The Use of Hedging Devices in Literature Review Sections of Undergraduate Thesis

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Abstract

This study is to explore the use of hedging device in undergraduate studens thesis, focussed on literature review section. The objective of this study are: 1). To find out the typical features of formal class of hedging device employed by undergraduate students in literature review sections of their thesis, 2). To find out the typical features of informal/less-formal class of hedging device employed by undergraduate students in literature review sections of their thesis. The significance of the research is intended to help both teachers and students in developing the skills of academic writing discourse. Especially for the students and researchers, it expected by this research it would improve their awareness to employ approppriate words or vocabularies in asserting the claims of their future research findings. Due to the qualitative design of this study the instrument applied was document, while the sample theses were taken purposively. The gathered data of 10 literature review sections of undergraduate thesis written on 2015 by the students of Muhammadiyah University of Makassar analyzed and classified using Hinkels' Classification of Hedges. The research findings revealed that Indefinite modal verbs 'should', 'may', and 'able' as the typical features of formal class of hedging device, meanwhile the definite modal verbs 'can', 'will' and 'must' were the typical feature of informal/less-formal class hedging device.

Keywords: *Hedging; Academic Writing; Approppriate Words.*

1. Introduction

Writing is the other context of communication used besides speaking. Writing has became as a means of expressing ideas or thoughts that developed widely all over the educational world as an essential skill to master. However, developing writing skill is not as easy as talking in verbal conversation, specifically. Its learning process needs much more practices to make the learners being habitually in such activity. Writing activity could be categorized as a process of combining both receptive and productive skills neatly and comprehensibly to transform various ideas from the brain into papers that it is unfortunately often put in the next interest than speaking skills to explore. Perhaps, that is the reason of why the students inclined to use speaking as medium to express their ideas than writing it in the texts.

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Along with this writing issue, John and Hinkel in (Hinkel, 2004:4) agreed that many non-native students at the college and university level in English speaking countries experienced those difficulties in writing academically. Various reasons arose from that situation, for instance the students often fail to recognize the appropriateness usage of conventions and features of academic written prose. Students produced academic papers and essays that evaluated by the faculty as a confusing and having discrepancy ideas or unstructured on rhetoric's; and their ideas often found to be exaggerated, with the result that many non-native students felt frustrated and alienated, therefore, they often perceived that the university to be highly exclusive and denied their own best efforts as unvalued and unqualified as academic grade.

In general perception, writing is one of the popular four skills which play a crucial role in educational world. Teachers and students should take into account the elements included in writing process, as the factors to measure whether the flows of ideas or arguments developed clearly and coherent, so it is understandably easier by the readers, or on the contrary it will be categorized as unstructured ideas. Following the idea of writing rule especially the term of *coherent* which was talked above, Murray and Hughes, (2008:45) stated that coherence is significantly regarded as highly important rule in writing activity, because in one side the stated ideas or arguments are often felt clearly for the writer, but on the other side their readers could not catch the ideas clearly. That may present a gap which could create a stumbling block for the readers to comprehend it.

Basically, writing academically is more or less as alike as doing speech to the audience in a formal forum or conference, where the ideas expressed and language style should be argued rhetorically by paying full attention to the appropriateness of words choices, sentence structure, references usage and, audience, tone and or, purpose. Oshima and Hogue (1991:2) described the audience of a written text, which should be considered because he/she the people who will read and perceive what is written. By considering the roles of audience in perform writing could help the writers to be clearer in presenting the core of ideas to succeed the purpose of communication. The audience of an academic writing could be the professors who might understand more about the tone and purposes of the texts written. Those discussed consideration could be assumed as the writers' efforts to gain the readers' acceptance, therefore, it could help them achieve one of the writing goals, which commonly said as writer-reader relationship.

Awareness to sustain such a good relationship particularly for the writing aspect, definitely implies the importance of communicative competence as an ability to deliver and produce ideas clearly in thoughtful meanings throughout the writing context (Brown, 1994:227). Communicative competence classified into 4 four categories based on Canale in Brown (1994:227-228). First, "*Grammatical competence*" or "*linguistic competence*" deal with proficiency of lexical items and of morphological rules, syntax, sentence-grammar semantics, and of phonology which related to the ability to comprehend the linguistic code of a language. Second, "*discourse competence*" which refers to our ability to develop sentences connections into written texts extensively (articles, books, essays, etc.), and deeply related to inter-sentential relationship. Third, "*sociolinguistic competence*" that is related to the ability to comprehend the socio-cultural rules of language and of discourse, and dealt with the skill to be aware of social context in which language is applied, i.e. the participants roles, the shared information, and the interactional roles. The fourth category namely "*strategic competence*" which is commonly divided into verbal and nonverbal communication strategies that assumed as the competence to partying, to turn take into

communication even without having a perfect proficiency, and to maintain communication by "paraphrase, circumlocution, repetition, hesitation, avoidance, and guessing, as well as changes of in register and styles".

Related to communicative competence that was talked above, Cruse (2006:131) proposed the term *politeness* to refer to a medium which is intended to decrease the negative effects of the stated expressions and increase the positive effects on audiences'/readers' feelings. He furthermore, classified politeness into positive politeness and negative politeness. Yet in reality, in general conversational context of our social relationship, we as human beings tend to use negative politeness in expressions to our statements rather than positive politeness. In term of negative and positive politeness, Cruse stated that negative politeness commonly known as the aims of one's to have freedom of action independently, and not to be impeded by others, while positive politeness is the aims of one's to be accepted or to be liked by others, to be regarded as the member of the same community, and to know that his or her wants are unhindered by other members. In sum, negative face is the one's aims of independency, while positive face is the one's aims to be associated.

In relation to the employment of politeness strategy in academic writing Swales and Feak (2004:125) called qualifying or moderating claims that leaned on the writers' intention to make such a claim or a judgment, which also needs to be presented in a good reviews and not to be highly strong or to be forcefully, because it is crucial to be confidently uncertain in producing such an idea for the writers. Therefore, Swales and Feak (2004:126) subcategorized the term qualifying or moderating claims into four categories i.e. The first, "*Probability*" that in a simple way is to employ modal auxiliary to decrease the strength degree of a claim, for instance, (having breakfast in the morning <u>will</u> give us more power to start our activities -- having breakfast in the morning <u>*might/could*</u> supply us more power to start our activities). Second, "*Distancing*" as another way to exchange self-position from a strong to possibly unjustified claims (The city has developed from the new buildings construction -- <u>*it has been said*</u> that <u>*the city seems to has developed from*</u> the new buildings construction). The third, "*Generalization*" is constructed by adapting 'verb *tend*' (The anonymous writer <u>*tends*</u> to claim strongly)*, 'qualifying the subject'* (<u>*In most part of his ideas*</u> the anonymous writer claimed strongly) and, *'by adding exceptions'* (*with the exception of*; *apart from*; *except for; etc*). The fourth, *"weaker verbs"* is by replacing the strong category of verbs into the weaker such as (*effect*) changed to (*contribute),* word (*prevent)* changed to word (*restrain* and or by adding modal '*may*' before the verb).

Henning et.al. (2005:17) point of view of applying politeness strategy in writing activity also proposed the ideas of good writers i.e. 1). The writers have an ability to propose the readers to agree with the idea; 2). The writers are able to persuade the readers to agree and; 3). The writers could make the readers/audiences consider that the idea proposed is visible, although if the reader does not agree

Linguists from several decades have offered an approach in writing activity as a device to present such qualifying or moderating claims as an extenuation of claims called "*Hedging device",* such as Evans and John (1998:77) which stated that it is a tool of moderating the statements or the vagueness ideas and as a politeness strategy in a critical review to opposite others' opinions. They furthermore describe that hedging device seems to be logically contributed in the development of our writing skills especially in academic writing discourse that is supported by some reasons. *First,* hedging device is used as the writers' fence or barrier to opposite other opinions. Hedging device could

become a device to be applied in demonstrating the ideas by encouraging the audience point of view, specifically in educational context sometimes their readers could be their professors.

The *second* reason referred to the use of hedging device to express tentativeness and to soften the claims through showing the respect to others' ideas, while the *third* reason hedging device is also possible to become a new knowledge for the students to help them develop their ideas clearly and comprehensibly, although this device was not merely a new educational issue because, it discussed since 1973 by Lakoff and it is also applied in other disciplines.

Taking into account Evans and John (1998) uses of hedges idea, we can say that hedging device is important by undergraduate students to employ in writing thesis. This stage of thesis writing is an opportunity for them to apply their academic skills that has been studied in formal class and specifically expected them to develop their proficiency in scientific writing approppriately. This phase also allows the students to collaborate with their consultants as their partner to reach the goals that have been stated in their thesis, and furthermore to reveal the relevant facts or ideas related to the problems of the study as a basic consideration to formulate the reasons why such a study is important to be conducted. The process of writing a thesis of course needs students' awareness of metaknowledge about writing that can influence the steps and results of their writing. This case is especially for non-native students who are commonly affected by their mother tongue, socio-cultural background and or their educational context applied in their curriculum (Manchon, 2009:23).

Hinkel (2004:316) argued that hedges is a device to apply in expressing ideas or points of view in academic writing context seems to be low cost in terms of work and time, especially for L2 learners even at the low to intermediate level of proficiency that could be started at the teaching of *lexical* and *syntactical* types of hedges. For instance, adverbs of frequency (*sometimes, never*) and quantifiers (*most, many, some*), or the use of English modals as, may; might; can; could; or should. Furthermore, students should take into account the appropriateness of hedges employment in their writing.

Prior to this research, there was a pilot study conducted as preliminary phase to observe the literature review of undergraduate thesis entitled "*Improving the students' pronunciation in speaking through prosody pyramid at the eleventh grade of SMA Negeri 3 Bulukumba* (Student 1, 2015) which was submitted to the Department of English Education, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education University of Muhammadiyah Makassar. The preliminary research result reveals that undergraduate thesis tends to hedge inappropriately. The thesis mostly inclined to employ "*definite modal verbs*" such as can, will, and must which '*indicate high degree of certainty*' that are classified by Hinkel (2004:320-322) as informal/less formal class of hedges. However, especially for academic writing context Hinkel suggests to employ the Formal class of hedges, which '*indicates lower degree of certainty*' namely "*Indefinite modal verbs*" (*could, may, would, should, etc.*).

Based on the discussion above, it could be raised three underlying reasons that motivate the research on the features of hedging devices that employed in undergraduate thesis of students at Makassar Muhammadiyah University. First, the researcher realized that there have been few studies on academic discourse, especially on hedging device in

education department of our country, even though that the features of hedges seem to be useful to help students develop their writing skill step by step.

The second reason deals with the important roles of hedging device as a medium to express the politeness statements or ideas in communication, that if the writers employ hedges appropriately as a writing style, they would reach a wider opportunity to be accepted by the readers, especially for academicians, they would get their papers publish easier because, they would receive good reputation of not being seemed arrogant, rude, or even offensive in presenting their statements.

Lastly, hedging device also take part in sustaining good relationship in both spoken and written contexts between the writer and the reader or even between the speaker and the hearer, especially for non-native students who are probably unfamiliar with the term of hedges.. Composing a written text also needs to pay attention to the words forms included in each sentence in order to make them coherent and to keep it goes in the main topic which discussed. This study is an attempt to analyze the typical features of hedging device employed by undergraduate students in literature review sections of their thesis. The result might be a proof of the typical features of both formal class and informal/less-formal class of hedging device employed by undergraduate students in literature review sections of their thesis. This has been conducted at the undergraduate theses submitted on 2015 of English education in Makassar Muhammadiyah University.

2. Literature Review

In applying hedging device which is often used in both writing and speaking activity, Evans and John (1998:76) stated that by employing hedging device, the writers are able to show a statement that possesses him/her-self in a neutral position rather than possesses him/her-self in a strong-claim position in her/his writing, or in other case the writer expresses a criticism in polite sentences for the purpose of showing the writers' humility.

Holmes in Alquraisy (2011:7) also acknowledges hedges as devices that deliver purposive tentativeness so that the speaker or the writer could present encouragement, offers friendliness, expressing respect and sustain integrity with the audience. They allow the writers to persuade readers of the correctness of their claims, helping them reach acceptance for their efforts. Hedging could be the way speaker/writer express their tentativeness about something or state something uncertain; thus hedges are classified as words or phrase which express the speaker's uncertainty of their thought.

Hinkel (2004:313-323), discusses hedges in more specific features. He classifies hedging device into two main classes, i.e. *formal class of hedges* and *informal/less-formal class of hedges.* The "*Formal Classes*" of hedging device which are regularly employed in scientific writing have the following features: A*dverbs of frequency* (usually, sometimes, from time to time, etc.); *Possibility hedges* (perhaps, probably, possibly, etc.); *Indefinite quantifier hedges* (many, much, most of, etc.); *Modal verbs* that divided into three subclasses, i.e. [1]. "*Possibility":* may, might, could, etc*., [*2]. *"Necessity*": have to, should, ought, etc., [3] "*Prediction*": would; *Adjective and adverb hedges* (about, related to, actually, etc.

The next class of hedges by Hinkel is "*Informal/less-formal Classes*" of hedges that commonly appears in colloquial conversation and their utterances are rarely found in scientific writing, as in: *Definite adverbs of frequency hedges* (hourly, weekly, everyday, etc.); *Informal possibility hedges*, which are divided into two sub-classes, i.e. [1]. *Possibility*

of Conditional Clause hedges that usually refers to common knowledge and generalization of truth: if, as the reader knows, as we all know, etc., [2]. *Conversational possibility*: some, any, chance, hopefully, etc.); *Definite quantifiers* (all, a half, nothing, everything, etc.); *Definite Modal verbs* which also divided into (*Implication*: can; *Obligation*: must, to be supposed to; and *Prediction*: will) and; *Exaggeratives and Emphatics adjectives and/or adverbs hedges* (almost, perfectly, very much, no way, well, etc.)

There some previous studies have been conducted to reveal the uses of hedges among native and non-native English writers, such as Nasiri (2012) which is about utilization of hedging devices by American and Iranian researchers in the field of civil engineering on Iran, examined the overall frequency of hedges used in the study of corpora, and compared the frequency and distribution of hedges. The data analysis revealed that American writers employed hedges more than Iranian writers in their published research article. However, comparing the hedges utilization of both authors using chi-square procedure, the result reveals no significant difference of hedges employment of both different cultural background of writers. Nasiri then assumed that hedging device as linguistics phenomenon is more on discipline influence and not the nationality or cultural background.

Halabisaz et.al, (2014) also looked at the section of thesis abstract on applied linguistics across Persian and English writers. Their study found a significant difference between natives and non-natives in terms of using hedges in abstracts of linguistic theses written by English and Persian writers. Generally, Native English writers used more hedging devices, while non-natives (Iranian) writers employed less hedging devices in their M.A. abstracts.

Analysis of hedges and boosters in academic writing trough gender differences in essays were conducted by Serholt (2012). The sample taken from 20 randomly selected C-essays written by Swedish students of English at several universities and was classified into 10 males and 10 females. Investigating overall frequency in which Swedish advanced learners use epistemic modality to express doubt and certainty (Hedges & boosters), the research revealed that females used more hedges than males; both sexes displayed a higher use of hedges and; hedges and boosters appeared more in the *Introduction* and *Discussion section* than other sections

Yagiz and Demir (2014) focused on hedging strategies in academic discourse which was a comparative analysis of Turkish writers and native writers of English in the section of introduction, discussion, and conclusion. This study claimed that the general tendencies of both non-native writers and native writers in using hedges are similar. This research finding seems to be similar with Ebadi and Khaksar (2015) which claimed no significant difference between native and non-native authors in the use of hedging devices. They investigated the use of hedging devices in conclusion section of the research articles of English teaching by native and non-native authors. Their research result evidenced that the majority of the non-native authors uses hedges in the same way as their native counterparts.

Explored gender differences in the use of discourse markers in Iranian academic research article found that gender differences play a significant role on utilizing hedging devices in the texts. The study also indicated that Iranian females prefer to use more hedges to express the information they supplied than those of males.

Salehabbaka and Yedla, (2015) conducted a research to define the use of hedging as moderation device by Babylon University learners on written and spoken discourse context. The methodology applied questionnaires and language testing, while the research findings revealed the facts that learners use less hedging and more boosting in their communication either in written or spoken context.

Aquino (2014) which focuses on hedges in campus journalistic articles that aimed to reveal the hedges written by high school students who published in their newspaper issues into 20 articles of Philippines campus journalistic. Those articles consisted of editorial; modulated and; mitigated articles that analyzed through close reading with the content and corpus analysis. The research found that editorial articles are the mostly hedged, modulated and mitigated articles and modal auxiliary verbs have the highest employment. The feature of accuracy-oriented hedges has a higher occurrence, while reliability hedges are used widely. Contributory factors on the presence of hedging are nature or purpose of articles, teaching instances of hedges, and at a certain point, the length of articles. The researcher furthermore offered Salager-Meyer's categories of hedges to be used to bring new perspective and compare if there would be difference in the results.

Furthermore It is also important to review the research of hedges in Indonesian context from various disciplines e.g. He analyzed the types of hedges used in method sections by the undergraduate students' skripsi of English education department. Ten undergraduate skripsi between 2007 until 2011 as the source of data were analyzed qualitatively, and the study concluded that frequency of hedges types found in the method section of the skripsi shows the writers of the skripsi preferred to employ modal auxiliary in making such claims and or statements.

Listiowati et.al, (2013), examined the hedges as a mitigation device at the novel *"Ketika cinta bertasbih"*. The research was aimed to find the function, the perlocutionary act of hedge and to find hedge as a mitigation devices in conversation to achieve speaker's goal easier and to save his or her utterance because of uncertain utterance. The research findings revealed that hedges as mitigation device are equal between both propositional hedging and speech acts hedging, and there found some contradictories from the theory that mitigation device is to attenuate the strength of the speaker's utterance to achieve the speaker's goal. Hedge as mitigation device affects the perlocutionary act. However, the perlocutionary act which occured in the research was different from the theory whereas the interlocutor follows the speaker's utterance. In this case, the study found that in perlocutionary act, the interlocutor denied the speaker's utterance, which means he/she did not help achieving the speaker's goal.

Moreover, Pebrianti (2013), with the research about women's language features used by Indonesian female bloggers. The source of data gathered from the form of written text of Blogspot.com, which was published from oktober 2011 to September 2012 and consisted of various bloggers' activities i.e. their daily routines, their business activity, their fashions, and other special events. The research findings indicated that the most frequent hedges usage is intensifiers followed by adjectives, and the lowest frequency categorized as avoidance of strong swear words. The researcher assumed that the result might be affected by respondents' preference to reflect uncertainty and lack of confidence in communication

Wibowo and Yusoff (2014) investigated the use of hedges and media ethics in Indonesian newspaper and revealed that the use of hedges in newspaper as an ethics for

the media is prioritized significantly, because of the media as news sources for various background people that needs to be balance and to show sympathy of others in presenting their statements. Thus hedges should be used by the journalists to protect participants, persons or institutions related to the news presented. Furthermore the result of the study also suggested that the reporter needs to protect their sources, otherwise they would have difficulty to get news in the future.

Related to the research findings discussed above, it is clear that hedging device plays its roles significantly in communication context of our daily routine. Thus it opened wider opportunity for the researcher to investigate more deeply, especially for its functions, its features and of its appropriateness usage in both spoken and written discourses. Particularly for the present research the researcher will focus on observing the appropriateness usage of hedges features (Hinkel, 2004) in academic written discourse on the literature review section of undergraduate students' thesis.

3. Methodologi

3.1 Research Design

This research used a descriptive research and applied qualitative data analysis.

3.2 Participants

The researcher determined the sample representatively to 10 undergraduate theses on classroom based research (quantitative experimental research), which selected purposively. The literature review section of each thesis was taken as the main focus of the research which aims to look at the occurrences of hedges features represented in written context. The following table are the caracteristics of the samples:

Table 1. Characteristic of the sample

No.	Initial	Title of the Thesis
1.	SRD	Improving the students' ability to translate the English text into Indonesian through sentence component identification strategy. (*a classroom action research at the eighth grade of SMPN Bontomatene Selayar,* 2015)
2.	SSPD	Improving the students' writing skill through quantum learning method. (*a classroom action research at the first year of MTS Guppi Taipa Le'leng,* 2015)
3.	KM	Improving thhe students' reading skill through look say method at the class XI student of SMK Muhammadiyah 4 Tallo. (*a classroom action Research,* 2015)
4.	MI	The Effectiveness of Whole Brain Teaching Method to Improve the Students' Speaking Skill at Seventh Grade Students of Smpn 1 Lilirilau. (*an Experimental Research,* 2015)
5.	HW	Improving the students' reading comprehension through the use of Directed Reading Thingking Activity. (*an experimental research at second grade student of SMKN 6 Jeneponto,* 2015)
6.	RAK	Improving the students' speaking skill through oral description practice technique. (*a classroom action research at the eigth grade of SMPN 1 Mangngarabombang,* 2015)
7.	MRH	The use of learning cell method to enhance students' comprehension in reading activity (*a pre-experimental research at the eleventh grade students of MA Muallimin Muhammadiyah Cabang Makassar,* 2015)

8.	RSD	The effectiveness of using improvisation techniique in teaching speaking. (*a pre-experimental research of the eleventh grade students of SMA Muhammadiyah Disamakan Makassar,* 2015)
9.	IW	Improving the speaking ability of students through inside-outside circle method. (*a pre-experimental research at the third year students of SMP PGRI Sungguminasa Gowa,* 2015)
10.	AD	Improving students' reading comprehension in narrative text through response journal technique. (*a classroom action research at the twelfth year students of SMA Buq'atun Mubarakah Makassar, 2015*)

3.3 Instruments

This research applied document as the instrument. Creswell (2009:169) stated that in qualitative research document is one example of instrument which becomes one source of data. Documents could include stuffs like pictures, or text as a proof that may present significant and qualified description, while specifically for this research; the documents were undergraduate theses of English education students that submitted to the FKIP of UNISMUH Makassar.

3.4 Procedures

To collect data the researcher focussed on observing the literature review sections of those 10 theses using documentation technique by identifying the employed hedges found, then researcher located and recorded the hedges which occurred in the literature review of the thesis. In relation to the recording of documents, Creswell (2009:171) stated that taking notes in qualitative documents can be leaned on the stages settled by the researcher's. Particularly, notes indicated the information about the document or other material as well as key ideas in the documents. Taking note is helpful for the researcher, whether the information represents primary material (i.e., information directly from the people or situation under study) or secondary material (i.e., secondhand accounts of the people or situation written by others).

3.5 Data analysis

To evaluate the occured hedges, the researcher represented data in qualitative interpretation, by describing the data of hedges features based on their classification and its functions adapting Hinkels' taxonomy of hedges. This kind of taxonomy clearly describes both appropriateness and inappropriateness of hedges usage in the sentences that helped the researcher to distinguish between those hedges employment, formal hedges and informal/less formal hedges. The researcher then measured the obtained data by calculating it to find out the hedges features that are commonly occurs from each class of both formal and informal/less-formal class of hedging.

4. Finding and Discussion

4.1 Finding

According to the document analysis process, the result of the research revealed the employment of both class hedging devices in literature review section of undergraduate thesis

a. The features of formal class hedges employed by undergraduate students' thesis in literature review sections of their thesis.

Based on the findings, the data described that the distribution of formal class of hedges according to its feature from highest to lowest:

1). Indefinite modal verbs 40.1 %,

2). Indefinite quantifiers 31.3 %,

3). Adverbs of frequency 13. 5 %

4). Adjective and adverbs 10. 8 %.

5). Possibility hedges 4.3 %

It can be seen that the feature of indefinite modal verbs was the highest frequency of hedges that recorded 40.1 % occurences. The presented data describes the typical indefinite modal verbs hedges that occured was the feature of necessity *"Should"* which recorded 38.1 %occurences, surpassed the possibility modal verbs feature i.e. the modal *"May"* that recorded 27.4 % occurences, and the modal "able" with 15.7 % occurences, while the other two features followed with 29 (14.7 %) occurences by the Negative modal verbs *"Modal+not"*, and by Prediction modal verbs *"would"* that were recorded 8 occurences (4.1 %).

The indefinite modal verb '*Should*' occured mostly from the sample Thesis 10 written by AD (2015:8-24), entitled "Improving students' reading comprehension in narrative text through response journal technique. (*a classroom action research at the twelfth year students of SMA Buq'atun Mubarakah Makassar, 2015*)". The indefinite modal verb '*may*' was employed mostly by the sample Thesis 6 (RAK, 2015:5-23) which entitled "Improving the students' speaking skill through oral description practice technique. (*a classroom action research at the eigth grade of SMPN 1 Mangngarabombang, 2015*)", while other indefinite modal verbs 'able' was employed mostly by the sample Thesis 7 (MRH, 2015:5-30), entitled "The use of learning cell method to enhance students' comprehension in reading activity (*a pre-experimental research at the eleventh grade students of MA Muallimin Muhammadiyah Cabang Makassar, 2015*). The elaborated data above indicates that, those theses tent to hedge appropriately in expressing the aims of their study by employing indefinite modal verbs in literature review sections.

b. The features of informal/less-formal class hedges employed by undergraduate students' thesis in literature review sections of their thesis.

The research finding in this phase reveals the distribution of formal class of hedges according to its feature from highest to lowest are as follows:

1). Definite modal verbs 61 %

2). Informal Possibility 14.2 %

3). Definite quantifiers 13.7 %

4). Exaggerative Adjective and adverbs 9.2 %

5). Definite Adverbs of frequency 1.9 %

Acording to the data provided above, it was found that the distribution of informal/less-formal hedges (Hinkel, 2004:320-322) were typically employed by the feature of definite modal verbs with 61% occurences. The typical hedges that commonly occured were modal verbs '*can*', '*will*', and '*must*'.

Information of definite modal verb hedges features used by the students in their literature review section that, again the modal verb '*can*' recorded 58.8 %. This became interesting, because formerly there was conducted a preliminary study as discussed earlier in this paper with similar result that modal verb 'can' recorded has the highest occurences than other hedges. However, this is not a big issue, because according to Hyland, 1998 in Hinkel (2004:12), that the modal verb 'can' and 'may' were the most employed modal in many corpus study than other modals as 'must', 'should', 'have to', or both 'will' and 'would'.

Meanwhile, the definite modal verb '*Will*' scored 27.5 % occurences and the definite modal verb '*Must*' recorded 13.7 % occurences.

The definite modal verb '*can*' was mostly employed by the thesis sample 2 (2015:5-23) written by SSPD, entitled "Improving the students' writing skill through quantum learning method. (*a classroom action research at the first year of MTS Guppi Taipa Le'leng*, 2015)". The definite modal verb '*will*' employed mostly by sample Thesis 8 RSD (2015:4-22). The thesis entitled "The effectiveness of using improvisation technique in teaching speaking. (*a pre-experimental research of the eleventh grade students of SMA Muhammadiyah Disamakan Makassar,* 2015)", while the definite modal verb with obligation function '*must*' were employed mostly by the Thesis 5 (HW, 2015:5-28), entitled "Improving the students' reading comprehension through the use of Directed Reading Thingking Activity. (*an experimental research at second grade student of SMKN 6 Jeneponto,* 2015)".

4.2. Discussion

The overall aims of this study were to find out the typical features of hedging device in literature review sections of undergraduate thesis, especially the features of formal class hedging devices and informal/less-formal class hedging device.

This first session deals with the discussion of formal class of hedging device employed in literature review section of undergraduate theses. According to data those theses employed mostly indefinite modal '*should*', '*may*', '*able*', we may assume that thesis writers have a higher awareness by conveying indefinite modal verbs that indicates necessity function of hedges feature along with his idea/conclusion to moderate his claim, rather than employing the definite modal verb '*must*' or '*can*' that indicates a strong prediction and certain impication of an idea. The above issue confirmed by Hinkel (2004:320-321), that it is approppriate to employ modals which convey a higher degree of politeness function to present a reason and or conclusion in academic writing contexts to moderate the necessity of the claims.

The next second session deals with the discussion of informal/less-formal class of hedging device employed in literature review section of undergraduate theses.The result elaborated the typical hedges that commonly occured were modal verbs '*can*', '*will*', and '*must*'. the data shown that thesis writers tent to be less aware by expressing definiteness to assert their claims of the future outcome, which indicated that the thesis writers have shown a great confidence of their future research findings in their statements. Although those definite modal verbs were common in conversational activity, but in formal academic discourse they were inapproppriate to use (Hyland in Hinkel, 2004:321). Furthermore, to not being seemed overexaggerated about definite outcomes, linguists proposed '*may*', '*should*', and or '*able*' that expresses possibility of the future outcomes from the stated claims.

The overall results of the data gathered through the analysis of both "Formal and Informal/lessformal" classes of Hedging Devices have shown that the usage of hedges by the students in literature review sections of their thesis were dominated by the feature of modal verbs

5. Conclusion

Falling back on the discussion of some previous chapters in this study, there are some important conclusions to be drawn i.e. The analysis of this study contributed to gathered information of the typical hedges found in this study.

In the section of appropriate hedges employed by undergraduate thesis writers, the indefinite modal verbs seemed to be the most favorite hedging device feature that employed to propose their claims of their future research findings surpassed other hedges features such as; Indefinite quantifiers, Adverbs of frequency, Adjective and adverbs, and those of possibility hedges features. The approppriateness of hedges employment analysis of Indefinite modal verbs used by the undergraduate thesis writers was acchomplished by the data of the necessity modal verbs feature '*should*' which was recorded as the most occurenced hedges. The data indicated that the thesis writer has efforted to be politely in expressing their future claims of their research.

On the other hand, the analysis of the informal hedges usage informed that the feature of definite modal verbs recorded as the most frequency of occurences than other features. The typical hedges that commonly occured were definite modal verbs '*can*', '*will*', and '*must*' which considered asserted a high degree of certainty in expressing ideas or claims surpassed other features of Informal Possibility; Definite quantifiers; Exaggerative Adjective and adverbs; and those of the feature Definite Adverbs of frequency.

The overall data analysis of the literature review sections of ten undergraduate thesis samples resulted a high frequency usage of Definite modal verbs 'can' than those of feature indefinite modal verbs. This result indicated that the thesis writers asserted a great confidence of their future research findings in their statements. Whereas, using approppriate hedges specifically in academic discourse area is a very important aspect to be realized, because using approppriate vocabulary as hedging devices refers to not only what the students know of words meanings, but also to know the usage of the words that fit with a certain context or situation. Teaching the uses of hedges in academic writing e.g. thesis, could be initialized by the approppriateness usage of modal verbs, such as the uses of '*may*' or '*could*' rather using modal verbs '*can*' that could bring the students to soften their claims of their future research findings, in order to protect their reputations as scholars from being error. The result informed in this study can be a valuable contribution to the English languange teachers, Language teaching material developers, or other researchers who aimed to study the hedging devices in different aspects from this research analysis beyond the researcher has done in this study. It is expected to another researchers to explore the different usage of hedging devices between academic speaking and academic writing context of the EFL students.

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