

Hedging devices : Any utterance in which speaker explicitly qualifies his commitment to the truth of the proposition expressed by the sentences he or she utters (Hyland, 1995).

Modal auxiliaries : Words that are used to express stance meaning, related to possibility, necessity, prediction, obligation, volition, and ability (Biber, Conrad, & Leech, 2002).

Epistemic lexical verbs : Words that denote actions, processes, or states and serve to establish the relationship between the participants in an action, process, or state (Biber, Johansson, Leech, Conrad, & Finegan, 2007).

Epistemic adjectives and adverbs : Words that are used as modifier and express degree of frequency or approximation. Adjectives most common use in modifying nouns and describe qualities of people, things, and states of affairs. Adverbs most common use in modifying adjectives or another adverbs, it can specify the circumstances under which an action, process, or state takes place; convey the speaker's or writer's attitude towards the information contained in the rest of the clause; or express the connection between clauses (Biber et al., 2007).