

**HEDGING DEVICES IN THE DISCUSSION SECTIONS OF  
SKRIPSIS AND MASTER THESES**



*Building  
Future  
Leaders*

**FAJAR WULANDARI  
2236139339**

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## ABSTRACT

**Fajar Wulandari.** 2017. *Hedging Devices in the Discussion Sections of Skripsis and Master Theses.* A Master Thesis. Jakarta: English Language Education Master Program, The Faculty of Languages and Arts, State University of Jakarta.

Hedges are communicative strategies that can be used in academic writing to mitigate the force of the statements. The present study investigated the types, the distribution and the functions of hedging devices in the discussion sections of *skripsis* and master theses. It also tried to find out how education level affected hedging devices used. To achieve this goal, 15 discussion sections of *skripsis* and 15 discussion sections of master theses written by students of English Language Education Program in Jakarta were selected as the corpus and analyzed by employing content analysis method. A classification of hedges formulated by Salager-Meyer (1994) was used as a model. Findings revealed that Shields category were frequently used in both discussion sections of *skripsis* with 63.06% and master theses with 65.63%. It was also found that the employment of hedges in the discussion sections of master theses was higher than that in *skripsis*. Thus, it can be inferred that educational level affected to the use of hedges. Hedges identified in this study mostly served the function as a self-protection for the writer if later their statements are proved wrong. The present study also suggested that the Study Program which is well- accredited is not always in line with the good quality of the academic writing as well as the writers. The findings of this study can be useful for some pedagogical implications for ESP courses and especially writing research reports.

Keywords: Hedges, Hedging Devices, *Skripsis*, Master Theses, Discussion Sections

## ABSTRAK

**Fajar Wulandari.** 2017. *Hedging Devices in the Discussion Sections of Skripsis and Master Theses.* A Master Thesis. Jakarta: English Language Education Master Program, The Faculty of Languages and Arts, State University of Jakarta.

*Hedges* merupakan strategi komunikatif yang dapat digunakan dalam penulisan akademik untuk mengurangi kekuatan dari pernyataan. Tujuan dari penelitian ini untuk menyelidiki tipe, distribusi, dan fungsi dari *hedging devices* pada bagian Pembahasan/*Discussion* dari skripsi dan tesis. Penelitian ini juga bertujuan untuk menyelidiki bagaimana tingkat pendidikan dari penulis mempengaruhi *hedging devices* yang digunakan. Untuk menjawab pertanyaan penelitian ini, peneliti memilih 15 bagian Pembahasan dari skripsi dan 15 bagian Pembahasan dari tesis yang ditulis oleh mahasiswa jurusan Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris di Jakarta sebagai sumber data. Sumber data tersebut kemudian di analisa menggunakan metode analisa isi untuk mencari kata atau gabungan kata yang teridentifikasi sebagai *hedges* dengan menggunakan model kategori *hedges* yang digagaskan oleh Salager-Meyer (1994). Hasil penelitian ini menjelaskan bahwa kategori Shields mendominasi penggunaan *hedges* di bagian pembahasan skripsi (63.06%) dan tesis (65.63%). *Hedging devices* yang lebih banyak ditemukan di bagian pembahasan tesis daripada skripsi mengindikasikan bahwa factor tingginya pendidikan dan lebih banyaknya pengeksposan *hedging* menentukan tingginya tingkat pemahaman siswa terhadap penggunaan *hedging* di tulisan akademik yang sebagian besar tujuan penggunaannya sebagai perlindungan untuk penulis jika nanti ide baru yang di klaim dari penelitiannya terbukti salah. Penelitian ini juga mengindikasikan bahwa mahasiswa dari Program Studi yang terakreditasi baik tidak selalu sejalan dengan baiknya pemahaman mereka terhadap penguasaan *hedging* serta baiknya isi dari teks akademik mereka. Hasil penelitian ini bisa berguna untuk implikasi pedagogis untuk mata kuliah ESP dan khususnya dalam penulisan laporan penelitian.

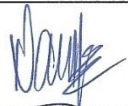
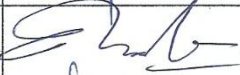

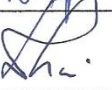

Kata Kunci: Hedges, Perangkat Hedging, Skripsi, Tesis, Bagian Pembahasan

**PERSETUJUAN PANITIA UJIAN  
ATAS HASIL PERBAIKAN TESIS**

Nama : Fajar Wulandari

Nomor Registrasi : 2236139339

Program Studi : Magister Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris

NO	NAMA	TANDA TANGAN	TANGGAL
1	Dr. Liliana Muliastuti, M.Pd. Dekan Fakultas Bahasa dan Seni		
2	Dr. Ratna Dewanti, M.Pd. Koordinator Program Magister Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris		21-8-2017
3	Dr. Ifan Iskandar, M. Hum Pembimbing I		22-8-2017
4	Dr. Ratna Dewanti, M.Pd. Pembimbing II		21-8-2017
5	Dr. Darmahusni, M.A. Ketua Penguji		21-8-2017
6	Dr. Muchlas Suseno, M.Pd Anggota Penguji		22-8-2017

## DECLARATION

I declare that this research paper entitled *Hedging Devices in The Discussion Sections of Skripsi and Master Theses* submitted for *Magister Pendidikan* degree is entirely the result of my own work. I am fully aware that I have quoted some statements and ideas from various sources. All quotations are already properly acknowledged.

Jakarta, August 2017



Fajar Wulandari  
No.Reg. 2236139339

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No. Reg : 2236139339  
Program Studi : Magister Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris  
Jurusan : Bahasa dan Sastra Inggris  
Fakultas : Bahasa dan Seni  
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No. Reg. 2236139339

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The Writer,

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August, 2017

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides some general description and rationale related to the use of hedging devices in discussion section of *skripsi* and master theses. This chapter consists of background, research questions, purposes, scope of the study, and significance of the study.

#### 1.1 Background of the Study

Writing is one of the channels of communications. It serves as a means of building connection among people across time, space, and culture. It also allows writers to communicate the message that they want to convey to the readers. Writers write to inform, educate, entertain, persuade and motivate. Its purposes and results depend totally on the intentions and hearts of writers and their audiences.

In the context of academic discourse, writing serves as a means of construction and development of knowledge. Academic writers may propose their new ideas either to fill a certain knowledge gap or add new information to the existing literature. They may also report the research they have carried on to public in the form of research report. Research report writing, in which it is still part of academic discourse, has a purpose to convey the findings of the study clearly and concisely to interested audiences and to enable them to understand the purpose and the whole results of the research.

Due to its importance, academic writing has recently drawn the interest of numerous researchers. These proliferation of studies on academic written discourse

has affected also to the increased number of researches on what language and communication tools that the researchers and the students must acquire so that they are fully recognized into their research community. An accepted or a published written work is important for them as it shows their acceptance in a specific discourse community. Thus, various efforts have been done so that their written work can be published in the international leading journals.

The fact that academics in Indonesia are now triggered to publish their research in international journals, they are supposed to consider how to write a good research report as well as to consider the constructed elements and features, so their research will be acknowledged internationally. However, the percentage of Indonesian academics who have published their research internationally is still far beyond the expectation (Sanjaya, Sitawati & Suciani, 2015).

That condition is confirmed by The SCImago Journal & Country Rank, a portal that includes the journals and country scientific indicators developed from the information contained in *Scopus* database. From that portal, Indonesia is positioned in the 55<sup>th</sup> rank among countries in the world whose scholars are recorded in *Scopus* database. It is far away different from our neighbors, Malaysia and Singapore, in which the former is in the 34<sup>th</sup> rank while the latter is in the 32<sup>th</sup> position. (SCImago Journal & Country Rank , n.d.)

The number of Indonesian scholars that participated in publishing their research in international journal which is still low may be caused by several reasons. One of the reasons is Indonesian researchers have problems in writing English

research journal articles that can be accepted at international journal publishers. The problem appeared because there is no guiding reference, especially grammatically, in writing research journal articles since the focus of studying academic research text is in the part of research articles. (Mirahayuni, 2013)

In this regard, the researchers should not focus merely on the structures of research report, but they have to be aware of other components or writing strategies in research report as academic writing is not entirely about presenting the findings of the study in written language, but also involving interaction between the writer and reader. Hence, in order the findings of the study to be accepted in a specific discourse community, there is a need for the writers to engage, influence, and persuade the audiences in academic writing, and it can be accomplished through the use of metadiscourse markers. These markers help the writers to establish the interaction between the writer and the reader and help to organize text coherently, as well as convey credibility and reader sensitivity which later will lead to gaining an acceptance of the writers in a specific discourse community. (Farrokhi, 2009)

Metadiscourse can be considered important in academic writing as it gives the writers an awareness of their position within a specific discourse community. The proper use of metadiscourse in academic writing is likely to help the writers to gain an acceptance from international research community. Hyland (2000) views metadiscourse as a tool to facilitate the writer to give a stance towards either the content or the reader as claiming a new statement or idea which is likely to support or contradict findings of other scholars cannot be avoided in academic writing. Thus, in order to be acknowledged in the research community, scholars should leave

rooms for interested readers whenever they present or claim a new statement or idea. They are supposed not to be too certain about their statements as being too certain can be considered as arrogant. It of course does not reflect the quality of a scholar. To avoid this, the use of such metadiscourse markers to tone down the proposition as well as express them with honesty, precision and caution is necessary. They are called hedges. (Wallwork, 2011).

The use of hedges has become an integral part in research report writing since they are as tools to express tentativeness and possibility over the research findings. Hedges are communicative strategies to reduce the force of statements so they leave readers room to judge the truth value of the writer's assertion. Hyland (2005) also points out that hedges as a part of interactional metadiscourse markers "...which indicate the writer's decision to recognize alternative voices and viewpoints and so withhold complete commitment to a proposition." That means, hedges not only carry the writer's degree of confidence in the truth of proposition, but also an attitude to audience.

It appears that the use of hedging devices in writing research report may be important as one of their functions is as a tool to soften the language used when the writers claim a statement or idea that they believe. Instead of being too certain about the ideas, the writers should anticipate that other scholars or findings would contradict to their statements or their statements are proven wrong later. In addition, the use of hedges seems to give contribution in establishing relationship between the writer and the reader as the writer leaves rooms for the readers to accept or to dispute. Hence, employing hedges would help them to be seen as the writers with

high level of credibility and reliability, and so it affect to the acceptance of their research in the world of academic. (Hyland, 1998)

Recently, there has been a great deal of research investigating the use of hedges in the context of academic discourse, i.e. research articles and research reports carried on by the researchers. They explored the frequency and the type of hedging devices in different rhetorical sections of research reports across various disciplines and research topics (Nivales, 2011; Tran & Duong, 2013, Bonyadi, Gholami, & Nasiri, 2012). Some also compared and contrasted the use of hedges in English and other languages, such as Chinese (Hu & Cao, 2011), Persian (Halabisaz, Pazhakh, & Shakibafar, 2014; Samaie, Khosravian, & Boghayeri, 2014), Spanish (Dafouz, 2008), Turkish (Akbas, 2012), and Middle Eastern students (Crompton, 2012).

The types and frequencies of hedging devices used in research reports written by native and non-native writers are assumed to be different in which native writers seems to be more cautious and tentative in claiming their statements and in rejecting or confirming the ideas of others than other language writers (Samaie, Khosravian, & Boghayeri, 2014). Cultural issue may affect the use of hedges among native writers and non-native writers. Thus, the need to raise an awareness of the usefulness of hedges for non-native writers should be heightened for their assistance in writing research report so that they will be accepted as members in international research community. (Halabisaz, Pazhakh, & Shakibafar, 2014)



Such failure faced by Indonesian and other L2 writers in publishing their research in international leading journal may probably be caused by a lack of knowledge of how to hedge appropriately in academic writing. Hyland (1996) also adds that though hedges are critical to the success of academic writing, the L2 writers give little attention to how to hedge statements since they are difficult to master. Due to the limitation of knowledge, some novice writers tend to be too firm over claiming their research findings or ideas without leaving rooms for the interested readers. They seemed to be not aware of the importance of using such metadiscourse marker to moderate the statements called hedges. Thus, providing some assistance to non-native writers through the exploration of the use of hedges in academic writing class which is usually as a compulsory subject in university, would be beneficial in helping them to be acknowledged in international research community. (Hidayati, Muhammad, & Dallyono, 2008)

From the problems encountered by Indonesian writers mentioned above, the present study aims at investigating hedging devices used in research report written by students of English Language Education Program. The types of hedging devices and their distribution as well as their functions will be explored to give a deep insight of hedging devices used in academic writing as an interactional device that can change the tone of the writer's statement so that it can be accepted in academic community. Also, this study will explore how discussion sections of *skripsi* and master theses share similarities and differences, and thus we can figure out how educational level affect to hedging devices used in academic writing. The type of the text to be analyzed is research report in the form of *skripsi* and master theses,

for Indonesian students are supposed to write a report on a research they have carried on as a partial requirement to complete their study. Besides, *skripsis* and master theses are a part of academic writing, and Hyland (1995) believes that it encompasses hedges comprehensively.

The focus of the analysis in this study is the discussion section of *skripsis* and master theses, for the main communicative purpose of it is to persuade the academic community of the validity of the research findings presented and thus the new knowledge claims will be accepted in a scientific community. That fact is also confirmed by Yang and Allison (2003) which proposed a move structure framework which consists of 7 moves that should be included in discussion section. One of the compulsory moves in this section is “Commenting on Results” in which in this section, the writers provide subjective judgment about their studies’ results, interpreting the findings, and comparing their studies with the literature. Hence, the possibility for the writer to use hedges when they present their subjective judgment is likely to happen as Salager-Meyer (1994) believed that the writers tend to use hedges the most in the discussion section compared with other parts of research article.

Considering the heavy use of hedging in discussion section, numerous studies have been done to explore how hedges are used by the writers in this section. Tran & Duong (2013) examined the use of hedges as a part of metadiscourse markers in results and discussion section of research articles in applied linguistics and chemical engineering. They compared the use of hedges between a soft-applied

science and a hard-applied science in which the findings suggest that the use of hedges in applied linguistics was more frequent than that in chemical engineering.

In addition, Hashemi & Shirzadi (2016) explored the use of hedges in 150 applied linguistics articles within three different methods (50 qualitative, 50 quantitative, and 50 mixed method studies). The findings indicated that hedging in the discussion section of quantitative applied linguistics articles had the highest frequency followed by mixed method studies and qualitative articles. The study also suggested that the nature of each research method affects the hedging devices used.

In Indonesia context, a study which was carried on by Sanjaya, Sitawati, & Suciani (2015) compared the use of hedges in discussion section of published research articles between native writers and Indonesian writers. The findings suggest that there is a significant difference of the use of hedges between native and Indonesian writers. Therefore there is a need of instruction that specifically focuses on hedging propositions in English for Indonesian scholars.

The studies above examined how students from different disciplines employed hedges as metadiscourse markers in discussion section. Many also compared between native and non-native writers' use of hedges. Some also compared how the method of study affects the hedging devices used in academic writing. However, to the best of the writer's knowledge, Indonesian writers' awareness of hedges can be considered as low since they tended to be too firm over the knowledge claim and it is different from the native writers which seemed to be tentative in claiming new knowledge. This might contribute to the acceptance of

Indonesian scholar written work in international research community which is still far from the expectation. Also, little attention has been focused on how education level affect to hedging devices used in academic writing.

To address this gap, the present study explored hedging devices used in two kinds of discussion section, namely *skripsis* and master theses. The types, the functions, the distribution and the similarities as well as differences among them will be explored. Also, this study would like to find out to what extent the education level affect hedging devices used in academic writing. To get a deep insight of hedging devices used in discussion section, the *skripsis* and master theses will be taken from those which were written by students of English Language Education Program in Jakarta. The findings of this study are expected to be beneficial for the teaching of academic writing of English Language Education Program in Jakarta so that students' awareness of the use of hedges in writing research report can improve which later will affect to the acceptance of their research work in international research community.

## **1.2 Research Questions**

Based on the background of the study above, the main research question of this study is: “How are hedging devices used in the discussion sections of *skripsis* and master theses written by students of English Language Education Program in Jakarta?”

In order to answer the main research question, the writer formulates the sub-questions as follows:

1. What are hedging devices used in the discussion section of *skripsis* and master theses?
2. How are hedging devices distributed in the discussion sections of *skripsis* and master theses?
3. How are hedging devices used as their functions in the discussion section of *skripsis* and master theses?
4. How do the discussion sections of *skripsis* and master theses share similarities and differences in terms of hedging devices used?
5. How does education level affect to the use of hedging in discussion section of *skripsis* and master theses?

### **1.3 Purposes of the Study**

This study is conducted in order to investigate hedging devices used in *skripsis* and master theses. More specifically, the study aims to seek these followings:

1. Types of hedging devices used in the discussion section of *skripsis* and master theses.
2. The distribution of hedging devices used in the discussion section of *skripsis* and master theses.
3. The functions of hedging devices used in the discussion section of *skripsis* and master theses.

4. The similarities and differences of hedging used in discussion sections of *skripsi* and master theses.
5. How the education level affects to hedging devices used in discussion sections of *skripsi* and master theses

#### **1.4 Scope of the Study**

The study focuses on analyzing the types, the distributions as well as the functions of hedging devices used in the discussion sections of *skripsi* and master theses written by students of English Language Education Program in Jakarta. This study will also explore how discussion sections of *skripsi* and master theses share similarities and differences which later will provide us with an insight how education level affect to hedging devices used in discussion section. The research report topic is also limited in English education issue.

#### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

##### **1.5.1 Theoretical Function**

This study is expected to enrich the knowledge of hedges as a type of linguistic devices to state or claim proposition or the research findings with appropriate degree of certainty used in academic writing. More specifically, it will enrich the knowledge of the most frequently types of hedging devices used in discussion sections written by non-native writers.

In addition, this study will provide the reader an insight of how education level affect to hedging devices used in academic writing.

#### 1.5.2 Practical Function

1.5.2.1 The results of this study have important implications to the study of academic writing as one of the compulsory courses taught in Indonesian universities. Educators, the lecturers, are expected to explore more on hedging used in academic writing course so that students are more aware of them.

1.5.2.2 For students, the results of this study may be useful in assisting them in writing research report, so that they will gain the level of credibility as a scholar and thus will affect to the acceptance in international scholar community.

1.5.2.3 For English Language Education Program, the results of this study may be beneficial in assisting them in designing a syllabus for the teaching of academic writing which later will affect to students' competence in producing academic writing which can be accepted in international leading journal. Thus, the English Language Education Program will have good reputation, for they can produce students or graduates with good writing competency.

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter discusses the relevant literature underlying the present study. There are several sub topics discussed in this chapter, such as studies on hedging including its definition, classification, and functions, studies on hedging in academic writing, studies on hedging in discussion section of *skripsis* and master theses and conceptual framework.

#### 2.1 Studies on Hedging

This section discusses hedging devices in terms of its definition, classification and the functions. The explanation of each will be presented below.

##### 2.1.1 Studies on Hedging Definition

The linguistic strategy known as hedges has received a good deal of attention recently, and thus there has been a large number of studies conducted to explore its existence in both spoken and written language within specific discourse or across linguistic. However, there is no precise definition for this term, and its definition has varied from researcher to researcher in many ways.

Borrowing from dictionary definition, to hedge means to limit or to protect something and to avoid making a definite statement or commitment. The term of hedges was popularized by Lakoff's (1972) in which he refers hedges as "words or phrases whose job is to make things more or less fuzzy." They function as communicative strategies to reduce the strength of statements, for scientists or



scholars are required to use a style of writing which reflects both personal modesty and honesty. Being too certain over the proposition claimed may be seen as arrogant and it will probably affect to not being well regarded by the international scientific community.

Using cautious language to mitigate statements or to show vagueness over the statements is worth to be considered by any scholars as every claim of academic knowledge is a threat to other researchers in the field, for they are free to judge the truth value of the claim. Therefore, Myers (1989) argues hedging in academic writing as one of a range of politeness strategies while claiming a statement or an assertion and it leads to the acceptance by the readers and the community as well. In the context of politeness strategy, hedging may be used to display not only the degree of confidence the writers have in their proposition, but also to what extent of confidence the writers feel it is appropriate to show.

Further, Hyland (1996) asserts hedges as words and phrases that signal the writer's lack of full commitment to a particular claim. Using hedges appropriately enables the writers to leave some rooms for the audiences or readers to judge the truth value of the proposition. It therefore protects the writer's reputation and minimizes the possible negative consequences which may be resulted from being proved wrong. Also, hedging can act as an interactional strategy which helps to build a relationship between the writer and the reader. In science, the writers should consider the readers' role in deciding their stance about the issues. In other words, , the use of hedges in claiming the knowledge indicates that the writer is aware of

the reader's opinion towards the knowledge to be claimed, and thus to show deference and respect for other researchers.

In addition, hedges emphasize the subjectivity of a position by allowing information to be presented as an opinion rather than a fact and therefore open that position to negotiation. Claim-making is risky, for it can contradict existing literature or challenge the research of one's readers. Thus, writers should consider to what extent they have to show the degree of the truth value of the assertion they make. (Hyland, 2005)

Along the same line with that, Cabanes (2007) defines hedging as the idea of 'barrier', 'limit', 'defend', or as the tools used to protect or defend oneself. Hedging is used to soften the statements so that the speaker or the writer gives freedom to the hearer or the reader to be able to judge for themselves.

However, to hedge does not mean always to be tentative over the assertions all the time. It simply means that when scholars would like to claim a proposition, they should express it with honesty, precision, and caution. They should also be diplomatic that are open to any criticisms from any other writers or researchers over the statements they make (Wallwork, 2011).

From the discussion above, it can be inferred that a hedge is an interactional device to mitigate the force of proposition that enables the writer to present the proposition cautiously, accurately, and modestly, so that the writer can gain the acceptance from the readers and the scientific community as well.

## **2.1.2 Studies on Hedging Classification**

It is considered to be difficult to classify hedging devices as there is no specific grammatical class of hedges. It is probably because they can be taken from any syntactic category. A word or a phrase can be considered to be as hedges if they function to make the strength of statements lesser. Thus, the identification of hedging devices in the text should be seen from the context they build rather than viewing them as a single word or phrase. Similar to the definition of hedging devices, the classification of hedging may vary from one researcher to researcher. However, the most acknowledged classification of hedging devices is the one that proposed by Hyland (1996) and Salager-Meyer (1994). The explanation of each will be presented below.

### **2.1.2.1 Hyland Classification**

Based on Hyland (1996) theory, hedging is typically expressed through five forms; Modal Verbs, Lexical Verbs, Adverbials, Adjectives and Passive Voice. The explanation of each will be presented below.

#### **a) Modal Verbs**

Modal verbs are the most frequently type of hedging devices used to soften the force of proposition. However, not all modal verbs can be considered as hedging devices. Those can be considered as hedging devices if they tone down the force of proposition and so they make the proposition vaguer. It is supported by Hyland (1998) statement that “while modal verbs can be readily identified in the sample corpus, the actual meaning expressed by modals is less clear”. So, modal verbs

enable the writer to display the degree of certainty towards what he/she claims. They also help to soften his or her proposition so that the reader will not be forced to accept the proposition, for he or she has freedom either to support or to contradict the proposition.

There are some motives underlying the use of modal verbs such as *would*, *will*, *could*, *may*, and *might*. First, *can* or *could* can be used to express an acceptance towards his/her proposition rather than the writer's judgment of its truth. The illustration can be clearly seen in this sample of sentence: *Self-motivation can affect the success of learning a new language*. In this sentence, the writer uses modal verb 'can' to get an acceptance from the readers towards what he/she thought about self-motivation. Second, modal verbs *may* and *might* can be used to show the writer's lack of confidence in the truth value of the statement, for example: *These results may have relevance to...* Third, modal verb *would* can be used to attenuate a proposition and express caution rather than a genuine hypothesis of the writer, for example: *It would be very interesting indeed to study with their methods...* Fourth, modal verb *should* can be used to express less certainty assumption of probability based on facts. It often relates to the subjectivity and logical assumption, and shows some degree of uncertainty. The last is modal verb *will* that can be used to weaken the strength of proposition by the use of prediction and inference respectively. The use of *will* can protect the writer from the possible negative result from being too certain over the assertion (Hyland, 1996).

## b) Lexical Verbs

Lexical verbs are used to show the writer's degree of confidence and leave room for readers to judge the truth value of the statements. Hyland considers lexical verbs as the most frequent means of expressing mitigation, for they offer writer with a various way to show the status of proposition, showing how the writer commits to the proposition he/she made. The most commonly used of lexical verbs to attenuate the assertions are: *think, suppose, suggest, propose, seem, guess, suspect, believe, argue, assume, indicate, appear, predict, claim, estimate*, and *tend to* also phrases that use any or a combination of these like *it may seem to appear, it might be suggested/argued/assumed/claimed/estimated/indicated*.

There are two types of lexical verbs, namely judgmental verbs and evidential verbs. Judgmental verbs allow the writer to give assumption towards the truth of a proposition. They may consist of conclusion and calculation as well as speculation, for example: *I believe that the overall orientation of...; Thus we propose that this insert is...* Meanwhile, evidential verbs refer to reasoning which is based on the fact or the report from others or the writer's finding itself, for example: *Trifonov has suggested that the 530 loop is a component...* (Hyland, 1996)

## c) Adjectives

Hedging adjectives make the proposition to be uncertain, not quite precise and vague. Adjectives that are commonly used to enable the writer express the assertion in tentative way are: *possible, probable, likely, usual, common, fair, slight, considerable, probable, apparent*, for example: *...is likely to be due primarily to a*

*deficiency of functional...;* Some hedging adjectives when they are used to make the proposition less certain, they are placed in an attributive position, that is in front of the noun, for example: *the existence of such a possible mechanism of translation regulation in plan cells was not investigated.*

#### **d) Adverbials**

Adverbs can be used by the writer to tone down the strength of the verb that convey an assertion which may result to an expression of uncertainty or lack of precision to an information. The occurrence of hedging adverbs can be found either in the beginning or in the middle of sentence like in the example: *There is apparently a relationship between...; Possibly, phosphorylation of ACC synthase....* Other most frequent adverbs used as a *downtoner* are: *almost, quite, maybe, perhaps, probably, possibly, apparently, generally, commonly, essentially, mostly, usually, largely, relatively, approximately, presumably,* and etc.

#### **2.1.2.2 Salager-Meyer Classification**

Salager-Meyer (1994) proposed the classification of hedging into five categories as follows:

##### **a) Shields**

Shields functions as expressions that change the extent to which the writer should liable for the assertions he/she make. It indicates the lack of commitment of the writer over his/her statements. Shields include all modal verbs expressing possibility; semi auxiliaries like *to appear, to seem*; probability adverbs like *probably, likely* and their derivative adjectives; epistemic verbs that is verbs which

express the writer propositional content and see the degree of certainty or possibility of the proposition, such as *to suggest, to speculate*.

### **b) Approximators**

Approximators are commonly used when the exact figures are irrelevant and imprecise that affect the truth value of the proposition and to avoid the writer personal involvement. Approximators enable the reader to widen the possible value of the proposition. There are four types of approximators. They are *approximators of degree* that concerned with the judgment of gradable constituent in relation to imaginary scale (e.g: His view on the matter is *quite* well received), *approximator of quantity* that specifies the quantity of something (e.g: There is *a lot of food* for everyone), *approximator of frequency* that indicates the number of the occurrence of something (e.g: *Sometimes* in life we are suggested to look deeper into the problems), and *approximator of time* that express for how long or how often the action is or was done (e.g: We have talked about the problems for *many* times). The most widely use of approximators are: *approximately, about, often, roughly, usually, generally, frequently, occasionally, somewhat, somehow, a lot of, almost, quite, sort of, etc.*

### **c) Author's personal doubt and direct involvement**

It refers to the expression that relate doubt, such as *I think, I take it, as far as I can tell, I believe, to our knowledge, we suggest, it is our view that...*

#### **d) Emotionally-charged intensifiers**

It refers to comment words used to project the writer's reactions such as *extremely* difficult/interesting, *dishearteningly* weak, of particular importance, particularly *encouraging*, *unexpectedly*, *surprisingly*.

#### **e) Compound hedges**

This type comprises string of hedges that is the construction of several hedges. Such compound hedges can be double hedges, such as *it may suggest that*, it could be suggested that, treble hedges such as *it would seem likely that*, *it seems reasonable to assume*, quadruple hedges such as *it would seem somewhat unlikely that*, and so on.

### **2.1.3 Studies on Hedging Functions**

Essentially, hedging devices indicate the writer's anticipation of the possibility of opposition to their statements. For the writers, there must be motives underlying the employment of hedging devices in their text that brings some advantages for them. Lakoff (1973), who popularized the term of hedging, considered two main functions served by hedging. First, hedges can help the writer to show the lack of certainty that the writer has over his statements. Hedges help writers to avoid being too certain about something. The second function is hedges are used to mitigate the claim or statements for the purpose of politeness. In other words, hedges help the writers to show their politeness as well as deference towards audience.



Hyland (1996) then proposed the functions of hedging devices into three broad functions. First, hedges enable the writers to present a proposition in appropriate language. Weakening an assertion by employing such linguistic devices called hedges may avoid the writer from being too certain towards the assertion they make as there is no absolute in science. Next is the use of hedging devices can protect the writers from possible negative effects from the proposition they make. Hedging devices here are to show a lack of full commitment over the statements they claim when later the readers or other researchers prove that their proposition are wrong. Finally, hedging devices help to develop relationship between the writer and the reader. Reducing the force of statements may leave room for doubt for the readers as they have freedom to give their stance about the issues claimed. The readers are free either to support or contradict the proposition the writers make. Indeed, the use of hedging devices will give contribution to the acceptance of our writing and propositions by the readers as well as the research community.

Furthermore, Salager-Meyer (1997) also argues that hedging devices serve three main rhetorical functions. First, hedging devices serve as threat minimizing strategies in which they are used to signal distance and to avoid absolute statements which may put the researchers and the institution they work at in an embarrassing situation. Second, hedging serves as strategies to accurately reflect the certainty of knowledge. It shows the extent to which the researchers should be liable for the proposition they claim. Finally, hedging devices serve as politeness strategies between the writers and the readers. Hedging devices are as tools that help the

researchers to claim the assertion that reflects honesty, modesty, and proper caution, so they are open to other possibilities of interpretations.

In addition, Cabanes (2007) suggested three main rhetorical functions or communicative goals served by hedges. First, hedges help the writers to protect themselves from any consequences of being proved wrong. So, hedges serve as a protection for the writer from any inappropriate claims. Next, hedges function as a tool to show the writer's politeness as well as deference toward the audience. Finally, hedges may serve as an evidence of the writer's consideration toward the degree of the truth value of the assertion that they have to show. In brief, how hedges are functioned in a statement depend totally on the interpretation from the reader and the communicative context it carries.

## **2.2 Studies on Hedging in Academic Writing**

Hedging devices constitute an important pragmatic feature of effective academic writing, as writers need to present their claims cautiously, accurately, and modesty in order to gain the acceptance from the readers and the community. Thus, there has been considerable research into the use of hedges in academic texts within different language, different major discipline, different research method and different genre.

Mojica (2005) explored the use of hedging devices within different major disciplines. The influence of different disciplines was investigated in the employment of hedging devices in the texts. The findings suggest that there was

significant differences in the two groups of authors' ways of showing commitment in which Engineers boost more while linguists hedge more.

Nivales (2011) is another example. 144 pages of introduction and conclusion sections in the randomly selected research articles of five different courses from both the arts and sciences disciplines investigated. It was found that hedges and boosters were almost equally used in both sections of the research article sample. The findings also suggest that the awareness of employing hedging and boosting devices to soften claims should be heightened.

In terms of language, Crompton (2012) is one of examples of the study of hedging used in different language. He investigated the use of hedging devices in 204 short essays written by non-native authors, that is Middle Eastern Students and in 189 editorials from four different UK broadsheet newspapers. It is found that the Middle Eastern students hedge less than the native speakers. This study also recommends that the exploration of hedging devices in native English speaker essays and editorials could serve as useful type of course instruction, so the non-native speakers are more aware of the use of hedging devices in natural context.

The study conducted by Samaie, Khosravian, & Boghayeri (2014) is another example of the use of hedging devices in different language. This study explored the use of hedging devices in forty introduction sections of academic research articles in the field of literature written by Persian and English Native Authors. The findings suggest that the use of hedging devices in the introduction section allows the writers to establish an early niche for the research. Also, it is found that hedges

are used differently by the writers of Persian and English in which native authors are considered to be more tentative in putting claims and in rejecting or confirming the ideas of others than Persian writers. Attention should be paid when the teacher designs the tasks and materials for teaching writing, so non-native authors are more aware of the use of hedging devices that may lead them to the acceptance of their research works in the international community.

Meanwhile, in Indonesian context, there have been several studies investigating the use of hedging devices in the academic text. Safnil (2003) investigated the use of hedging devices in one research article introduction section in the discipline of psychology. It was found that Indonesian authors are also aware of the employment of hedging devices, yet with some differences to the extent of native speaker does.

Another study focused on the exploration of how hedges are used in academic writing is the one which was conducted by Shafwati (2013). She explored the use of hedges in the introduction and conclusion sections of *skripsi* written by English department students of UNJ in the year of 2012. It was found that the most frequently used of linguistic devices to mitigate the statements is Adjectives. It can be inferred that ED students of UNJ are aware of hedging devices as they presented the negotiable information.

In addition, Sanjaya, Sitawati, & Suciani (2015) conducted a study which examined whether there is a significant difference between the research articles written by English and Indonesian in terms of the number of hedges used. It also

tried to find out whether Indonesian scholars are in need for special instructions in hedging propositions. 52 research articles of Applied Linguistic disciplines written in English and Indonesia were generated as the corpus for the study. The findings reveal that English research articles contain significantly more hedges than Indonesian and thus it suggests that Indonesian scholars need a special instruction for hedging the proposition properly.

From several studies have been conducted in the context of academic writing above, it can be inferred that hedges is essential in academic writing which contribute to the success of academic writing. Hedges allows scholars to take a stance over either the content or the reader, to mitigate the statements and anticipate audience responses by adjusting the degree of their certainty over their propositions. Therefore, this study aims at investigating how hedges are used in the research report, namely *skripsi*, a requirement to get a bachelor degree, and master theses, a requirement to get master degree which are still parts of academic writing.

### **2.2.1 Studies on Hedging in *Skripsi***

*Skripsi* is a part of academic writing in which they involve information gathering as well as a large amount of research and work in the process. Writing *skripsi* is an important part of the study program as this gives the students chance to use the research and writing skills that he or she learned in the program. They also serve as proof that the student gained knowledge in a particular field which later the students may publish as a way to gain a foothold in the field.

*Skripsi* is written by the last semester students as a requirement to graduate in the college to get the bachelor degree. *Skripsi* should be acceptable by their *skripsi*' examiner so that students can get the bachelor degree. In order their new ideas or new knowledge claim to be accepted by the examiner as well as the research community in the field, employing hedging in the writing process of *skripsi* would be helpful for the students as strategies to avoid the absolute statements which later may be proved wrong.

Claiming the assertions cannot be avoided in the writing of *skripsi*. Therefore, hedging devices may be used when the students claim the assertions so that their ideas can be well accepted by the readers and the examiner, especially. The exploration of hedging devices used in *skripsi* has been done by a number of researchers in Indonesia. One that focused on the employment of hedging devices in *skripsi* is the study conducted by Shafwati (2013). She explored the use of hedges in the introduction and conclusion sections of *skripsi* written by English department students of UNJ in the year of 2012. It was found that the most frequently use of linguistic devices to mitigate the statements is Adjectives. It can be inferred that ED students of UNJ are aware of hedging devices as they presented the negotiable information.

For that reason, this study used *skripsi* as the data source, for the occurrence of hedging devices as strategies to mitigate the statements may be found here which later will give us a deep insight of hedging devices used in *skripsi*.

### 2.2.2 Studies on Hedging in Master Theses

Master thesis is an academic text as a requirement for post graduate students to graduate in a university. They should present the study they have carried out in the research report organised with a highly stylistic related to the research topic. Each Master programme is likely having its own specifications which student should follow but the format is generally internationally recognisable. A thesis' writing styles and language are appropriately formal (Murphy, 2010).

Bui (2009) considered thesis as an original piece of work, written by the postgraduate students. She suggested that thesis is supposed to be an original piece of work as it represents students' abilities and their final research in order to get master degree. They also serve as proof that the student gained knowledge in a particular field which later the students may publish as a way to gain a foothold in the field.

Like *skripsis*, thesis generally, covers five sections, namely Introduction that presents the nature of study and reasons underlying the study; Literature Review that describes further about the topic and the conceptual framework of the study; Research Methodology that explains the design of the study as well as the technique in data collection and data analyses; Findings and Discussion that presents the result of the study and relates them to the existing theory or other previous researches; and Conclusion that includes implication and suggestion for further research. The different between them is in the depth of the analysis and the topics discussed.

Several numbers of studies on hedges used in master theses have been done. Musa (2014) explored the linguistic strategies that served as hedges employed in the Introduction and Discussion Sections of 40 English and Chemistry masters' theses (20 each from English and Chemistry). The results of the study revealed that the use of hedges is more in English master theses than in Chemistry.

Another study explored hedges in master theses is the one which was carried out by Pazhakh, Halabisaz, & Shakibafar (2014). They investigated the use of hedges in the total of 450 abstracts of pure linguistic theses written by 150 native English speakers, 150 non-native English speakers and 150 native Iranian speakers. The research findings suggest that despite the similarities in the employment of hedges in the abstract of theses that they share, it was also found that there were statistically significant difference between the employment of hedges in abstracts written by native English speakers and non-native English speakers. The number of hedges which are rarely found in the theses written by non-native speakers could happen because second language learning curricula tend not to explore more on the employment of hedges. Thus, the findings of study would be beneficial to academic students for developing theses, academic writing, and EFL writing instructions.

In short, from the studies above, the occurrence of hedges in master theses can be explored. Therefore, this study aimed at exploring the occurrence of hedges in master theses written by students of English Language Education Program in Jakarta.



### **2.3 Studies on Hedging in Discussion section**

Discussion which is a part of research report plays a significant role to give readers specific issues to the general concerns about the study. In this section, the writer presents all the answers to the research questions raised in the introduction part. This section is not merely to prove what has been done in the study, but rather to discover the findings related to the hypothesis the writer gives that will be beneficial for further exploration for the development of the study.

Yang & Allison (2003) proposed the move structure framework of discussion which identifies seven rhetorical moves, namely move 1 background information in which the writer restates the aims, objectives, procedural information, theories, and research questions. It functions as providing supported information about the study. Move 2 is reporting results in which the writers present the results of the studies, the main textual features which may be presented in examples, numerical values, graphs, tables, or observations. Move 3 is summarizing results which provides a brief account of the main points from the perspective of the overall study. Move 4 is commenting on results in which the writers provide subjective judgments about the results of the study, interpreting their findings, and comparing their studies with the literature, accounting and evaluating the results. Move 5 is summarizing the study which provides the summary of the whole study but not just a summary of the results as in move 3. Move 6 is evaluating the study in which the writers give their judgments over their studies in terms of significance, limitations, delimitations, innovations, strength, and weaknesses. Move 7 is deductions from research where the writers should make suggestions concerning

areas for further research or solutions to certain problems. In this move, the writer also presents the claims about the generality of some or all of the reported results.

From the framework proposed above, it can be assumed that discussion section is extensively hedged, for in this section the writers present their subjective judgment over the findings that later may be claimed as a new knowledge in the world of academic. Thus, the probability of the use of hedging devices in this section is likely to happen as a tool that helps to facilitate the writers when they claim the new proposition.

That is also confirmed by Salager – Meyer (1994) that suggests that there is a differential distribution of hedging frequency and hedging devices used in chapters of research paper in which Methods and Results section are low in terms of the distribution of hedging devices while Introduction and Discussion are extensively hedged. Moreover, according to Hyland (1998, P.154) “ It is in Discussions that authors make their claims, consider the relevance of results and speculate about what they might mean, going beyond their data to offer the more general interpretation by which they gain academic credibility. The level of generality, and therefore the density of hedges, is much higher here, as writers explore the ratifications of their results.”

For that reason, Discussion session is chosen as the focus of this study, for this part will give both the writer and the reader a deep insight of hedging devices used which later will function to assist the students especially to be aware of other

features when they write a research report so that they will gain an acceptance from the research community.

Numerous studies on hedges used in discussion sections have been investigated. Tran & Duong (2013) examined the use of hedges in the results and discussion section of research article in Applied Linguistic and Chemical Engineering. The findings suggest that there is a difference in the use of hedges between AL and CE in which the use of hedges in AL was more frequent than that in CE. Also, the qualitative analysis of hedging in both AL and CE showed that the use of hedges depended much on the nature of data in each discipline.

Hashemi & Shirzadi (2016) explored the use of hedges in 150 applied linguistic articles within three different methods (50 qualitative, 50 quantitative, and 50 mixed method studies). The findings indicated that hedging in the discussion section of quantitative applied linguistic articles had the highest frequency followed by mixed method studies and qualitative articles.

In addition, Atai & Sadr investigated hedging devices used in discussion sections of English Applied Linguistic Research Articles written by English and Persian Native Speakers. To find out whether language/culture affect to the use of hedging, they compared hedging used in discussion section of experimental and descriptive research articles. The findings revealed that there are significant differences in the use of hedging in the discussion sections of research articles written by English and Persian Native speakers. The findings also found that English native speakers tended to use a variety of terms to indicate their lack of full

commitment over the findings of their research. Also, the implication of this study may be beneficial for the teaching of English for Academic/Specific Purpose, especially to heighten students' awareness of hedges in writing.

The study above explored the use of hedges in the discussion sections of research article across different disciplines and different methods of study. Many also explored the use of hedges in the discussion section between native and non native writers to find out how language/culture affect to the use of hedging in academic writing. Meanwhile, to the best of the writer's knowledge, little attention have been focused on the study of how hedges are used in the discussion section across students with different levels of knowledge. To address the gap, this study aims at exploring hedges used in the discussion sections of *skripsi* and master theses to find out how education level have an impact to hedges used. To easily generalize, the source of data will be taken from the students of English Language Education Program in Jakarta, so it will not only include two universities, but three. Also, only discussion sections of *skripsi* and master theses which are presented separately from the findings were chosen.

## 2.4 Conceptual Framework

Hedging is an interactional device which the writer can use to weaken the force of the proposition. Hedging devices serve at least three communicative functions in the text. First, they can serve as threat minimizing strategies or self-protection in which they help the writer to avoid the negative possibilities that may be resulted from being too certain over the statements. It then will protect the writer or the institution from being embarrassed for the statements that are proved wrong. Second, it may serve as strategies to reflect the certainty of knowledge in which it indicates to what extent of certainty the writer should show over the proposition he/she makes. Finally, it serves as politeness strategies that enable the writers to claim his/her proposition that projects personal modesty, honesty, and with greater precision that reflect to the value of the scholars should have (Cabanés, 2007).

Academic writing consists of claiming the statements and propositions and as scholars, they are suggested to express it with caution and greater precision. That's why hedging is extensively used in academic writing. *Skripsi* and master theses are a part of academic writing that college students should complete in order to get a degree and graduate from the university. Both *Skripsi* and master theses consist of five chapters in which the Discussion section are extensively hedged.

For that reason, this study aimed at exploring hedges used in the Discussion sections of *skripsi* and master theses written by students of English Language Education program in Jakarta. The analysis were based on the classification from Salager-Meyer (1994) for the types of hedging used and Cabanes (2007) framework

for the analysis of the communicative functions of hedges served. This study also explored the similarities and differences that the discussion sections of *skripsi* and master theses share, and thus, it wish to suggest how education level of students affect to hedging devices used in their academic writing. The findings of study was expected to give an insight of hedging devices used in the discussion sections of *skripsi* and master theses written by students of English Language Education Program in Jakarta in claiming the assertions they make, and therefore will contribute to the consideration of designing course instruction for the teaching of academic writing in the study program.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

This discussion of this chapter focuses on three main sections of research mechanism procedures. The first section is the research design used by the writer to analyze the data. Next is the data and data source collection of the research. The last section is the steps in analyzing the data or data analysis procedures.

#### 3.1 Research Design

To answer the research question that was previously stated in Chapter I, content analysis was employed. It is because this research technique is used to determine an existence of certain words, themes, phrases, clauses, or sentences within texts. It is also as a technique for making reliable and valid inferences from texts (or meaningful matter) to the context of their use (Krippendorf, 2004). The text in this study is defined as discussion sections of *skripsi* and master theses written by students of English Language Education Program in Jakarta that are presented separately from the findings of the study. The concept to be analyzed in the text is all words and phrases considered as hedging devices. The content analysis design concerns in quantifying and analyzing the presence of concept, hedging devices, and end in creating interpretations.

#### 3.2 Data and Data Source

The data were all words and phrases considered as hedging devices that were taken from the discussion sections of *skripsi* and master theses which were presented separately from the findings of the study. The types of research report in

terms of *skripsi* and master theses were chosen because the researcher tried to find out how the writers of those two types of research report which have different level of education employed hedges in their writing which later answered the question to what extent the education level of the writers affect to hedging devices used in their academic writing.

In addition, the reason underlying the selection of discussion section of a research report as the focus of the study is partly because as what Salager-Meyer (1994) believed that discussion section tended to encompass hedges the most extensively followed by Introduction section. Besides, according to Yang & Allison (2003), in discussion section, there are seven compulsory moves that should exist in that section in which there is one move, namely Commenting Result which the writers are suggested to give their subjective judgment over the research findings which later might be claimed as a new knowledge. Thus, the existence of hedges cannot be avoided in the discussion section.

The selection of discussion sections of *skripsi* and master theses were based on the one that is presented separately with the findings section. Typically, Indonesian writers tend to combine the results and the discussion section into one. However, most of research reports written by native writers are arranged into IMRD section in which results and discussion section are presented separately. For that reason the choice of discussion sections are those presented separately from the findings.



The total of thirty data sources were gathered randomly from *skripsi* and master theses (15 for each) written by students of English Language Education Program in Jakarta. The selection of the data source that were taken from three different Study Programs and universities was aiming at providing other valuable factor that might contribute to hedging devices used in the academic writing, such as the quality of the Study Program seen from their accreditation as well as the quality of the research report itself. The selection of *skripsi* and master theses were based on the publication from 2014-2017 in the library.

### **3.3 Data Analysis Procedures**

This study employed qualitative approach. The procedures of the data analysis in this study are those suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994). According to them, qualitative data analysis involves three procedures, they are Data Reduction, Data Display, and Conclusion Drawing/Verification. Those procedures are three simultaneous activities, interacting throughout the analysis. The explanation of each procedure in analyzing the data in this study are as follows:

#### **1. Data Reduction**

Miles and Huberman (1994) proposed that Data Reduction involves the process of searching, selecting, focusing, abstracting and transforming the data that appear in written text. According to them, Data Reduction is the early stage to do the analysis in which it also involves Data Collecting Procedures. The objective of

data reduction is to reduce the data without losing any significant information. The explanations of this step are as follows:

- a) Searching *skripsi* and master theses which were available in the library of three different universities in Jakarta which have English Language Education Program.
- b) Selecting fifteen *skripsi* (five for each university) and fifteen master theses (five for each university) which were available in the library. The *skripsi* and master theses selected were those which were written by students of English Language Education Program focusing on English education issue in the year of 2014-2017.
- c) Focusing only on the discussion sections from many sections exist in *skripsi* and master theses.
- d) Abstracting all sentences under the discussion sections to words or phrases which were considered as hedges by employing Salager-Meyer (1994) taxonomy of hedges to find out the types of hedging devices used in that section.
- e) Abstracting all words and phrases considered as hedges in the discussion section by employing the communicative function framework proposed by Cabanes (2007) to find out the functions of hedging devices.
- f) Transforming the types and the functions of hedging identified in the discussion section into numbers and frequency as well as the percentage to know the distribution of the types and the functions of hedging devices identified.

## 2. Data Display

In this stage, the researcher displayed the data in the form of tables and charts. Those tables and charts could be categorized as the instruments of the present study that the researcher used to analyze the data in order to answer the research questions. The explanation of each instrument as well as the function of each are as follows:

- a) Instrument 1 was used to identify and classify the types of hedging devices in the discussion sections. This instrument was adapted from Salager-Meyer (1994) framework of hedging classification which is depicted as follows.

Instrument 1. Table 3.1: Table of Analysis of Hedging Categories (Source: Adapted from Salager-Meyer framework (1994))

<b>Data No</b>	<b>Hedges Excerpts</b>	<b>Hedging Devices</b>	<b>Hedging Classification</b>

- b) Instrument 2 was used to count the frequency and percentage of hedges identified in discussion sections of both *skripsis* and master theses. The table was as follows:

Instrument 2. Table 3.2. Table of Analysis of Distribution of Hedging Categories

<b>NO</b>	<b>HEDGING CATEGORIES</b>	<b>FREQUENCY</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE</b>
1	Shields		
2	Approximators		
3	Author's personal doubt		
4	Emotionally-charged intensifiers		
5	Compound Hedges		
	<b>Total</b>		

- c) To analyze and count the functions of hedging, instrument 3 was used which was based on the framework of Cabanes (2007).

Instrument 3. Table 3.4 Table of Analysis of Hedging Functions. (Source: Adapted from communicative functions proposed by Cabanes (2007))

NO	HEDGING CATEGORIES	FREQUENCY	FUNCTIONS	FREQUENCY
1	Shields		Self-protection from consequences of inappropriate claims	
			Showing politeness as well as deference toward audience	
			Showing the author's consideration of the degree of precision	
2	Approximators		Self-protection from consequences of inappropriate claims	
			Showing politeness as well as deference toward audience	
			Showing the author's consideration of the degree of precision	
3	The authors' personal doubt and direct involvement		Self-protection from consequences of inappropriate claims	
			Showing politeness as well as deference toward audience	
			Showing the author's consideration of the degree of precision	
4	Compound Hedges		Self-protection from consequences of inappropriate claims	
			Showing politeness as well as deference toward audience	
			Showing the author's consideration of the degree of precision	
	<b>Total</b>			

- d) Instrument 4 was used to analyze and count the categories of hedging used in the discussion sections of both *skripsis* and master theses for each university to find out the similarities and differences that they shared. The categories were adapted and modified based on the framework of Salager-Meyer (1994) which is depicted in the table below.

Instrument 4. Table 3.4 Categories of Hedging Devices in Discussion Sections of S-1 and S-2 Program for each university

NO	HEDGING CATEGORIES	UNIVERSITY 1		UNIVERSITY 2		UNIVERSITY 3	
		S-1 PROGRAM	S-2 PROGRAM	S-1 PROGRAM	S-2 PROGRAM	S-1 PROGRAM	S-2 PROGRAM
1	Shields						
2	Approximators						
3	The authors' personal doubt and direct involvement						
4	Emotionally-charged intensifiers						
5	Compound Hedges						
	<b>Total</b>						

### 3. Conclusion Drawing/Verification

Conclusion Drawing/Verification is the third steps of qualitative data analysis procedures. The first two procedures were helpful to assist the researcher to draw the conclusions over the findings of this study. This step might be considered as difficult since it involves a number of different analytical processes. In this study, conclusion were drawn after examining the types, the functions, and the distribution of hedges identified in the discussion sections of *skripsis* and master theses. From examining those three things in discussion sections of *skripsis* and master theses, the researcher then could draw for a conclusion of how they shared similarities and differences. To find out how education level affected hedging devices used in the discussion sections, the researcher drew the conclusion from the similarities and differences that they shared and explored more on the academic quality of the discussion sections.

## CHAPTER IV

### FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In this chapter, the researcher provides the findings and the discussion of the analysis of hedging devices in the discussion sections of *skripsis* and master theses in English Language Education Program in Jakarta. This chapter is organized to answer the main research questions of this study: “How are hedging devices used in discussion sections of *skripsis* and master theses of English Language Education Program in Jakarta?”

To answer the main research question, the following sub questions follows:

- a. What are hedging devices used in the discussion sections of *skripsis* and master theses?
- b. How are hedging devices distributed in the discussion sections of *skripsis* and master theses?
- c. How are hedging devices used as their functions in the discussion sections of *skripsis* and master theses?
- d. How do the discussion section of *skripsis* and master theses share similarities and differences in terms of hedging devices used in the discussion section?
- e. How does education level affect to hedging devices used in the discussion section of *skripsis* and master theses?



## **4.1 Findings**

This study analyzed hedging devices in the discussion section of *skripsis* and master theses written by students of English Language Education Program in Jakarta. After analyzing 15 *skripsis* and 15 master theses, this study identified that there were 157 hedging devices used in discussion sections of *skripsis* and 288 hedging devices used in discussion sections of master theses. After identifying the data, they were categorized, analyzed, and interpreted based on the functions and similarities and differences of hedging devices used. The researcher discovered the results of this study to answer the research question mentioned above as follows:

### **4.1.1 The Categories of Hedging Devices in the Discussion Sections of *Skripsis***

Based on the data, the study identified 157 hedging devices in 15 discussion sections of *skripsis* written by students of English Language Education Program in Jakarta. The 157 hedging devices in discussion sections of *skripsis* were categorized into four categories of hedging based on hedging categories proposed by Salager-Meyer (1994). The categories were presented in the following table:

Table 4.1 Categories of Hedging Devices in Discussion Sections of *Skripsis*

NO	HEDGING CATEGORIES	HEDGING DEVICES IDENTIFIED	PERCENTAGE
1	Shields	99	63.06%
2	Approximators	49	31.21%
3	The authors' personal doubt and direct involvement	7	4.46%
4	Compound Hedges	2	1.27%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 4.1 shows that *skripsi* writers employed hedging devices in discussion sections in different categories. This study employed hedging categories based on the framework proposed by Salager-Meyer (1994) which consists of Shields, Approximators, Author's Personal Doubt and Direct Involvement, Emotionally-charged intensifiers, and Compound Hedges. However, the findings of this study suggest that there were only 4 categories from the total of 5 categories proposed by Salager-Meyer (1994). The sub-points below will explain each hedging category identified in the discussion sections of *skripsis*:

a) Shields

In the discussion sections of *skripsis*, the highest rank of the employment of hedging identified in this study is Shields with 99 devices from the total of 157 hedging devices identified. Shield can be categorized as an expression that can change the extent to which the writer should be responsible for the precision he/she makes. Shields can be represented in all modal verbs expressing possibility; semi

auxiliaries like *to appear*, *to seem*; probability adverbs and their derivative adjectives; and epistemic verbs.

The present study found that Shields were mostly used in discussion sections of *skripsis* written by students of English Language Education Program in Jakarta. The most favored type of Shields identified in the discussion sections of *skripsis* was in the form of modal verbs. Here are the examples of the use of Shields in the text:

- (1) The results of speaking is the ability to communicate in speaking English that **can** be felt through the form of fluency in English ... (S4,P.56)
- (2) It occurred because the students were **likely** to have been familiar with the rule-based functions of articles and sentence structure (comma slices, run-ons, and fragment) at the beginning of the study.(S6,P.49)
- (3) Besides, enjoyable and cheerful situation **can** motivate students to learn better. (S11, P.58)

The examples above showed the use of Shields in the text to express the writer's lack of full commitment over the statement she/he claims. The example (1) used the device *can* which can be categorized as a modal verb. The use of *can* here indicated that the writer was not so sure about the statement she made. If it is analyzed deeper, from the writer perspectives, it was found that in the discussion section of S4 writer, there were only five Shields identified from the total of 11 hedging devices used. All five Shields identified were in the form of modal verb only. The types of Shields found here was not varied. Though the S4 writer

graduated from English Language Education program of University 1 which is accredited B by Banpt, the employment of hedges, especially in Shields category was limited here. A small number of hedges as well as Shields category might happen probably because, the discussion section of S4 was merely about presenting the findings. She did not evaluate her findings and confirm with the previous relevant studies results. Thus, the use of Shields in the discussion section of S4 served the function of interpreting the information from the table.

The example (2) used *likely* as a probability adverb to express the writer's doubt over the statement she made. She avoided from being too certain through the employment of probability adverbs. It was found that in this study, the discussion section of S6 written by student who graduated from B accredited study program of University 2, there were nine Shields identified in the form of modal verbs and probability adverb from the total of 17 devices identified. The more number of hedges in the category of Shields identified in the discussion section of S6 than that in S4 might probably happen because the discussion section of S6 was not merely about presenting the findings, but also involving the evaluation of the findings by relating to previous studies. Thus, the use of Shields was more varied in S6 than that in S4.

The example (3) used modal verb *can* to express the writer's statement with appropriate tone. From the discussion section of S11 written by the student graduated from accredited B Study Program of University 3, it was found that there were only four Shields identified from the total of seven hedging devices. All Shields categories were in the form of modal verbs. The small number and the less

varied use of Shields in the discussion section of S11 might be because the writer did not give evaluation as well as interpretation of her findings with previous relevant studies. It was merely the presentation of the findings without giving her personal judgment to the findings.

b) Approximators

This study suggested that Approximators can be considered as the second most frequently used of hedging with 49 devices of the total 157 hedging found in the discussion section of *skripsis*. Approximators are commonly used when the exact figures are irrelevant and imprecise that affect the truth value of the assertion. They can be categorized into four types. They are approximators of degree, approximators of quantity, approximators of frequency, and approximators of time. The examples are as follows:

- (1) NLP has become a technology of mind of the most popular and used by **many** people in the world. (S4,P.56)
- (2) The previous studies (Sheen, 2007; Bitchener, 2008; Bitchener and Knoch, 2008) used **some** structured (closed) texts (e.g. speeded dictation test and error correction test, see on Sheen (2007)) as their instruments. (S6,P.50)
- (3) There were **some** facts that were found during the observation in the class related to the teaching and learning reading in the class for junior high school level especially for seventh grade students of SMP Kuntum Wijaya Kusuma (S11, P.58)

The examples above showed the use of Approximators that was represented in three different types of Approximators. The example (1) used *many* that can be categorized as the Approximators of quantity expressing to what extent the writer show his precision over his statements. The writer of S4 employed four Approximators which were categorized into Approximators of quantity. The reason underlying the use of Approximators of quantity in the discussion sections of S4 was probably because the writer presented the findings of the study which was considered involving a lot of Approximators of quantity.

The use of *some* in the example (2) that can be categorized as Approximators of quantity was identified in the discussion section of S6 written by student of University 2. From the total of 17 hedging devices identified in the discussion section of S6, there were 8 Approximators which were represented in Approximators of quantity and Approximators of degree. Overall, the differences of frequency and the various types of Approximators identified in the discussion section of *skripsis* between University 1 and 3 might happen due to the research report quality.

Approximators of quantity was represented in the use of *some* in the example (3). In the discussion section of S11 written by student of University 3 which the Study Program is accredited B, it was identified that there were three Approximators in terms of Approximators of quantity. Again, the small number of Approximators might occur because of the structure of the discussion section which did not follow the standards.

c) Author's Personal Doubt and Direct Involvement

The third rank of hedging devices used in the discussion sections of *skripsis* in this study is a word or a phrase that expresses The Author's Personal Doubt and Direct Involvement. This category of hedging refers to the expression of the writer's doubt over the truth value of the statements he/she makes, and sometimes, it involves the writer directly. This study found 7 devices from the total of 157 hedging devices identified in discussion sections of *skripsis*. The examples can be seen in the following excerpts.

(1) Thus **we can conclude** that the sample comes from populations with normal distribution. (S4,P.55)

(2) **The researcher** also found two similar items which was not on Hyland's list of Interactive Metadiscourse. (S9,P.47)

Hedges excerpts above show that the use of *we can conclude* as in excerpt (1) might indicate the writer's involvement directly that it is based on their view that the writer can draw for a conclusion. It did not only show to what extent the writer should be liable for her/his statements, but also it functioned to leave some room for the reader or the audience to judge the truth value of the statements they make.

In the example (2), the writer used *the researcher* to show that the writer is responsible for any knowledge claim she/he makes. It can be assumed that the writer from the study program which is accredited B tried to avoid the use of the third personal pronoun in showing his/ her involvement. The study also found that the writers of *skripsis* from the same university used less for this category of hedge.

The reason might be because they did not want to show the audience that they should be liable for any knowledge claim that they make as what Hyland (1996) points out that hedges can help the writer to show their lack of full commitment over the assertions they make. Thus, to protect themselves from any threat resulted from any knowledge claim, the occurrence of this category in the discussion section of this university is low.

#### d) Compound Hedges

The fourth position of category of hedges identified in the discussion sections of *skripsis* in this study is Compound Hedges with only 2 devices for each identified in discussion sections of *skripsis*. This type of hedges can be considered as series of hedges that the writer can use to mitigate the statements so that the statements can be well accepted by the audience or reader. The examples of Compound Hedges can be seen in the following excerpts.

- (1) It is accordance to the second moves in finding and discussion section proposed by Brett, Posteguillo, Thompson, Yang, and Allison; explaining the preparatory by referring to the previous information which **could be probably** and effectively achieved by using endophoric markers.(S9,P.43)
- (2) It **can be considered** as the item of topic shift..(S9,P.42)

Based on the excerpts above, it indicates that the excerpt (1) used *could be probably* in which it is a combination of modal verb and adverbial expressing possibility. It functions to show the writer's politeness as well as deference toward the reader so that the statement can be well accepted. In this study, it was found that



Compound Hedges was not found in the discussion sections of *skripsis* written by students of S-1 program of University 1 and 3. It indicates that students of S-1 program of University 3 have higher awareness of this category of hedge.

#### 4.1.2 The Categories of Hedging Devices in the Discussion Sections of Master Theses

Based on the data, the present study identified 288 hedging devices in 15 discussion sections of master theses written by students of English Language Education Program in Jakarta. The 288 hedging devices identified in discussion sections of master theses were categorized within five categories of hedging. The categories were presented in the following table:

Table 4.2 The Categories of Hedging in Discussion Sections of Master Theses

NO	HEDGING CATEGORIES	TOTAL	PERCENTAGE
1	Shields	189	65.63%
2	Approximators	88	30.56%
3	The authors' personal doubt and direct involvement	8	2.78%
4	Emotionally-charged intensifiers	1	0.35%
5	Compound Hedges	2	0.69%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>288</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 4.2 shows that hedging devices used in discussion sections of master theses were categorized into five categories of hedging proposed by Salager-Meyer (1994). This study identified that from 288 hedging devices used in discussion sections of master theses written by students of English Language Education

Program in Jakarta, there were 189 Shields, 88 Approximators, 8 The author's Personal Doubt and Direct Involvement, 2 Compound Hedges, and 1 Emotionally-Charged Intensifiers.

In order to see how hedging devices identified in the discussion sections of master theses, the explanation as well as the discussion of each category of hedging found are presented in the sub-points below.

a) Shields

In the discussion sections of master theses, the highest rank of the employment of hedging identified in this study is Shields with 189 devices from the total of 288 hedging devices identified. Shield can be categorized as an expression that can change the extent to which the writer should be responsible for the precision he/she makes. Shields can be represented in all modal verbs expressing possibility; semi auxiliaries like *to appear*, *to seem*; probability adverbs and their derivative adjectives; and epistemic verbs.

The present study found that Shields were mostly used in discussion sections of master theses written by students of English Language Education Program in Jakarta. The most favored type of Shields identified in the discussion sections of master theses was in the form of modal verbs. Here are the examples of the use of Shields in the text:

- (1) Methods **tend** to be concerned primarily with the teacher and students role and behaviors and secondary with such feature as linguistic and subject-matter objectives, sequencing, and materials. (T2,P.70)

(2) In the middle of the program, they, **possibly**, face problem with their learning. (T7,P.105)

(3) They **might** not realize when they fail to plan means they plan to fail.(T11,P.72)

The use of *tend* categorized as Shields in the form of semi auxiliaries verb in the example (1) can reduce the writer's commitment of the truth of proposition. The writer of T2 that graduated from A accredited of Magister Program of University 1 used Shields category of hedges with 11 devices from the total of 21 devices. The identified Shields were in the form of 10 modal verbs and only one semi auxiliaries' verb. If it is compared between how S-1 program and S-2 program of University 1 in terms of Shields category used, it can be concluded that the number of Shields employed were much higher in S-2 program students than that in S-1 program students. The difference might occur because the discussion sections of S-1 program were merely about the presentation of findings while in S-2 program with the additional of evaluation of the findings with previous studies though they were not presented comprehensively, only at a surface.

The example (2) used *possibly* as an example of adverbials expressing the writer's uncertainty over the proposition that she made. The writer of T7 graduated from C accredited magister program of University 2. It was found in his discussion section that there were 22 Shields categories in the form of modal verbs, semi auxiliaries and adverbial from the total of 30 categories identified. Though the magister program where the writer of T7 graduated is accredited C, the number of the types of Shields category identified here is higher than that in the discussion

section of T2 in which the writer graduated from A accredited Magister Degree Program. This might happen because the discussion section of T7 was presented comprehensively than that in T2.

The last example of Shield category presented in the example (3) is the use of modal verb *might*. The use of *might* might indicate the writer's lack of confidence of the truth value of the assertions. It was found that there were 9 Shields in the form of modal verbs and semi auxiliaries found from the total of 16 hedging devices identified in the discussion section of T11 written by student of B accredited Magister Program of University 3.

In short, it can be inferred that Shields category were found the most dominated hedges types in the discussion sections of master theses. The variation of the Shields categories identified as well as the number existed might occur due to several factors. The academic quality of the researcher as well as the quality of the research report may affect to Shields categories used.

#### b) Approximators

This study suggested that Approximators can be considered as the second most frequently used of hedging with 88 devices from the total of 288 hedges found. Approximators are commonly used when the exact figures are irrelevant and imprecise that affect the truth value of the assertion. They can be categorized into four types. They are approximators of degree, approximators of quantity, approximators of frequency, and approximators of time. The examples are as follows:

- (1) They are **always** thought as being broadly applicable to variety of audiences in a variety of contexts. (T2,P.70)
- (2) They feel bored, tired, and, **sometimes**, indisciplined. (T7,P.105)
- (3) In their first diary, all of them considered memorising the patterns to be the principal grammar learning strategy they **commonly** used (T11,P.73)

The student from Magister Program accredited A of University 1 used Approximators of frequency *always* in the example (1). Approximators found in the discussion section of T2 were represented in the use of Approximators of quantity and Approximators of frequency.

The example (2) used *sometimes* to indicate the writer's imprecision about the value of the statement. It was found that the discussion section of T7 written by student of S-2 Program which was accredited C were still aware of the use of hedges in the Approximators categories.

The example (3) of *commonly* can indicate that the writer did not know the exact figures and just drew the conclusion in general. The reason behind this is that the writer did not want to show the degree of the certainty which was absolute as there is no absolute in science.

In short, it can be concluded that Approximators placed the second position after Shields in the discussion section of master theses. The high employment of Approximators might occur because in the discussion section, the writers are

suggested to present the findings of the study before giving any comments or evaluation by relating them with relevant studies.

c) Author's Personal Doubt and Direct Involvement

The third rank of hedging devices used in the discussion sections of master theses found in this study is a word or a phrase that expresses The Author's Personal Doubt and Direct Involvement. This category of hedging refers to the expression of the writer's doubt over the truth value of the statements he/she makes, and sometimes, it involves the writer directly. This study found 8 devices in the discussion sections of master theses. The examples can be seen in the following excerpts.

(1) Here **we can conclude** that the student to overcome their problems.

(T2,P.73)

(2) **I think** that the goals of English are not reached..(T5,P.86)

The use of *we can conclude* as in excerpt (1) shows the writer's involvement over the statements that she/he makes. Comparing to other sources of data in this study, the occurrence of this hedge category was the highest in the discussion sections written by S-2 program accredited A of University 1.

*I think* in the example (2) indicates to what extent the writer should show her/his certainty over the information presented. It involves the subjectivity of the writer as what Hyland (2005) points out that hedges help the writer to present the information as an opinion rather than a fact. It then mitigates the truth value of the

statements. In brief, this category of hedges occurred the most in the discussion sections of master theses accredited A.

#### d) Compound Hedges

The fourth position of category of hedges identified in the discussion sections of master theses in this study is Compound Hedges with only 2 devices. This type of hedges can be considered as series of hedges that the writer can use to mitigate the statements so that the statements can be well accepted by the audience or reader. The examples of Compound Hedges can be seen in the following excerpts.

(1) Yet, some of them **might sound** too practical, suitable only in context of working, so that they must be adjusted to fit classroom condition.

(T10, P.52)

(2) It **can** therefore **be assumed** that by doing this constantly, the students' vocabulary mastery could increase significantly. (T14, P.40)

The writer used *might sound* in excerpt (1) in which it was a combination of modal verb and semi-auxiliaries. It was found in this study that the category of Compound Hedges in the discussion sections of master theses written by students of C accredited S-2 program was only one device. Meanwhile, in excerpt (2), the use of *can be assumed* can be considered as Compound Hedges comprised of modal verb and epistemic verb. Those Compound Hedges served to tone down the strength of the statements so that it can avoid the writer as well as in the institution from the embarrassment if later their statements are proved wrong or inappropriate.

In brief, the employment of Compound Hedges in the discussion sections of master theses seems to be different while in A accredited S-2 program was found there was none for this hedge category, in B accredited S-2 program was found one device and another one device was found in C accredited S-2 program. The tendency of the better the S-2 program is, the better the students' awareness of hedges will be can be considered was not able to be applied for this matter.

e) Emotionally-charged intensifiers

The least category of hedging found in the discussion sections of master theses in this study is a word or a phrase that can be considered as Emotionally-charged intensifiers. In this study, there was only one device identified for this category that was the one in discussion section of master theses written by student of B accredited S-2 Program. The excerpt can be seen in the following.

(1) This active atmosphere is **definitely** good for learning. (T13, P.56)

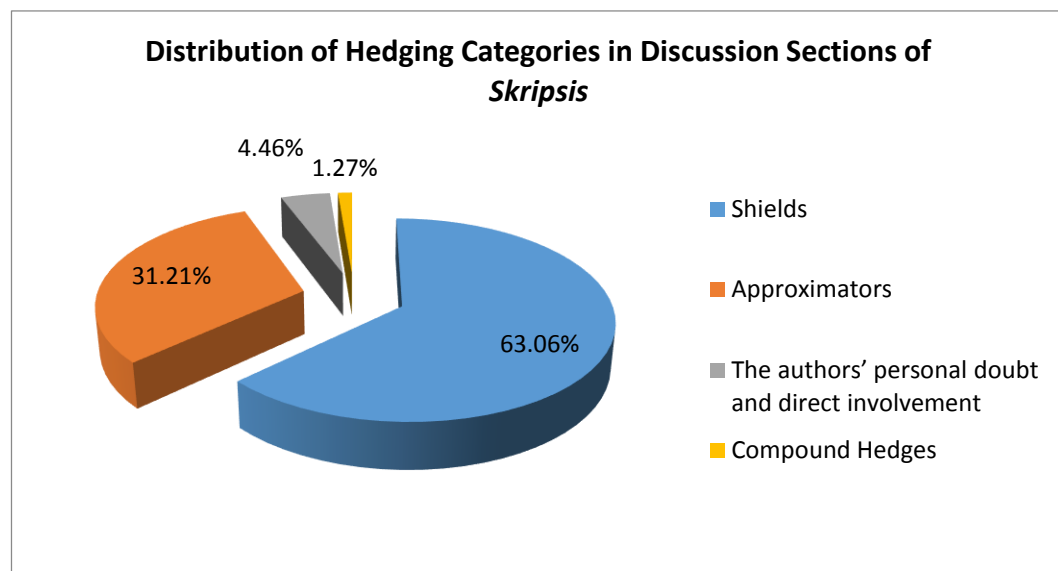
From the excerpt above, it can be assumed that the writer involved his/her opinion or reaction toward the statement he/she claimed with the use of *definitely*. The reason underlying the occurrence were only in the discussion section of master thesis written by student of B accredited S2 program was the tendency of the higher of education level is the higher hedging awareness is.



### 4.1.3 The Distribution of Hedging Categories in the Discussion Sections of *Skripsi*

Based on the data, the distribution of hedging categories were dominated by Shields, followed by Approximators. The distribution of hedging devices in discussion sections of *skripsi* written by students of English Language Education Program in Jakarta can be seen in the following chart:

Chart 4.3 The Distribution of Hedging Categories in Discussion Sections of *Skripsi*

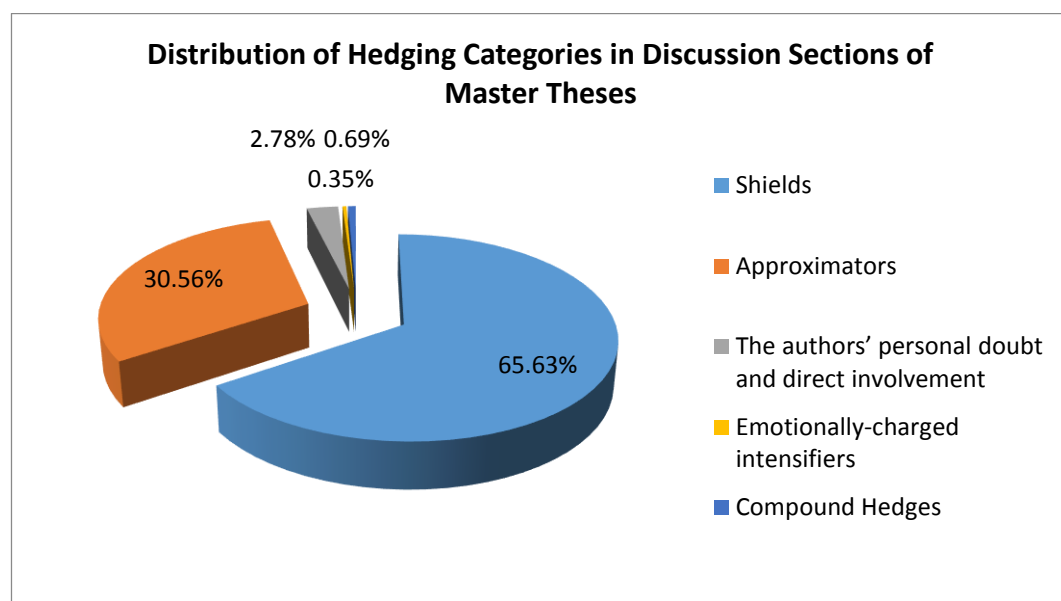


Based on the chart above, this study found that from 157 hedging devices used in discussion sections of *skripsi*, 63.06% were dominated by Shields, followed by 31.21% Approximators, 4.46% The Author Personal Doubt and Direct Involvement, and 1.27% Compound Hedges. This study revealed that from 157 hedging devices identified, 99 devices (63.06%) were categorized as Shields, followed by Approximators with 49 devices (31.21%).

#### 4.1.4 The Distribution of Hedging Categories in the Discussion Sections of Master Theses

Based on the data, the distribution of hedging categories in the discussion sections of master theses were dominated by Shields, followed by Approximators. The distribution of hedging devices in discussion sections of master theses written by students of English Language Education Program in Jakarta can be seen in the following chart:

Chart 4.4 The Distribution of Hedging Categories in Discussion Sections of Master Theses



Based on the chart above, this study found that from 288 hedging devices used in discussion sections of master theses, 65.63% were dominated by Shields, followed by 30.56% Approximators, 2.78% The Author's Personal Doubt and Direct Involvement, 0.69% Compound Hedges and 0.35% Emotionally-Charged Intensifiers. This study revealed that from 288 hedging devices identified, 189 devices (65.63%) were categorized as Shields, followed by Approximators with 88

devices (30.56%). In other words, hedging devices in discussion sections of master theses written by students of English Language Education Program in Jakarta were dominated by Shields and Approximators.

In brief, the present study identified that one of the similarities that the discussion sections of *skripsi* and master theses shared was in terms of the two most favored category of hedges employed, they are Shields in the form of modal verbs and Approximators in the form of Approximators of quantity. This similarity might occur because in the discussion section the writer should present the findings in which the writer tends not to be too certain over the information that they got from their findings. Thus, to appropriately show the degree of the certainty over the assertions toward the audience, the writer add any kind of modal verbs expressing possibility. Also, when the writer presents the findings of the study in the discussion section, they cannot avoid the use of Approximators of quantity when the writer cannot find the precise or exact figures or numbers of their research findings. Therefore, the occurrence of Shields in the form of modal verbs and Approximators in the form of Approximators of quantity might be found more extensive in the discussion section.

#### **4.1.5 The Functions of Hedging Devices in the Discussion Section of *Skripsi* and Master Theses**

After analyzing the categories and the distribution of hedging, this study also analyzed the functions of hedging. The analysis of hedging devices identified in *skripsi* seems to indicate that they fulfill three main rhetorical functions or

communicative goals. Firstly, hedging devices identified seem to show politeness as well as deference toward audience; secondly these devices seem to serve as a self-protection from the writer from consequences of inappropriate claims or being proved wrong; and finally hedging devices identified seem as a tool to show the author's consideration of the degree of precision (Cabanés, 2007). The functions of hedging devices identified were presented in details in the table below:

Table 4.5 The Functions of Hedging in Discussion Sections of *Skripsi*

NO	HEDGING CLASSIFICATION	FREQUENCY	FUNCTIONS	FREQUENCY
1	Shields	99	Self-protection from consequences of inappropriate claims	98
			Showing politeness as well as deference toward audience	0
			Showing the author's consideration of the degree of precision	1
2	Approximators	49	Self-protection from consequences of inappropriate claims	0
			Showing politeness as well as deference toward audience	0
			Showing the author's consideration of the degree of precision	49
3	The authors' personal doubt and direct involvement	7	Self-protection from consequences of inappropriate claims	0
			Showing politeness as well as deference toward audience	0
			Showing the author's consideration of the degree of precision	7
4	Compound Hedges	2	Self-protection from consequences of inappropriate claims	1
			Showing politeness as well as deference toward audience	1
			Showing the author's consideration of the degree of precision	0
<b>Total</b>		<b>157</b>		<b>157</b>

Based on the table above, it can be seen that this study found Shields with 95 devices serve as Self-protection from consequences of inappropriate claims and 1 as Showing the author's consideration of the degree of precision; 49 Approximators that serve Showing the author's consideration of the degree of precision; 7 The authors' personal doubt and direct involvement devices that serve as Showing the author's consideration of the degree of precision; and 1 Compound Hedges that serve as Self-protection from consequences of inappropriate claims and another one Compound Hedges serves as showing politeness as well as deference towards audience.

Meanwhile, the analysis of hedging devices identified in master theses seems to indicate that they fulfill three main rhetorical functions or communicative goals. Firstly, hedging devices identified seem to show politeness as well as deference toward audience; secondly these devices seem to serve as a self-protection from the writer from consequences of inappropriate claims or being proved wrong; and finally hedging devices identified seem as a tool to show the author's consideration of the degree of precision (Cabanés, 2007). The functions of hedging devices identifies are presented in details in the table below:

Table 4.6 The Functions of Hedging Devices in Discussions Sections of Master Theses

NO	HEDGING CLASSIFICATION	FREQUENCY	FUNCTIONS	FREQUENCY
1	Shields	189	Self-protection from consequences of inappropriate claims	186
			Showing politeness as well as deference toward audience	3
			Showing the author's consideration of the degree of precision	0
2	Approximators	88	Self-protection from consequences of inappropriate claims	0
			Showing politeness as well as deference toward audience	0
			Showing the author's consideration of the degree of precision	88
3	The authors' personal doubt and direct involvement	8	Self-protection from consequences of inappropriate claims	8
			Showing politeness as well as deference toward audience	0
			Showing the author's consideration of the degree of precision	0
4	Emotionally-charged intensifiers	1	Self-protection from consequences of inappropriate claims	0
			Showing politeness as well as deference toward audience	0
			Showing the author's consideration of the degree of precision	1
5	Compound Hedges	2	Self-protection from consequences of inappropriate claims	2
			Showing politeness as well as deference toward audience	0

			Showing the author's consideration of the degree of precision	0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>288</b>		<b>288</b>

Based on the table above, it can be seen that in the discussion sections of master theses, this study found the category of Shields with 186 devices serve as Self-protection from consequences of inappropriate claims and 3 devices as Showing politeness as well as deference toward audience; 88 Approximators that serve as Showing the author's consideration of the degree of precision; 8 The authors' personal doubt and direct involvement devices that serve as Self-protection from consequences of inappropriate claims; 1 Emotionally-charged intensifiers that serve as Showing the author's consideration of the degree of precision; and 2 Compound Hedges that serve as Self-protection from consequences of inappropriate claims.

The explanation for the communicative functions of hedging identified in the discussion sections of *skripsis* and master theses will be presented in the sub-points below.

a) Self-protection from consequences of inappropriate claims

The first and the most functions of hedges served in this study in both discussion sections of *skripsis* and master theses is as a self-protection for the writer from consequences of inappropriate claims. For the rhetorical functions, hedging mainly serves to mitigate the statement so that it helps the writer to state the statements in an appropriate way. Hedges avoid the writer from being too certain



over the assertions he/she makes. So, when later, the statements or the knowledge claimed are proved wrong, it would not put the writer as well as the institution at the embarrassment (Hyland (1996); Salager-Meyer (1997)).

How hedges are functioned as a self-protection for the writer can be seen in the following examples.

- (1) Another difference in findings **might** also be explained by the test instruments used.(S6,P.50)
- (2) It occurred because the students were **likely** to have been familiar with the rule-based functions of articles and sentence structure (comma slices, run-ons, and fragment) at the beginning of the study.(S6,P.49)
- (3) The writer **suggests** the last sentence should be revised. (S12, P.58)
- (4) Methods **tend** to be concerned primarily with the teacher and students role and behaviors and secondary with such feature as linguistic and subject-matter objectives, sequencing, and materials. (T2,P.70)
- (5) They **might** not realize when they fail to plan means they plan to fail.(T11,P.72)

In example (1), the writer used modal verb *might* which can be categorized as Shields. The use of *might* in this excerpt shows that the writer is not too certain about the truth value of the statements he/she makes. The use of modal verb is here to weaken the strength of the statement so that it will save the writer's face when later his/her ideas are inappropriate or proved wrong by other researchers in the field.

The use of *likely* in the example (2) which can be categorized as Shields in the form of probability adverb seems to indicate that the writer is not really sure about the degree of the certainty of the statement. It therefore mitigates the truth value of the statement. It is also as a strategy from the writer to minimize the consequences when later the audience or other researches contradict to their findings.

To avoid the absolute statement of the sentence in the example (3), *suggest* is used. This word can be categorized as Shields in the form of epistemic verb. The use of epistemic verb is helpful for the writer as it will tone down the degree of certainty of the writer toward the assertion being claimed.

The writer in excerpt (4) used *tend* which can be categorized as Shields category. It can be clearly seen that the use of semi-auxiliaries in this excerpt helps the writer to state the claim in an appropriate degree of certainty, so if later the claim are proved wrong, it would save the face of the writer.

In example (5) the use of *might*, modal verb, that can be categorized as Shields serve the function to protect the writer from any possible bad consequences from the knowledge claim.

In short, based on the findings of this study, it can be assumed that the main reason for the students of both S1 and S2 Study Program of English Language Education in Jakarta employed a word or a phrase considered as hedges is to mitigate the truth value of the statement so it will serve as a strategy to protect the writer from any consequences or threat which may appear later when the statements

or the knowledge they claim are proved wrong. To realize this intention of the writer, Shields category was employed.

b) Showing the author's consideration of the degree of precision

One of the functions of hedging devices is that they will help the author to show to what extent of the degree of their certainty over the statements that they should display to the audience. Hedging can be helpful for the writer when the writer does not include the exact figures or when the exact figures or numbers are irrelevant and mostly, it can be realized through the use of Approximators.

This study found that the second most reason underlying the employment of hedging in discussion sections of *skripsi* and master theses written by students of English Language Education Program in Jakarta is to help them to consider about the degree of precision that they should display to the audience over the assertions they make. It can be clearly seen in the following hedging excerpts:

- (1) Meanwhile their comprehension, grammar, and vocabulary have better result but not **quite** good. (S3,P.68)
- (2) Even though all types of interactive metadiscourse were used in finding and discussion section of theses, **several** items of each type were underused, it was only used once.(S9,P.34)
- (3) Even if they had **some** difficulties, they still expected the teacher's defense rather than modifying the strategies used. (T11,P.72)
- (4) **Mostly**, students complain when they got lost of internet connection,...(T7,P.105)

(5) They feel bored, tired, and, **sometimes**, indisciplined. (p.105)

In the example (1), the writer used *quite* that can be categorized as Approximators of degree and the use of *several* in example (2) as Approximators of quantity to indicate the writer's uncertainty about the exact figures they should display over the assertions they make. For that reason, they employed hedging devices for the category of Approximators since it helps them to show to what extent of the degree of the truth value of the statements they should display to the audience.

In example (3), the writer used *some* as a type of Approximators of quantity in which in this case, the writer seems to be not certain about the number of quantity of the difficulties the students experienced. Since, the writer could not find the exact figures for this quantity, hedging can be used to indicate the degree of the precision over the statement the writer makes.

In example (4), the use of Approximators of degree *mostly* helps the writer to show to what extent of the degree of precision for the statement he/she makes. Meanwhile, in the example (5), the writer used *sometimes* as a type of Approximators of frequency. It can be assumed that the writer did not give the exact frequency for the figure stated in the claim, thus the writer employed hedges to show the degree of certainty of the truth value of the assertions.

In brief, the second most underlying reason behind the employment of hedging in discussion sections of master theses is to show the author's consideration of the degree of precision. It helps the reader or the audience to figure out to what extent of the truth value of the assertions they make.

c) Showing politeness as well as deference towards audience

Cabanes (2007) proposed that one of communicative goals of the use of hedging is to show the politeness as well as deference towards the audience. Myers (1989) also accounts for hedging in academic writing as one of a range of politeness strategies which reflects the writer's modesty.

Salvager-Meyer (1997) suggests that the realization of this function may be achieved through the use of Emotionally-charged intensifiers and Compound Hedges category. It will be clearly seen in the following example.

- (1) It is accordance to the second moves in finding and discussion section proposed by Brett, Posteguillo, Thompson, Yang, and Allison; explaining the preparatory by referring to the previous information which **could be probably** and effectively achieved by using endophoric markers.(S9,P.43)
- (2) It **can be considered** as the item of topic shift ..(S9,P.42)
- (3) Yet, some of them **might sound** too practical, suitable only in context of working, so that they must be adjusted to fit classroom condition. (T10,P.56)
- (4) It **can** therefore **be assumed** that by doing this constantly, the students' vocabulary mastery could increase significantly.(T14,P.60)

From the example (1), the hedging devices identified is *could be probably* in which it can be categorized as Compound Hedges which comprised of modal verb and probability adverb. In this example, this device may function to help the

writer express the statements in an appropriate way or appropriate degree of certainty which may reflect to the writer's modesty. Therefore, the use of Compound Hedges may serve as a range of politeness strategies, for it will make the statements more well accepted by the audience.

In example (2), Compound Hedges consisted of modal verb and epistemic verb through the use of *can be considered* seem to show the writer's politeness as well as deference toward the audience. Beside to avoid the absolute statement, this hedging device might also function as a tool to soften the statement so that it can be more well-accepted for the audience.

The use of Compound Hedges in example (3) *might sound* which comprised of modal verb and semi-auxiliaries can be indicated as a sign of showing the writer's politeness in claiming the statements in which the writer is considered being careful when claiming the statement.

In example (4) the use of modal verb and epistemic verb help the writer to avoid being too certain over his claim and thus showing their respect toward the audience in which the writer considers about the audience's free judgment over the statements he/she claimed.

In short, the writers of *skripsi* and master theses of English Language Education Program in Jakarta can be suggested in a need of an awareness of how to show their respect toward the audience through the use of a word or phrase called hedges. It is partly because the occurrences of Compound Hedges and Emotionally-

charged intensifiers category in the discussion section which might realize politeness over the statements they make are still beyond the expectation.

#### 4.1.6 The Categories of Hedging Devices in the Discussion Sections of S-1 and S-2 Program for Each University

To answer the research question of the similarities and differences of the discussion sections of *skripsis* and master theses that they share, it will be helpful to look at more details first about hedging devices employed in discussion sections written by students of S-1 and S-2 Study Program for each university. The data were presented below:

Table 4.7 Categories of Hedging Devices in Discussion Sections of S1 and S2 Program for each university

NO	HEDGING CATEGORIES	UNIVERSITY 1		UNIVERSITY 2		UNIVERSITY 3	
		S1 PROGRAM	S2 PROGRAM	S1 PROGRAM	S2 PROGRAM	S1 PROGRAM	S2 PROGRAM
1	Shields	29	44	44	84	26	61
2	Approximators	11	17	29	41	9	30
3	The authors' personal doubt and direct involvement	6	8	1	0	0	0
4	Compound Hedges	0	0	2	1	0	1
5	Emotionally-charged intensifiers	0	0	0	0	0	1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>93</b>

From the table above, it was found that the number of hedging devices employed in the discussion sections written by students of S-1 Study Program for the category of Shields, University 2 has the most number with the total of 44 and followed by University 1 with 29 devices and University 3 with 26 devices. For Approximators category, University 2 also was in the first position with the total devices of 29, followed by University 1 with the number of 11 devices, and University 3, 9 devices. University 1 has the most devices for The Authors' personal doubt and direct involvement category with the total of 6 devices followed by University 2 with the total of only 1 device. Meanwhile, University 3 did not use hedges for this category. For the category of Compound Hedges, it was only University 2 that used this device with the total number of 2 devices.

In terms of hedging devices used in the discussion sections written by students of S-1 Program, from the data above, it can be concluded that the discussion sections written by students of S-1 Program of three different universities share some similarities and differences. In terms of similarities, students of those three universities were able to employ hedging devices in discussion sections of *skripsis*. All S-1 program writers were able to recognize hedging devices to mitigate the statements by the use of Shields and Approximators category.

Meanwhile, the differences were underlying in some cases. First, the total number of hedging devices used in those three universities. The findings suggest that students of S-1 Study program from university 2 has the highest awareness of the utilization of hedging devices with the total of 76 devices. The second rank was



students from University 1 with the total of 46 devices found in their discussion section. The last is students from University 3 in which there were 35 devices identified. In terms of the types of categories identified in discussion section, University 2 used all types of hedging devices found in this study, namely Shields, Approximators, The Author's personal doubt and direct involvement, and the last is Compound Hedges. The next is students from University 1 that employed three categories of hedging identified in their discussion section, namely Shields, Approximators and The Author's personal doubt and direct involvement. The last position is University 3 in which in the discussion sections, it was found that there were only two categories of hedging identified, namely Shields and Approximators.

The reason underlying the difference of the utilization of hedges in the discussion sections of those three S-1 Study programs might happen because the quality of the academic writing that they have. Though those three S-1 Study Programs are accredited B, they do not have the same structure of the discussion section. It was found in this study that the structure of the discussion section written by students of S-1 Program of University 1 and 3 do not meet the compulsory moves which have been a standard in academic writing. Therefore, it might affect to hedging devices identified in this section.

Next, is about hedging devices used in the discussion sections written by students of S-2 Program. From the table above, it was found that in discussion sections of master theses of University 1, from the total of 69 hedging devices identified, Shields were dominantly used with the total of 44 devices followed by Approximators with 17 devices. The next is 8 devices for The authors' personal

doubt and direct involvement category. In University 2, Shields were dominantly used with 84 devices from the total of 126 hedging devices identified. The next position is Approximators with 41 devices and the last is Compound Hedges with only 1 device identified. Meanwhile, there were four categories of hedges identified in University 3. The most dominant category was Shield with 61 devices from the total of 93 hedges found. The second most frequently used is Approximators with 30 devices. The last is Compound Hedges and Emotionally Charged-Intensifiers with only one device for each category.

In other words, the similarity that the discussion sections written by students of S-2 Program from three universities shared was those were dominated by the use of Shields and Approximators. The difference is in terms of the frequency of hedging devices identified in this section. From the data, it was suggested that S-2 Study Program which is considered as good and is accredited A might not affect to the quality of academic writing. The findings revealed that the discussion sections of students of S-2 Study Program which is accredited A were found to be the least in the utilization of hedges with the total of 69 devices. The next rank of higher use of hedges in the discussion sections are those written by students of S-2 Study Program which is accredited B with the total of 93 devices found. Meanwhile, the highest employment of hedges in the discussion sections is those written by S-2 Study Program which is accredited C with the total of 126 devices identified.

In short, several factors may contribute to hedging devices used in the discussion sections written by S-1 and S-2 Study Program. The tendency of the higher the education level is, the higher hedging awareness is can be considered as

relevant to these present study findings in which the total of hedging devices identified in discussion sections written by S-2 Study Program were much higher than those written by students of S-1 Study Program. However, the academic quality of the students as well as the academic writing itself may also contribute to hedging devices used.

## 4.2 Discussion

This study was aimed at exploring hedging devices used in the discussion sections of *skripsi* and master theses written by students of English Language Education Program in Jakarta. More specifically, this study explored hedging devices in terms of the types which were based on Salager-Meyer (1994) categories of hedges and the communicative functions they served (Cabanes, 2007). It also discussed the similarities and differences that the discussion sections of *skripsi* and master theses share in terms of hedging used which later could be drawn for a conclusion whether education level affect to hedging used. The following is the discussion of the findings which later will provide us with the answer to the research questions of the study mentioned.

This study found that there were 157 hedging devices in the discussion sections of *skripsi* which were categorized into four types of categories of hedges proposed by Salager-Meyer (1994), namely Shields, Approximators, The Author's Personal Doubt and Direct Involvement, and Compound Hedges. It was also found

that hedging used in discussion sections of *skripsis* were dominated by Shields (63.06%) and Approximators (31.21%).

Meanwhile, it was found that there were 288 hedging devices in the discussion sections of master theses which could be categorized into five categories of hedging by Salager-Meyer (1994), namely Shields, Approximators, The Author's Personal Doubt and Direct Involvement, Emotionally-charged intensifiers and Compound Hedges. The findings also revealed that 65.63% of the total were dominated by Shields and another 30.56% by Approximators.

Based on the data presented above, it can be inferred that the most frequently used of hedging devices in the discussion sections of *skripsis* and master theses which was based on the category of hedges proposed by Salager-Meyer (1994) is Shields and Approximators. More specifically, the most frequently use of hedging devices is in terms of modal verbs for the category of Shields and Approximators of quantity for the category of Approximators.

The findings of this study confirmed the results of the study suggested by Sahragard, Ahmadi, & Zadeh (2016). They analyzed 100 research articles in applied linguistics discussing the importance, frequency, and distribution of hedging categories in different sections of research articles written by native and non-native writers by employing Salager-Meyer classification (1994). The findings suggested that the most frequently use of hedging in discussion sections of research articles in applied linguistics is Shields category in terms of modal verbs and the least is emotionally-charged intensifiers.

It was also in line with the study conducted by Salager-Meyer (1994). She suggested that in the discussion sections, Shields in the form of modal verbs were the most frequently employed that signaled the utilization of hedges. Also, it confirmed the findings of study suggested by Mojica (2005). She suggested that the most favored form of hedges that appeared in the academic writing is in the form of modal verbs and probabilities.

In addition, Tran & Duong (2013) on their study on comparing the use of hedges in the research articles results and discussion in Applied Linguistic and Chemical Engineering, suggest that there is a difference in the use of hedges between AL and CE in which the use of hedges in AL was more frequent than that in CE. The result of this study was also in line with the findings of this study in which in Applied Linguistic research articles of Results and Discussion section, it was found that modal verbs are the most frequently used of hedging.

To sum up, the typical of hedges in the discussion sections is Shields in terms of modal verbs and Approximators in terms of approximators of quantity. The high use of modal verbs and approximators of quantity that signaled hedges in the discussion sections might be probably because in the discussion sections, the writer should present the qualitative and quantitative information as well as to show the reader to what extent of the truth value of the information the writer should show appropriately that later may put the writer as well as the institution at embarrassment if the statements are proved wrong.

In terms of the functions, the findings of this study suggested that at least there are three communicative functions served by the use of hedging devices in the discussion sections of *skripsis* and master theses. First, hedges help the writers to protect themselves from any consequences of being proved wrong. So, hedges serve as a protection for the writer from any inappropriate claims. Next, hedges function as a tool to show the writer's politeness as well as deference toward the audience. Finally, hedges may serve as an evidence of the writer's consideration toward the degree of the truth value of the assertion that they have to show. In brief, how hedges are functioned in a statement depend totally on the interpretation from the reader and the communicative context it carries. (Cabanés,2007)

Next is about the similarities and differences that the discussion sections of *skripsis* and master theses share in terms of hedging devices. The similarities is in terms of the types of hedging categories found in two different data sources. From the data above, it can be inferred that the discussion sections of *skripsis* and master theses share similarities in which the most favored categories classified by Salager-Meyer (1994) that exist in the data sources is the use of Shields and Approximators. The differences of the discussion sections of *skripsis* and master theses that they share is in terms of the frequency of the hedging devices used.

From the distribution of hedging devices in discussion sections of *skripsis* and master theses, it was found that the discussion sections of master theses employed more hedging devices with the total number of 288 hedges. Meanwhile, the total of hedging devices found in the discussion sections of *skripsis* was fewer with the total of 157 hedging devices.

The differences that exist among them in terms of the total number of hedging devices used might happen for several reasons. The first factor that might contribute to the different frequency of hedging for each category among the discussion sections of *skripsi* and master theses is the source of data. To the best of the writer's knowledge, what was included in the discussion sections might contribute to the number of hedging devices used. The reason underlying why the discussion section of *skripsi* employed fewer hedges than in master theses, might happen because some discussion sections of *skripsi* could not be considered fulfilling the moves that should exist in the discussion section proposed by Yang & Allison (2003).

Yang & Allison (2003) proposed the move structure framework of discussion which identifies seven rhetorical moves, namely move 1 background information in which the writer restates the aims, objectives, procedural information, theories, and research questions. It functions as providing supported information about the study. Move 2 is reporting results in which the writers present the results of the studies, the main textual features which may be presented in examples, numerical values, graphs, tables, or observations. Move 3 is summarizing results which provides a brief account of the main points from the perspective of the overall study. Move 4 is commenting on results in which the writers provide subjective judgments about the results of the study, interpreting their findings, and comparing their studies with the literature, accounting and evaluating the results. Move 5 is summarizing the study which provides the summary of the whole study but not just a summary of the results as in move 3. Move 6 is evaluating the study

in which the writers give their judgments over their studies in terms of significance, limitations, delimitations, innovations, strength, and weaknesses. Move 7 is deductions from research where the writers should make suggestions concerning areas for further research or solutions to certain problems. In this move, the writer also presents the claims about the generality of some or all of the reported results.

However, it is the researcher view that the discussion sections of *skripsis* from University 1 and 3 can be considered not following the moves proposed by Yang & Allison (2003). From seven moves, only move 1, move, 2, 3 and 4 that existed in the discussion sections from University 1 & 3. The discussion sections from those two universities might only present the overall study and the research findings without giving an evaluation of the findings by relating them to the previous studies. With the lack of compulsory moves that should exist in the discussion section, it could contribute to the number of hedging devices appeared in the discussion sections.

The second reason that might contribute to the differences in terms of hedging devices used in the discussion sections of *skripsis* and master theses is the education level. Regarding the variable of education, there seems to be a relationship between education and hedging devices used which later might give us information about the awareness of students of using hedging in their academic writing.

The tendency is that the higher education of the subjects, the higher their hedging awareness is. This finding is in accordance with the common sense that



education contributes to the development of the knowledge that the subject experience. Thus, it can be concluded that education level affects to the hedging devices used in the discussion sections of *skripsis* and master theses. This idea was clearly shown in the frequency of the total hedging devices used in which discussion sections of master theses employed more hedging devices than in *skripsis* and the more varied of hedging categories used in which the discussion sections of master theses used all categories proposed by Salager-Meyer (1994) while the discussion sections of *skripsis* only employed four categories.

In addition to that, the quality of Study Program might not always relate to the quality of the academic writing as well as the quality of the students in writing research report. The findings of this study suggested that the Study Program which is accredited A by Banpt and considered as good did not reflect to the quality of academic writing as well as the students. Therefore, there is a need for the Study Program to improve the quality of their academic writing and provide their students with special instructions for academic writing purposes, so that their image of good reputation Study Program will be in line with the quality of their academic writing as well as the writers.

In short, it can be concluded that the discussion sections of *skripsis* and master theses written by students of English Language Education Program employed hedging to mitigate the statements so that it protects the writer from any consequences or any threat that might appear if later the statements are proved wrong. Also, it can be drawn for conclusion that students who wish to write in academic context should consider about how to claim the new knowledge which

reflects personal modesty which later will contribute to gaining an acceptance from the research community and in the field.

Therefore, it is in need for the English Language Education Program to provide their students with a special instruction for exploring hedging devices as a part of metadiscourse markers which seems to play an important part in any types of academic writing through academic writing course. By exploring hedging in any types of academic writing, the students' awareness of hedges might improve. Further, The Study Program should also consider about the structures of their research report in which it is suggested to be analyzed, evaluated and revised based on the standardized conventions which later will be a big advantage for the study program for gaining a good reputation among universities in Jakarta, especially which later affect to the accreditation of the Study Program.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

This chapter presents the conclusion and suggestions as well as the implications of this study dealing with the hedging devices in the discussion sections of *skripsis* and master theses written by students of English Language Education Programs in Jakarta.

#### 5.1. Conclusion

This study aimed at investigating hedges in the discussion sections of *skripsis* and master theses written by students of English Language Education Program in Jakarta, in terms of categories, distribution, and functions of hedges. This study also analyzed the similarities and differences that the discussion sections of *skripsis* and master theses share and how education level affect to hedging devices used. The hedging devices were identified, categorized, and analyzed in reference to Hedging Categories proposed by Salager-Meyer (1994) which consists of five, those are Shields, Approximators, The Author's personal doubt and direct involvement, Emotionally-charged intensifiers, and Compound Hedges.

After identifying, categorizing, and analyzing the data, the writer would like to draw conclusions. Based on the data presented in the previous chapter, it was found that there are three main conclusions to this study. The first conclusion is about the categories of hedging devices in the discussion sections of *skripsis* and master theses written by students of English Language Education Program in Jakarta.

This study found that there were 157 hedging devices in the discussion sections of *skripsis* which were categorized into four types of categories of hedges proposed by Salager-Meyer (1994), namely Shields, Approximators, The Author's Personal Doubt and Direct Involvement, and Compound Hedges. It was also found that hedging used in discussion sections of *skripsis* were dominated by Shields (63.06%) and Approximators (31.21%). Meanwhile, it was found that there were 288 hedging devices in the discussion sections of master theses which could be categorized into five categories of hedging by Salager-Meyer (1994), namely Shields, Approximators, The Author's Personal Doubt and Direct Involvement, Emotionally-charged intensifiers and Compound Hedges. The findings also revealed that 65.63% of the total were dominated by Shields and another 30.56% by Approximators.

Next is about the functions of hedging devices used in the discussion sections of *skripsis* and master theses. The findings suggested that hedging devices appeared in the discussion sections may serve at least three communicative functions. The first is as a self-protection for the writer from any consequences that may happen later when the statements are proved wrong. Next is by employing hedging it helps the writer to show to what extent of the degree of certainty that it is appropriate for the writer to show over the statements that he/she makes. Finally, hedging may serve as a range of politeness strategies.

Finally, the discussion sections of *skripsis* and master theses share some similarities and differences. The similarity is in terms of the categories of hedging which were the most favored used in the discussion section, namely Shields and

Approximators. Meanwhile, the different is in terms of the number of total hedging devices identified in the discussion sections. This could happen for several reasons. One of them is the fact that some discussion sections of *skripsi* which were taken randomly from English Language Education Program in Jakarta could be considered not fulfilling the compulsory moves in the discussion section proposed by Yang & Allison framework. Finally, is that the tendency of the higher the education level the higher the hedging awareness is. Thus, the education level of the writer can be assumed could contribute to hedging devices used in the discussion sections of *skripsi* and master theses.

Some new findings from this study also revealed that the accreditation of English Language Education Program which can be considered as good is not always in line with the awareness of students about hedging devices. The fact that students of A accredited English Language Education Program employed less hedges in their discussion sections than those students of B and C accredited Study Program. Besides, the quality of the academic writing as well as the writer might affect to hedging devices used in the discussion sections. It was found that some discussion sections did not meet the compulsory moves and therefore, the employment of hedges in this section was rather few to be explored.

## 5.2 Implications

The findings of the present study were beneficial for several parties in the academic field, especially in terms of English Language Education issue. For the lecturers or the teachers, the results of the present study gave a valuable insight of students' awareness of hedging in which there is a need for the teachers as well as the lecturers to expose their students with the use of hedging devices by exploring them in many types of academic writing. By doing so, the students will have not only about the knowledge of hedging but also the knowledge of types of academic writing as well as the structures of them. Therefore, the students can improve the quality of their academic writing.

For the students themselves, the present study was implied to help them to improve their understanding about the use of hedging devices as a way to moderate their statements so that their written work can be more acceptable for the audience. The present study was also beneficial for the students to help them focus more on the quality of their academic writing, for the fact that some research reports in the present study did not meet the standards.

For the Study Program, the findings of the present study were beneficial to help them in designing course syllabus related to academic writing course, for Indonesian students are in need of the special instruction for hedging in academic writing. Besides, the findings of present study was beneficial to help them to review the structures of the research report that their students should submit in order to finish their study. It is because the findings of the study suggested that some research reports did not meet the compulsory structures that a research report should

have. Thus, reviewing the structures of the research report as well as providing their students with special course instructions for hedging might be helpful for the Study Program to increase the good reputation, the accreditation as well as the quality of the academic writing and the students.

For the researcher of the present study herself, the findings of the present study were helpful to improve the researcher understanding of the use of hedging devices in academic writing. When the researcher wrote this paper, she was really careful whenever she claimed a statement, especially in the discussion section. She preferred to present the statements or the findings of the study as an opinion rather than a fact. She avoided to be too certain over her research findings. It can be found that in the discussion sections many knowledge claims were toned down as the researcher tried to protect herself if later the claim is proved wrong or not applicable anymore. Also, the researcher was aware of the compulsory parts that should exist in every chapter of research report so that the research report meet the standard.

### **5.3 Suggestions**

Several points were suggested in this study related to hedging devices in academic writing, especially in research report in terms of *skripsi* and master theses. Theoretically, the results of this study were beneficial to give contributions to the academic field of English Education, thus it is suggested that the academic writers should be aware of the utilization of hedges in academic writing as a tool to mitigate the statements.

It is also suggested for students of English Language Education Program in Jakarta to consider the hedging devices to help them in writing their research report, in terms of *skripsis* and master thesis. For the lecturers, it is also suggested to provide their students with special instructions devoted for exploring hedging devices in academic writing which later will improve and enhance the quality of the students' writing. For the Study program itself, it is suggested that they should analyze, evaluate and revise the structures of the research report and adapt from the conventions which have been standardized. Also, the Study Program should suggest the lecturers to involve special instruction for hedges through the exploration of numerous types of academic writing.

Finally, the suggestion is for the researcher(s) who would like to conduct a study about the similar topic about the use of hedging devices in the *skripsis* and master theses, the researcher(s) could examine hedging devices employed in other parts of the *skripsis* and master theses such as introduction, literature review, methodology, and abstract of the master theses. Also, the source of the data can be added more not only from the research report in terms of *skripsis* and master theses, but from dissertation. The number of the data source would also be better if it is increased, so that the findings will represent English Language Education Program in Jakarta as a whole.



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