

LEXICAL HEDGES IN ONLINE PRESENTATION AT INDONESIAN EFL CLASSROOM SETTINGS

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Abstract

Since the discourse analysis covered a wide range of disciplines to describe the activities and the language in those disciplines included in education, the phenomena of language use in the class still become the object of study ever since the languages are essential aspects of classroom interaction. The communicative styles of the lecturers and students will be influenced by many aspects. One of them is the attendance of lexical hedges in their utterances. For that purpose, of this article is directed to explore the occurrence of lexical hedges in EFL classrooms with online class settings. This research applied a qualitative research design taking one class and the students in Universitas Negeri Makassar as the subject. The data of this research were collected by employing classroom observation and audio recording. The data were analyzed descriptively by adopting the Discourse Analysis approach which relies on data recording, data transcription, data selection, and data interpretation. Furthermore, this research employed the theory from (Namasaraev, 1997) in categorizing the lexical hedges and the data were obtained from the observation in online classroom settings through the application called ZOOM. The result of the research shows that the presenters employed lexical hedges in their utterances during the process of presentation and discussion which can be seen from the table in the findings section. This study also found that there are a bit differences in the way men and women pronounce the hedges and the researcher also found support data for the research from Nikula (1997). The findings from this study are worthy of reading for English language teaching practitioners in their effort to create effective classroom interaction.

Keywords — Hedges, Lexical hedges; Online presentation, Discussion

INTRODUCTION

The spread of Pandemic Covid-19 had affected the ways people communicate in their daily life. Due to the efforts of reducing the infected people from the Pandemic-Covid-19, people are encouraged to reduce the interaction. The teaching in the class was absolutely affected by the case, in which the teachers and the students were encouraged to limit the

interaction in the class, by conducting online classroom teaching. Since then, teachers and students employed Zoom Cloud Meeting or Google Meet Application as the ways to conduct the teaching and learning process, including the classroom presentation.

In Indonesia, the spread of the COVID-19 caused losses to many countries, especially in the economic sector. In the field of education, this virus has also drastically changed the learning model. All learning activities are carried out online, starting from elementary school to university level. According to Isman in Galuh (2020), online learning is the use of internet networks in the learning process, with online learning, students have the flexibility to study time, can study anytime and anywhere. Students can interact with teachers or lecturers using several applications such as classrooms, video conference, telephone or live chat, zoom or via WhatsApp group. This learning is an educational innovation to answer the challenges of the availability of various learning resources. Student interaction in online learning may be slightly different with offline learning or face-to-face learning.

The success in English teaching and learning process in the classroom depends on many factors, one of which is the language used in classroom (Basra & Thooyibah, 2017). The language used in the class should be appropriate in order that the messages can be conveyed clearly. To some extent, people communicating sometimes are lack of certainty which can be indicated by some hesitations. This is usually called hedging.

Hedges are linguistic devices that largely diminish the force of an utterance and soften the impact of a statement (Varma & Tan, 2015). Hedging suggests degree of more or less without exhibiting the full commitment so that the accuracy or precision of what is said can be achieved (Arpana, 2022). Hedging is a phenomenon in which a speaker communicates a lack of commitment to what they are saying. For example: (1) "I think it's a little odd." This sentence contains two hedges, first "think" and the second "a little"; one indicating the speaker's lack of commitment to the proposition "it's a little odd" and the other indicating lack of commitment to the quality of oddness. The use of this hedging may affect the messages conveyed in the learning and teaching process.

For that purpose, the researchers tried to analyze the use of lexical hedges by the students in online learning interactions. This study then focuses on the use of lexical hedges by English students in online class interactions. The findings of this study are expected to contribute to a pragmatic study of lexical hedges in EFL class interactions. It can also serve as a useful reference for classroom interaction practitioners, especially English teachers or lecturers, to create

effective EFL classroom interactions.

METHODS

This study employed a descriptive-qualitative research design. (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000) state that qualitative research involves interpretive and naturalistic approaches. Moreover, (Arikunto, 2013) stated that human and thing can be classified as a subject of research. In this research, the researchers described naturalistic settings as classroom interactions involving the teachers and students during the teaching and learning process. The method of data collection is determined by the types of data that need to be collected in order to answer the research questions (Matthews & Ross, 2010).

This qualitative research was conducted through online classroom setting (ZOOM) during the Pandemic covid 19, in Bilingualism classroom at Universitas Negeri Makassar in Makassar, South Sulawesi, Indonesia in 2021. The subject of the research is the students from Bilingualism classroom or specifically the presenting group (group 4) in English Department. The subject was chosen because of their competence and experience in EFL. In this study, the researcher observed through online classroom in which all of the students in these classes are taught and familiar enough with English as A Foreign Language and are at the advanced level. To collect data, the researcher observed the group who act as the presenters at the time and during the process the researcher also observed students who use lexical hedges in the process of discussion. Classroom observations were conducted in one meeting and to aid the process of observation, a video recorder or the ZOOM video recording was employed and a field note was taken.

The ZOOM Video recorder from the presentation process were reviewed several times to assist in the analysis of the notes taken during the observation. The researcher also video transcribed the video to ensure the trustworthiness of the data analysis. The transcribed data were then analyzed based on the framework of discourse analysis which relies on data recording, data transcription, data selection, and data interpretation. The classroom interactions were transcribed. The transcripts were next analyzed to describe, interpret, and explain the classroom processes adopting the hedges classification from (Namasaraev, 1997) which is consist of: Modal auxiliary verb, Lexical verb, Probability adjective, Noun, Adverb, Adverb of frequency, "If" clause, Compound hedges, and Fillers.

In this research, the findings resulted from the text analysis were explained and divided based on the classification of the hedges in which the text is embedded, including the differences of lexical hedges in woman and man utterances.

RESULTS

1. Modal auxiliary verb

Extract 1:

*“A language of a poor and of the peasant is not the language of prosperity and power aa you can see if there is **a**= a gang’s workers **yaa** or maybe the immigrants or maybe the <**x** unidentified word **x**> looking for the social and aa vocational **aa** mobility aa **might** placed a high value of education majority language and the next slide”.*

The above extract is an example of hedges in the form of modal auxiliary verb. The sentences above were produced by SU, at the time she explained about the factors involved in language vitality. After explained the factor she intended to portrayed the situation of a language of a poor and of the peasant in society through *“looking for the social and aa vocational **aa** mobility aa **might** placed a high value of education majority language and the next slide”*. In this sentence she employed ‘might’ to show a possibility or a chance of minority language to be survive because of the pressure of majority language. Based on the extract above, when the presenter explaining her material, she uses ‘might’ in the process of giving an example. This word can be categorized as a modal auxiliary verb.

Extract 2:

*“When a major language is seen as giving higher social status and more political power, a shift towards the majority language **may** occur”.*

In this extract the presenter (SU) during her explanation, she employed ‘may’ which is categorized as a modal auxiliary verb. Still from the same presenter (SU), in her utterance above she uses cause and effect sentences. *“When a major language is seen as giving higher social status and more political power, a shift towards the majority language may occur”*. she started with *“When a major language is seen as giving higher social status and more political power”* to show the cause and closed with *“a shift towards the majority language may occur”* to show the effect and in this process, she used ‘may’ as the signal word of the effect. Based on the

extract above, when the presenter explaining her material, she uses 'might' in the process of giving an example and this word can be categorized as a modal auxiliary verb.

Extract 3

*"There **will** be 3 presenters in this section the first I myself Sri Ulfanita, the second **will** be Hariyani Dafid, and the third **aaa** there **will be(hx)** Pret Sarira, okay to use the time effectively I'm going to started **aaa** our presentation this morning ... next slide please".*

The above extract is the example of modal auxiliary verb that used in presenter's (SU) explanation. At the time SU acted as moderator for the group and opened the presentation by introducing the members along with their set-up in the presentation *"There will be 3 presenters in this section the first I myself Sri Ulfanita, the second will be Hariyani Dafid, and the third aaa there will be(hx) Pret Sarira"*. In this process she inserted 'will' before the name of the presenter as the signal word to introduce the members. Based on the extract above, the presenter employed the 'will' word in order to introduce the member of the group that would act as a presenter at the time. The presenter uses the word to expressing the future and this word included in modal auxiliary verb.

2. Lexical verb

Extract 4:

*"Where Wales **amm** nama **amm** <L1 mengacu pada Bahasa ibu dari pada Argentina L1> they **appear** to be more chance of the language surviving why? Because aa many people can speak Wales it 70% and then also important in the language maintenance acquisition is demographic of biliteracy".*

This above sentence is a piece of H's explanation. This sentence indicates contained with a lexical verb hedge. These sentences were uttered by H during her presentation, it shows from the extract above that after explained the material she tried to interact or catch the attention or the curiosity of the participant by gave a question based on her explanation *"they appear to be more chance of the language surviving why?"*. According to the extract 2 above, the presenter (H) seems use 'appear' in her explanation or specifically in giving a question as an opener to widen or introduce the new information. And those word 'appear' categorized as a lexical verb.

Extract 5:

*“And emm Baker also in **ee** 1985 and 19**ee**92 do research in Wales again and **ee...eee** he **suggest** that it is majority language mass media that is the destroyer of a minority language and culture, rather than minority language television and radio being the salvation of the language”.*

From the extract above, the presenter (H) said “*he suggest that*”, to show or introduce the result of the research by employed ‘suggest’ in her utterances. She expressed the results of the research as a support or r strengthen of her statement. Derives from the sample above, the presenter (H) employed ‘suggest’ as a bridge to present a scholar’s opinion or statement which is those word can categorize as lexical verb.

3. Probability adjective

Extract 6:

*“The first, there is economic status **yaa, aaa** the economic status of minority language is **likely** to be a key element in language vitality where a minority language community experiences considerable an employment or maybe **aaa** wide spread low income and sometimes **aaa** they aa experience **aaa** preasure **yaa** preasure toward the majority language and a minority language may be sacrificed on the altar of economic progress”.*

The probability adjective hedge slightly appears in the above extract. The sample above were uttered by SU, she started by introduce one of the indicators with “*The first, there is economic status*”, after that she employed ‘Likely’ in “*the economic status of minority language is likely to be a key element in language vitality*” as the signal word to brings the threat for the next explanation. From the sample, the presenter used or employed the ‘likely’ word in order to indicate a case that might happen or to be true (probable), in hedging classification ‘likely’ categorize as probability adjective hedge.

Extract 7:

*“Mmm, the example of **eee yaa** okay... okey the example of **aaa** the example **possible** for a small language minority to survive, okay in here there are 3 example that I will **aaa** share aa the first is in a large city or border areas, a small number of minority language speakers may be socially and culturally active in their minority language”.*

The extract above produced by SU, after said “*Mmm, the example of **eee yaa** okay... okey the example*” she employed ‘possible’ as a represented the capability of her example to be true “*the example possible for a small language minority to survive*”. Besides, act as a signal word to

bring a wider example. The sentence above, containing with probability adjective 'possible'. The word act as an indicator for the case or problem to be done within the power of capacity of someone or something and categorize as Probability adjective hedge.

4. Noun

Extract 8:

*"<L1 Disini ini maksudnya adalah **a.a.a assumption** yang kedua itu bahwa adanya pencampuran Bahasa diantara **aa** dua-- **aaa** dua kebudayaan yang berbeda, dimana kita tahu kalau setiap kebudayaan mempunyai Bahasa mereka masing-masing, nah disini diberikan contoh **aaa** integrated <L2 eastern and western **aa** Europe, a=ssumption L2> kedua ini bahwa adanya pergeseran Bahasa itu karena adanya pencampuran Bahasa dari dua budaya yang berbeda".*
*"In here means that **a.a.a** the second **assumption** is there is mixture in language between **aa** two-*
*- **aaa** two different cultures, we know that each culture has its own language, nah an example is given here **aaa** integrated eastern and western **aa** Europe, in this second a=ssumption shown that the language shift occurred because there is a blended in language from two different cultural".*

This extract derives from PS presentation, he intended to explained the second assumption that cause the language shift. *"In here means that a.a.a the second assumption is there is mixture in language between aa two-- aaa two different cultures"*, from the sample the presenter (PS) employed 'assumption' to show a thing that is accepted as true or as certain to happen even without proof. Moreover, 'assumption' categorizes as a noun hedge.

Extract 9:

*"okay, **aaa** thank you **aaa** thank you for the time now **amm** gonna take over the <x paddle x> **aaa** I'm gonna explain 3 from the chapter first **amm assumptions** of reversing language shift and the second **aaa** steps in reversing language shift and the last **aa** limit and critics".*

Still from the same presenter, he uses 'assumption' to introduce the possible cause of the problem. And that sentence containing with noun hedge.

5. Adverb of frequency

Extract 10:

*"The destruction of minority languages is the destruction of intimi- intimacy, family and comm- community, **often** involving aa oppression of the week by the strong, subjugating the unique and traditional by uniform and central".*

The presenter (PS) introduced a case by said *“The destruction of minority languages is the destruction of intimi- intimacy, family and comm- community”*, he continued by employed ‘often’ to show the cause of the case *“often involving aa oppression of the week by the strong, subjugating the unique and traditional by uniform and central”*. From the extract of the sample above, the presenter (PS) employed a word that indicate the frequency of occurrence. Furthermore, the presenter used ‘often’ which is include in adverb of frequency.

Extract 11:

“They focused aa like in Hollywood film better than their language minority so aa if..if its ee and it will be ee and it will be make the language minority extinct if...if ee do if always do something like this in that area or place in Wales, amm okay the next slide please”.

The presenter brings a comparison in her presentation as the cause of the problem *“They focused aa like in Hollywood film better than their language minority ...”*, and continued by employed ‘always’ to indicate the frequency of the causes *“if ee do if always do something like this in that area or place in Wales”*. From the extract above, it shows that the presenter (H) employed an adverb of frequency which is ‘always’ to show the frequency of the event.

6. Fillers

Since the first to the fifth extract above, all the extract above shown that each presenter frequently uses or employs the fillers. No matter, the men or the woman employed the fillers and both genders almost use the same fillers but slightly different in the way they pronounce and the purpose of the filler. Below the analyses of the fillers:

Extract 12:

“I give a short example from superordinate and subordinates yaa if you see the slide you can see there is a vehicles include in superordinate and then the= part of the other... the other words aaa under the vehicles you can see such as the lorries, cars, and so on is include as the subordinates and because of these, superordinate and subordinates eliminated the function of some words io our.. in their daily aaa use hmm..mmm (THROAT) and next slide please”.

After explained her material, she intended to show the example of her explanation by said *“I give a short example from superordinate and subordinates”* then continued by employed ‘you see’ as imperative sentence to interact or catch the attention of the participants. The extract

above released by (SU) and contain with 'you see' word which is act as a sign of undirect command for the participant. The 'you see' word categorized as fillers.

Extract 13:

*"a heritage language maybe an important symbol of ethnic identity we have to remember that aa most of us still use our local language because we believe that our local lang-- language it's become a part of the symbol of our local identity **yaa**, such as if you are Buginese maybe you use the Bugis language **yaa** to...to show your identity that you come... that you come from the Buginese tribe **yaa** something **like** that and heritage language is often regarded as a mark of nation hood".*

The word 'like' usually used in someone's explanation to show or give an example, the extract above employed 'like' after the presenter give an example in the end of her explanation. That word categorized as a fillers. Furthermore, the two extracts above shows that there are a chain of letters or alphabets which if they stand alone without compliments, they are meaningless and this phenomenon called fillers. Each filler employed by the speaker for some reason depends of their situation, for example; 'aaa or amm or eee' usually indicate as a pause between words or sentences when the speaker takes a time to generate or think the next words or sentences. *"Okay, here there is the symbol of status **yaa** most of **ammm** heritage language around the globe **yaa** it become **eee** symbolic of status of something **yaa** and the symbolic status of language is also important in language vitality"*

The extract above contains with filler 'ammm', while pronounce this word the presenter or the speaker also thinking to generate or find the word that match with the previous one. As written at the beginning of the paragraph (extract 6) about the fillers occurs in men and women explanation but slightly different in the way to pronounce (tone) it. The filler is 'yaa', the women employed 'yaa'(the tone fall at the end of the sound) to engage the trust of the participant while for the men 'yaa' (the tone high from beginning to the last), they employed this word to clarified the previous word or convinced himself.

Women:

*"Okay, here there is the symbol of status **yaa** most of **ammm** heritage language around the globe **yaa** it become **eee** symbolic of status of something **yaa** and the symbolic status of language is also important in language vitality"*

Men:

*“Kemudian the language community needs to be awoken and mobilized to support its language, Bahasa **aaa** komunitas Bahasa itu harus dibangkitkan atau **yaa** dibangkitkan dan dimobilized atau apa yaa istilahnya mobilized, di= di sebarluaskan atau **aaa yaa** disebarluaskan untuk mensupport Bahasa tadi”. “and then the language community needs to be awoken and mobilized to support its language, language aaa the language community must be awoken or yaa awoken and mobilized or what is the term of mobilized yaa?, disseminated or aaa yaa disseminated to support the language”. From the two extract above, we can see the different way to pronounce ‘yaa’ by woman and men.*

DISCUSSIONS

Thirteen extracts above had been discussed as examples of the use of lexical hedges in online presentation. The first finding shows that the utterances of the presenters during the discussion session are seen using or applied lexical hedges and can be seen from the table in findings section.

From 9 classifications of lexical hedges states by Namasaraev, the researcher during the observation only found six classifications used or employed by the presenters, they are; modal auxiliary verb, lexical verb, probability adjective, noun, adverb of frequency, and fillers.

The first is about modal auxiliary verb. This hedge shows the total of words that categorized as modal auxiliary verb such as *will, must, might, can, may, and maybe*. Generally, the presenter employed the modal auxiliary verb when they want to express their attitude towards something: whether it is needed, recommended, allowed, might happen, and so on.

The second is the lexical verb, which can be found in the presenter’s utterance for examples, *appear, believe, tend, suggest, think, argue, indicate, seem, and propose*. If we decipher this hedge, the extract shows that the presenters used this hedge to explain or show the main action performed by the subject.

The third relates with probability adjective. Derived from the data, this hedge are divided into three types; namely *possible, likely, and certain*. This hedge employed by the presenters to speak about probability and they use adjectives to represented it such as *probable, likely, possible and certain*.

The fourth is the noun hedge. The obtained data during the observation showed that only one word employed by the presenter which categorized as noun hedge, it’s ‘assumption’. From the extract, we can interpret that the presenter uses this word to thing that is accepted as true or as certain to happen even without a proof.

The fifth is the adverb of frequency, from the data the presenters employed 4 words that categorized as adverb of frequency and they are; *often, usually, sometimes, and always*. According to the 5th extract in findings section, the presenters employed these words in order to describes how often an action happens.

The sixth or the last extract described the fillers, the data showed that the fillers occurred on women and men utterances. Moreover, the presenters employed a lot of fillers during their presentation such as *you see, well, like, and (aaa, emm, ee, eh, yaa, hmm, uh, and etc.)*. Pebrianti (2013) writes that lexical hedges or fillers are signal of lack of confidence or expressing of uncertainty in the conversation, which aim to fill the gap between the conversation or to take and hold on the turn of the conversation, to begin the conversation, and to keep the conversation on the track. *Well, you know, think, seems, may, can, believe, looks and addition from* (Namasaraev, 1997) *aaa, emm, ee, eh, yaa, hmm, uh, and etc.* are the examples of lexical hedges or fillers.

This study also found that the fillers occur in men and women explanation but slightly different in the way to pronounce (tone) it. The filler is 'yaa', the women employed 'yaa' (the tone fall at the end of the sound) to engage the trust of the participant while for the men 'yaa' (the tone high from beginning to the last), they employed this word to clarified the previous word or convinced himself.

This study also supports the statement of (Yu, 2009) about the results of her study indicate that learners progress from a system in which learners use only performative 'I think' to an intermediate stage with combinations of intensifiers and mitigators before they progress to an advanced system at the university level in which they exhibit awareness of hedging clusters that draw on all categories of hedges. Besides, (Nikula, 2010) found qualitative differences between native and non-native speakers: learners tended to overuse 'I think' and use it only at the beginning of utterances while native speakers tended to use this hedge in combination with others at a variety positions throughout utterances.

If we linked with the obtained data from the researcher observation and transcribe, the total amount of employed the 'I think' words only occurred twice and it indicate that the students in university level specifically in English department rarely use 'I think' in presenting the materials. This phenomenon may happen because the responsibility or requirement from the lecturers to explained the materials based on the scholars' statement and not from our own statement.

CONCLUSIONS

The researcher can conclude this research as follows: Female and male' tendency in using the words of lexical hedges have been shown on this research or with the other words the lexical hedges occur in both genders and the researcher found that there is slight difference in how the male and female pronounce the fillers especially in 'yaa'. The female employed 'yaa' (the tone falls at the end of the sound) to engage the trust of the participant while for the male 'yaa' (the tone high from beginning to the last).

Moreover, the result of this research also supports the statement about 'learners use only performative I think to an intermediate stage with combinations of intensifiers and mitigators before they progress to an advanced system at the university level in which they exhibit awareness of hedging clusters that draw on all categories of hedges' based on the data that obtained in the observation which have been explained in discussion section above.

The last, this study is worthy of reading for English language teaching practitioners or the EFL students in their effort to differentiate the types of lexical hedges and its function and in order to find some statement of the scholars that may support your research.

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