PRAGMATIC STUDY ON HEDGING AS POLITENESS STRATEGY IN ONLINE NEWSPAPER

A Thesis
Submitted to Letters and Humanities Faculty in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Strata One

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ABSTRACT


This study intends to analyze hedges do function as politeness strategy within the New York Times online newspaper entitled: U.S Says Syria Has Used Chemical Weapons at Least 50 Times during War. This descriptive study employes synthetized classification theories of hedges by some linguists. However, Vold’s system test is applied in order to prove selected lexical expressions that might act as hedge. Regarding politeness strategy, this research uses Salager & Mayer’s and Levinson’s theories of politeness.

The foremost result of this research evinces that by combining the classification theories of hedges and Vold’s test in analyzing the hedges succor the writer to ascertain whether the lexical expressions act as hedge or not. In the meantime, by applying politeness theory reflects profound understanding on the use of the hedges. Additionally, within politeness strategy provides new evidence that hedges are not only able to be applied as the positive politeness strategies, but in this research covers negative politeness strategies as well.

Keywords: Hedge, Hedging, Politeness Strategy, Pragmatic
APPROVAL SHEET

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LEGALIZATION

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The thesis entitled above has been defended before the Letters and Humanities Faculty’s Examination Committee on November 12th, 2018. The thesis has already been accepted as a partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of strata one.

Jakarta, 12 November 2018

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this submission is my original work and that, to the best on my knowledge and belief. It contains no material previously published or written by another person nor material which to substantial extent has been accepted for award of any other degree or diploma of university or other institute of higher learning, except where due acknowledgment has been made in the text.

Jakarta, 5th November 2018

Anisa Zakia
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In the name of Allah, the Entirely Merciful, the Especially Merciful

To my fabulous parents, there is no vagueness in their devotion and strength

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Jakarta, 10th October 2018

Anisa Zakia
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

The term “hedging” was introduced by Lakoff (1972) in describing “words whose job it is to make things more or less fuzzy.” As Hyland (1998) elaborates, hedging has subsequently been applied to the linguistic devices used to qualify a speaker’s confidence in the truth of a proposition, the kind of caveats like I think, perhaps, might, and maybe which we routinely add to our statements to avoid commitment to categorical assertions (Marco & Mercer, 1). Hedging, also denoted to as epistemic modality, refers to a linguistic phenomenon in which a speaker or writer attempts to mitigate the force of a proposition in order to display humility, objectivity, or fallibility (Cassidy, 37). As Hübler (1983) stated, hedges are used to increase the appeal of the utterance, to make it more acceptable to the interlocutor and thus increase the probability of acceptance and reduce the chances of negation (Boncea 9). Additionally, Thorat argued that hedges are generally used to produce the effect of interposing the speaker's opinion between the propositional content and the addressee's assessment (Lafi, 8).

Hedging has received much attention in relation to conversational rules as a means to facilitate turn-taking, show politeness, mitigate face-threats, but it is also considered a means of conveying vagueness purposely. Politeness and hedging have become forms of social interpretation of verbal and non-verbal behavior revolving
around the concept of saving face, thus playing a crucial role in social interaction strategies (Boncea, 7). However, as natural language, hedges are not only used in verbal communication but used in writing communication as well which identified through various linguistic features. Addressing hedging in news writing, Zuck and Zuck define the strategy as “the process whereby the author reduces the strength of what he is writing” in case the information reported turns out to be incorrect. Here, hedging is viewed as a rhetorical means through which writers seek protection for their image (Adamu, 5). Hedges, thus, protect writers from making false statements by indicating either a lack of complete commitment to the truth value of a proposition, or a desire not to express that commitment categorically (Rashady, 31).

(Mauranen, 173) referred to hedges or hedging as a pragmatic phenomenon and connected it to politeness. In written communication, one way by which writer expresses negative and positive politeness strategy is by means of hedging. Myers (1989) argued that politeness strategies can be used in written communication as a way of ensuring smooth communication between readers and writers (Agbaglo, 30). Biber (1999) in Tang (37) argued that writers hedge through the use of modal auxiliaries, modifiers and tentative verbs. The examples below illustrate how hedges of modal auxiliary verbs are used as a negative politeness strategy:

(1)  

a. The reason for Chemistry and Literature students’ preference of simple titles may be that it is the familiar pattern to them; it could also be the least taxing way of formulating a title (Afful, 2005).

b. Today, every effort of life could be associated with industrial and commercial activities.
c. The contrasting findings may be traced to the different levels of education involved in the two studies: the present study involves undergraduate research and the previous study involves expert writing (Tang, 37).

In the example (1.a) may and could are used by the writer to avoid imposing his views on readers whereas in example (1.b), could is used for the same purpose. Also, may is used in example (1.c) for the same purpose. Therefore, by using these modal auxiliaries, the writers acknowledge the possibility that they could be proven wrong and the fact that they are only expressing their perspectives about their findings rather than certain truths. Aside modal auxiliary verbs, modifiers are also used to express tentativeness. Modifiers are used to indicate the degree of confidence writers invest in their claims. By using modifiers, writers indicate that their views come from a subjective point of view. Modifiers used to express tentativeness in research articles include probably, possibly, probable, possible, likely, presumably, perhaps, among others (Tang, 37).

A considerable number of studies have been conducted on hedges as politeness strategies in academic texts. The first related journal was completed by Jingwei Tang (2013) entitled “Pragmatic Functions of Hedges and Politeness Principles”. The research focused on the pragmatic functions of hedges and explored their effectiveness to keep politeness. Face theory and politeness principles were applied on identifying the functions of hedges in communication from the perspective of politeness. The result showed that different types of hedges played the role of maintaining politeness in communication. It is also pointed out that improper use of hedges failed to maintain politeness and leads to pragmatic failure. Another journal
entitled “*Hedging in Written Academic Discourse: Polypragmatic Functions, Cooperation and Politeness*” written by Monica Mihaela Marta (2017). This research concerned on the use of hedges as rhetorical tools in present-day written academic discourse, especially research articles. The aims were to explore the polypragmatic functions of hedging in the academic context and to carry out a theoretical analysis of hedges against the cooperation and politeness maxims. The polypragmatic character of these rhetorical tools is confirmed by the available literature while the present analysis concludes that hedges can be viewed as politeness strategies able to promote interaction as part of the cooperative endeavor that character communication in today’s dynamic and competitive written academic discourse.

The last research is a journal conducted by Mahmoud Samaiea, Fereshteh Khosravian, Mahna Boghayeri (2014) entitled “*The Frequency and Types of Hedges in Research Article Introductions by Persian and English Native Authors*”. This research investigated the types and frequency of hedges employed by Persian and English native speakers in the introduction section of academic research articles in the field of literature. Here, hedges allowed researchers to establish an early niche for their research. The results of the study indicated that English writers were more tentative in putting forward claims and in rejecting or confirming the ideas of others than Persian writers.

Furthermore, this research is conducted to investigate which linguistic expressions can be identified as hedges and analyze how hedges act as politeness strategy in the The New York Times’s article which released on April 13th 2018 with selected topic Syria Civil War – entitled: *U.S. Says Syria Has Used Chemical*
Weapons at Least 50 Times During War. This research is discourse analysis research with pragmatic approach. Since pragmatic is a study of context, moreover, several authors who have worked on context, such as Hymes, include media as part of the context. Djick explains further that discourse manifests itself in, is expressed in, or occurs (is placed, inscribed, etc.) in media such as letters, newspapers, magazines, television, internet, etc. the location metaphor would suggest a subcategory of the Setting (or of the Place subcategory of the Setting) (Djick, 150).

Moreover, there are two reasons why newspaper is chosen by the researcher as the object of the study. In the first place, the author of articles can objectively narrate something and protect people’s privacy from personal issues. At the same time, they may try to save face in case of any possible falsification of their judgments. By using hedges and not attributing the ideas to oneself, writers can also invite readers to evaluate the truth value of the proposition as an independently thinking individual without the possibility of being biased by the absoluteness of a non-hedged statement (Bonchea, 9). As the ethics also has standard of how to present idea without being impolite or inappropriate, writers tend to use a strategy that allow them to convey undesirable matters in polite way. Writers commonly use this strategy to prevent conflict or manage appropriate situation (Hamuddin & Noor, 52).

Thus, doing research on the use of hedges in online newspaper article is essential because their presences are to balance subjective evaluation and objective information with anticipated reactions from readers and aim to persuade readers to accept their claims. By investigating hedges, researchers are in a position to disclose
the linguistic masks of mass media so that the author of article can unveil the actual informations conveyed to the people. In the same time, the readers of article are supposed to think over the contents of the news. So that, they are able to distinguish between fact and opinion.

**B. Focus of the Study**

This study focuses on investigating which lexical expressions might act as hedges and analyze how hedges do function as politeness strategy in the New York Times’s article which released on April 13th 2018 with selected topic Syria Civil War – entitled: *U.S. Says Syria Has Used Chemical Weapons at Least 50 Times during War.*

**C. Research of Questions**

As it has been explained in the background of the study, therefore, the research questions in this study are:

1. Which can lexical expressions be identified as hedges within the New York Times’s article “*U.S. Says Syria Has Used Chemical Weapons at Least 50 Times During War*?”

2. How do hedging devices serve a function as politeness strategy within the New York Times’s article “*U.S. Says Syria Has Used Chemical Weapons at Least 50 Times During War*?”
D. Objectives of the Research

Based on research question above, the objective of this research are:

1. To recognize lexical expressions that can be identified as hedges within the New York Times’s article *U.S. Says Syria Has Used Chemical Weapons at Least 50 Times During War*.

2. To comprehend how do hedging devices serve a function as politeness strategy that are used in the New York Times’s article *U.S. Says Syria Has Used Chemical Weapons at Least 50 Times During War*.

E. Significance of the Study

Theoretically, this research is expected to enrich sufficient knowledge on the study of hedges in online newspaper. This research is also expected to be something valuable for references or comparison for the next study. Practically, the writer can provide an explanation how hedges are used in media discourse, peculiarly newspaper in order to fulfill tentative commitment and politeness.

F. Research Methodology

1. Research Method

The method that is used in this research is descriptive qualitative method. Qualitative method is not designed using statistical procedures (Subroto, 5). Qualitative research is descriptive, in that the researcher is interested to the process, meaning, understanding that gained through words or pictures (Creswell 1994 in Jauvilaili, 19). Thus, the researcher meticulously the data inform of words, in this
case is news article. The purpose of descriptive research is to provide an accurate description of the fact, data or material object in form of words or discourse through appropriate and systematic interpretation (Wibowo, 15).

In this descriptive qualitative method, the researcher will classify hedges based on the hedge classification theories by several linguists. Besides, Vold’s testing system is applied to identify the lexical features that act as hedges in politeness strategy. Therefore, this research uses Salager & Mayer’s and Brown & Levinson’s politeness concept to identify the politeness strategy in the data. The data of this research is textual source that was taken from online newspaper the New York Times.

2. The Technique of Collecting Data

Collecting data in scientific research is a systematic procedure to obtain indispensable data. The data is obtained from online newspaper, the New York Times, entitled: U.S Says Syria Has Used Chemical Weapons at Least 50 Times during War. The site as follow: (https://www.google.co.id/amp/s/www.nytimes.com/2018/04/13/world/middleeast/un-syria-haley-chemical-weapons.amp.html).

There are sixsteps of data collection as follows:

1. Access the online news media site, The New York Times,
2. Read the news texts published in online news, The New York Times, about Syrian Civil War
3. Mark lexical expressions that might act as hedge
4. Collect all data that have been selected from news articles

5. Writing down the hedgeg on the data card

3. **The Technique of Data Analysis**

The data that has been collected will be analyzed with several steps as follows:

1. Test lexical expressions which might act as hedges using Vold’s test system
2. Classify the hedges based on the theory of hedges by several linguists
3. Analyze how hedges are used as politeness strategy. To analyze the corpus, data card is used as an instrument of the research.
4. Summing up the entire data analysis.

4. **Unit of Analysis**

   The unit of analysis in this research is online newspaper, the New York Times ([https://www.nytimes.com](https://www.nytimes.com)). The New York Times sometimes is abbreviated as the NYT or The Times. According to Dimmagio, papers are like the NewYork Times reach beyond an American audience; it is considered one of the most prestigious papers in the world (Dimmagio, 1). However, as one of the largest mass media in the world, the New York Times has great influence in reporting under war. The primary emphasis of news reporting focused on how to gauge the "progress against the
insurgency," as the New York Times accurately depicted the mass media's and military's objectives (Dimmigo, 82).

The author is interested in studying the NYT newspaper because as a prominent online newspaper in the world, it does not rule out the existence of using hedges as politeness strategy in writing the news articles. On the other hand, the NYT has a great impact to the reader when untruthfulness, uncertainty and imprecision are identified in reporting the fact since the existence of media will herd public opinion. Media corporations today appear more powerful than at any time in world history, and they exercise a tremendous amount of influence and power over public opinion in the markets in which they operate (Dimaggio, 2).
CHAPTER II
THEOROTICAL FRAMEWORK

A. Previous Research

A considerable number of studies had been conducted on hedges as politeness strategies in academic texts. For instance: Tang (2013) tried to explore the pragmatic functions of hedges in politeness. The thesis adopted the theory of face theory and politeness principles and conducted a study on the functions of hedges in communication from the perspective of politeness. The study found out that different types of hedges play the role of maintaining politeness in communication. It also showed that improper use of hedges fails to maintain politeness and leads to pragmatic failure. The result showed that Hedges are the most typical components of fuzzy language and play roles of maintaining politeness in communication. Hedges can make communication euphemistic, moderate, polite and flexible, which effectively helps to maintain and adjust the relationship between speakers and hearers and keep communication smooth. On the other hand, hedges would make information fuzzy and fail to keep conveyed information appropriate, which may lead to inaccuracy of information. Hedges need to be used timely and moderately in communication (Tang, 59).

Samaiea, et al’s (2014) investigated the types and frequency of hedges employed by Persian and English native speakers in the introduction section of
academic research articles in the field of literature. Therefore, a corpus of forty research articles published in national and international journals were randomly selected and analyzed through descriptive statistics in terms of frequency. In the introduction section, hedges allow researchers to establish an early niche for their research. The results of the study indicate that English writers are more tentative in putting forward claims and in rejecting or confirming the ideas of others than Persian writers. English native writers used modal auxiliaries, evidential main verbs, adjectives and nouns in RAs more frequently than their Persian native writers' counterparts. The present findings can be employed to design tasks and materials for teaching writing that focus not only on grammar but also on rhetorical structures and various genres of writing. The study also recommends that as hedges are used differently across languages and non-native authors mostly desire to publish their scholastic writings in prestigious journals, adequate consideration seems necessary to be paid to the descriptions of linguistic and rhetorical devices in English (Samaiea, 1678).

Marta (2017) concerned on the use of hedges as rhetorical tools in present-day written academic discourse, especially research articles. The aims were to explore the polypragmatic functions of hedging in the academic context and to carried out a theoretical analysis of hedges against the cooperation and politeness maxims. The polypragmatic character of these rhetorical tools were confirmed by the available literature while the present analysis concludes that hedges can be viewed as politeness strategies able to promote interaction as part of the cooperative endeavor
that characteristic communication in today’s dynamic and competitive written academic discourse.

Unlike the three studies above, this research is different in term of corpus data, research problem, theory and method of research. Firstly, the corpus data of this research is news article released on April 13th 2018, which concerns on Syria Civil War, especially the news about America and its allies launched punitive airstrike. Secondly, this research is descriptive qualitative research method, the researcher will classify hedges based on the hedge classification theories by several linguists. Besides, Vold’s testing system is applied to identify the linguistics features which function as a hedge in politeness strategy. Therefore, this research uses Salager & Mayer’s and Brown & Levinson’s politeness concept to identify the politeness strategy in the data.

B. Theory

1. Politeness

The notion of politeness which by Yule (1998) was defined as as a polite way of social behavior, which differs from culture to culture. According to Spencer-Oatey (2000) stated that all the definitions of politeness have one particular feature behind them - human interaction which maintains or promotes interpersonal relationship. Politeness can be understood as a social phenomenon, a means to achieve good interpersonal relationships and a noun imposed by social conventions. So it is phenomenal, instrumental and normative by nature (Yuxian, 51).

(Hamuddin and Noor, 54) stated that theory of politeness by Brown and Levinson (1978) was first used as model for politeness strategies in which they conveyed that particular act might threaten someone’s face, referred as face threatening strategy (FTA). As the basis for the theory, Brown and Levinson firstly, revised the notion of ‘face’ provided by Goffman (1967) and introduced a definition more acceptable for the new century “a public self-image” (Brown and Levinson, 61-2). Secondly, they divided the ‘face’ into two types – positive and negative, where positive refers to the desire to be understood and accepted, and negative is the need to have free will to express oneself (Brown and Levinson, 22). Thus, politeness is employed when the ‘face’ is threatened and needs to be preserved.

For the preservation of the faces, Brown and Levinson (68-71) have divided the politeness strategies according to how much the speakers and hearers minimize the threat when they are having conversation. The strategies range from doing the FTA (Face Threatening Acts) directly without minimizing the threat at all to not doing the FTA. They are bald on-record, positive politeness, negative politeness, and off-record strategy.

Face –threatening –act (FTA) theory is the further extension of Leech’s Politeness concept. According to Brown and Levinson, Face has two aspects—positive and negative. Yule (1996) states that positive face is the need to be connected and negative face is the need to be independent. Illocutionary acts that are possible to
damage or threaten another person’s face are known as face–threatening acts (FTAs). In order to reduce the possibility of damage to the hearer’s face or to the speaker’s own face, speakers are inclined to employ certain strategies, such as hedging devices to save the hearer’s face or the speaker’s face (Teng, 1691).

As already mentioned, since we all are interested in maintaining the face of others, under normal circumstances, people try to avoid Face threatening Acts (FTA). However, when it becomes impossible to avoid the FTA, then the only thing people can do is to minimize the threat caused. They further propose that the degree of threat can be evaluated according to three culturally sensitive social variables: social distance (D) between interlocutors, relative power (P) of the participants and absolute ranking (R) of the impositions carried in the act in a particular culture. In addition to the three variables, the seriousness of an FTA is also determined by the participants in interactions. In any given situation, participants then select strategies appropriate to its needs. The greater the threat of an act, the more a polite strategy is required. With this rationale, Brown and Levinson propose five strategic choices for speakers: (Agbalo, 31-32).

The first strategy is on record politeness strategy. Here the FTA is done directly, unambiguously and concisely without any redressive action. Off-record politeness relies upon implication. Though off-record politeness strategies are considered very polite, Brown and Levinson admit that in practice, some of the off-record strategies are actually on record strategies. The last strategy (don’t do the
FTA) is considered to be the most polite among the politeness strategies. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), a wise person would evade the FTA or do his very best to mitigate threat. This strategy is often used when the speaker realizes that the magnitude of the FTA could be too great and decides to do nothing, so as to avoid face loss (Agbaglo, 31).

For gaining deeper knowledge about Brown & Levinson politeness strategies, further explanations provided below:

a. Bald on-record;

According to Brown and Levinson, Bald on-record strategy is a direct way of saying things, without any ministration on the imposition, in direct, clear, unambiguous, and concise way. Furthermore, Cutting states that if a speaker makes suggestion, request, offer, or invitation in an open and direct way, we say that they are doing an FTA bald on-record (Makejeva, 14). Normally, this strategy is employed among people who are very close to each other or know each other very well. It can also be used in a situation of urgency. In such circumstances, maintaining face is not the main goal of the conversation. For instance, someone can shout “watch out” when he or she realizes that someone is in danger. In this scenario, it is very unlikely that the person who shouts “watch out” will be considered impolite, the reason being that the urgency of the situation is considered more important (Agbalo, 32).
Table (2.1) Situations of using bald on-record strategy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situations of use</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Urgency or desperation</td>
<td>Watch out!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. When efficiency is necessary</td>
<td>Hear me out.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Task-oriented</td>
<td>Pass me the paint.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Little or no desire to maintain someone’s face</td>
<td>Don’t forget to wash the dishes!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Doing the face-threatening act is in the interest of the hearer</td>
<td>Your stove is on!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Welcomes</td>
<td>Come on in.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Offers</td>
<td>Leave it, I'll read it later.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

b. Positive politeness;

According to Brown and Levinson (1987) positive politeness is redress directed to the addressee's positive face, his/her perennial desire to the his/her wants or actions acquisitions, and value resulting from them should be thought as desirable. Positive politeness is used to make the hearer feel good about himself, his interests or possessions, and usually seen in groups of friends, or where people of given social situation know each other fairly well (Makajavea, 15)

Table (2.2) Situations of using positive politeness strategy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situations of use</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Attend to H’s interests, wants, needs</td>
<td>You look sad. Can I do anything?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Exaggerate interest</td>
<td>How wonderful!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Intensify interest</td>
<td>I come into my flat, and what do I see? - A huge mess all over the place, like a tornado passed through and..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Use in-group identity markers</td>
<td>Honey - wife, sweetheart – daughter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Seek agreement</td>
<td>The team played horribly last night, right?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Avoid disagreement</td>
<td>Yes, it’s rather long; not short certainly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Presuppose/raise/assert common</td>
<td>I had a really hard time learning to drive,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ground</td>
<td>didn’t I?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Jokes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Assert or presuppose S’s knowledge of and concern for H’s wants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Offer / promise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Be optimistic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Include both S and H in the activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Give (or ask for) reasons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Assume or assert reciprocity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Give gifts to H (goods, sympathy, understanding, cooperation)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

c. Negative politeness;

Brown and Levinson argued that negative politeness strategies are oriented toward the hearer’s negative face and emphasize avoidance of imposition on the hearer. The speaker recognizes and respects the hearer’s negative-face wants and will not or will only minimally interfere with the hearer’s freedom of Action. Negative politeness, similarly to positive, takes into account the face, however if positive politeness deals with the positive face, then negative politeness deals with the negative face. This means that the speaker wants to have absolute freedom but at the same time soften the imposition on the hearer and redress the negative face threat (Bousfield, 57).
Table (2.3) Situations of using negative politeness strategy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situations of use</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Be indirect</td>
<td>Would you know where Oxford Street is?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Asking questions using hedges</td>
<td>I wonder whether you could pass the rice please?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Be pessimistic</td>
<td>So I suppose some help is out of the question, then?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Minimize the imposition</td>
<td>Could I talk to you for just a minute?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Giving deference</td>
<td>Excuse me, officer. I think I might have parked in the wrong place.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Apologizing</td>
<td>Sorry to bother you, but..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Impersonalizing S and H: performatives, imperatives, impersonal verbs, passive and circumstantial voices, replacing the pronouns ‘I’ and ‘you’ by indefinites, pluralizing the ‘I’ and ‘you’ pronouns, using point-of-view distancing</td>
<td>A: That car’s parked in a no-parking area. B: It’s mine, officer. A: Well, it’ll have to have a parking ticket.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Stating the FTA as a general rule</td>
<td>Parking on the double yellow lines is illegal, so I’m going to have to give you a fine.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Nominalising</td>
<td>Participation in an illegal demonstration is punishable by law. Could I have your name and address, madam?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Going on record as incurring a debt, or as not indebting H</td>
<td>If you could just sort out a problem I’ve got with my formatting, I’ll buy you a beer at lunchtime.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

d. Off-record (indirect);

Brown and Levinson (1999) define off-record strategy as a communicative act which is done in such a way that is not possible to attribute one clear communicative
intention to the act. Off record utterances are important in indirect use of language (Makajevea, 17). Sometimes, speakers realize that when the FTA is done, the intensity of face lost will be so great. In such situations, speakers use off record strategies to convey their message ambiguously, leaving the hearer to interpret the message in his own way (Agbalo, 32).

Table (2.4) Situations of using off-record (indirect) strategy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situations of use</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Giving hints</td>
<td>It is cold here.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Giving association rules</td>
<td>I’ve got a headache again.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Presupposing</td>
<td>I cleaned the home again today.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Understating</td>
<td>The green hat is quite nice for you. (quite means not so good)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Overstating</td>
<td>I asked for a hundred times, but you never give me the Answer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Using tautologies</td>
<td>War is a war.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Using contradictions</td>
<td>A: Are you okay with him?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B: Well, between yes and no.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Being ironic</td>
<td>Yeah, Jim is a real genius. (He’d just done many stupid things)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Using metaphors</td>
<td>Harry is a real fish. (He swims like a fish)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Using rhetorical questions</td>
<td>How many times I should tell you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Being ambiguous</td>
<td>John is pretty sharp.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Being vague</td>
<td>I’m going down the road for a bit. (To the mini-market)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Displacing H</td>
<td>A: Someone has to be responsible for this mess.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B: You know who was having time with his friends tonight here.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Being incomplete, using ellipsis</td>
<td>Well, I’ll just...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1.2 Politeness Theory and Written Discourse (Myers, 1989) in (Agbaglo 32-34)

Whilst the politeness theory propounded by Brown & Levinson (1987) was originally used to analyze spoken data, it has been successfully applied to written discourse, in general, and written academic discourse, in particular (e.g. Myers, 1989; Pilegaard, 1997; Getkham, 2016). In written academic discourse, politeness is seen in the way writers engage readers in the activity and how they offer, promise or give reasons in order to soften the blow of the FTA.

1.2.1 Positive politeness strategies (Expressing solidarity with the reader)

Positive politeness strategies are the strategies used to emphasize solidarity, common grounds or agreement. When writers are making claims or suggestions in research articles, they employ a variety of positive politeness strategies to enable them gain approval from readers. The strategies used here include Claiming common grounds and Showing that the writer and readers are cooperators (Brown & Levinson 1978). Two sub-strategies (claiming common views, attitudes, and opinions & creating rapport) find themselves under the strategy Claiming common grounds. According to Myers (1989), in claiming common views, attitudes and opinions, writers make a good use of modifiers such as adjectives. Adjectives that are normally used by writers in this regard include certainty adjectives such as clear, certain, sure, undoubted and definite. Below is an illustrative example from (Getkham, 130):

1. Another obvious limitation is the use of strong functional forms used for the demand and cost functions.
In the above example, the writer uses the certainty adjective obvious to claim common grounds with readers.

Another way by which writers claim common views, attitudes and opinions with readers and engage them in the work is through the use of alternative and speculative expressions (Myers, 1989; Getkham, 2013). By using such alternative and speculative expressions, writers assume that their audience have a shared knowledge of the claims the writers are making, as illustrated in the example below.

2. To mimic the strategy followed by such literature, estimation is also performed using ML under the assumption that the errors defined by (10) and (11) are jointly normally distributed. (Getkham, 130)

The writer of the above example claims common ground with the audience by using the assumptive expression assumption. In addition to the first sub-strategy, writers also use the second sub-strategy Creating rapport to create common grounds with readers. In creating rapport with the readers, writers normally use emotional expressions, rhetorical questions and imperatives to show solidarity with the readers. The following are some illustrative examples from (Getkham, 131):

3. Interestingly, learners with low self-regulation skills did not benefit significantly by the partially learner-generated mapping, contrary to the intention of the treatment design: the original assumption was that partially learner-generated concept mapping would help learners with low self-regulation more because it combines the advantages of a midlevel of generativity and a pre-developed structure of an expert’s schema that reduces learners’ cognitive overload.

4. To see how wide this uniform distribution is, note that for the distribution of family net worth for all U.S. farm households in 2004, the ratio of the 95% quartile (= $2.36 million) to the 10% quantile (= $150 thousand) is only 15.7

5. What about the use of historical experience, knowledge of institutions, and professional judgment as part of the process that produces Applied Economics? How about including the use of “economic intuition” in the mix?
I would argue that all of these aspects of knowledge and approaches to analysis belong in the realm of Applied Economics.

In the examples above, an emotional expression, an imperative and a rhetorical question are respectively used by the writers to show solidarity. Whilst the writer of example (3) used the emotional expression interestingly, the writer of example (4) used the imperative note that. The writer of example (5), on the other hand, makes use of the rhetorical question *What about the use of historical experience, knowledge of institutions, and professional judgment as part of the process that produces Applied Economics?* to achieve the same aim.

By using some politeness devices, writers also indicate that they cooperate with readers. In showing that the writer and the readers are cooperators, writers make use of the inclusive pronoun *we* and its derivatives. In using this pronoun, the writer considers readers as colleagues or fellow researchers (Harwood, 2005; Li and Gi, 2009) and writers to reduce the gap between they themselves and readers, thereby bringing readers into the text.

The following example from Gil-Salom and Soler-Monreal (2009) illustrates this point.

6. *We assume that the two operands are the same and both are pyramids. Each has n number of vertices, 2n 22 number of edges, and n number of faces.*

In the above example, it is clear how the writer used *we* to create rapport between himself and the readers.
1.2.2 Negative Politeness Strategies (Mitigating imposition when making claims)

According to Myers (1989) most of the conventional features of research articles double as negative politeness strategies which are used to assure readers that writers do not want to impose on their freedom of action. These strategies include hedges, and impersonal constructions. Getkham (2013) groups these strategies into three main sub-strategies:

a. Being tentative by hedging;

b. Showing that you don’t want to impose;

c. Attributing all responsibility by personalization.

In order to avoid coercing readers, most writers mitigate their FTAs through hedging. To this end, writers employ hedges such as modals, modifiers (e.g. probably, possibly, probable, possible, likely) and tentative verbs. According to Myers (1989), these devices normally occur in Discussion sections of research articles, the reason being that this section contains tentative propositions for the research findings. An example is given below:

7. Another possible explanation for students’ perceived interest in grammar teaching might be an experienced disconnect between teaching and testing. (Getkham 131)

In the example above, the writer makes use of the modifier possible and the modal auxiliary verb might to avoid imposing his views on readers.
To indicate that they do not want to impose their views on readers, writers dissociate themselves from the statement by the use of a variety of linguistic devices. This strategy embraces three sub-strategies:

a. the use of impersonal construction 1,

b. the use of impersonal construction 2, and

c. the use of introductory phrases.

In the first sub-strategy (impersonal construction 1), writers use impersonal constructions such as these observations suggest, these results imply, this leads to the proposal, to introduce their ideas. Writers who use the second sub-strategy make use of agentless passives to introduce their ideas. The introductory phrases used in the third subcategory include phrases such as it seems, it is interesting to, et cetera. This is illustrated below:

8. These results suggest that subsequent non basic job growth is negatively and significantly related to the 1990 mining share, but the other two basic or export sector employment shares are statistically.

9. Unless games are designed specifically as curriculum resources, or else considerable support is provided for post-play reflection, relating experiences of play to formal education is problematic.

10. From the literature, it is evident that assessment can be used as a means of channeling students’ energies as it requires students to focus their efforts towards successful completion of tasks. (Getkham, 132)

The above examples show how the strategy showing that you don’t want to impose is used. In example (8), (9) and (10), impersonal construction 1, impersonal construction 2 (passive voice without agent) and the introductory phrase respectively are used. Often times, writers also assume all responsibility by showing their personal
attachment to their claims. In this regard, writers use personal subjects followed by performative verbs. Performative verbs are verbs that explicitly convey the kind of speech act being performed. Such verbs include believe, deny, and declare. The example below illustrates this point (Getkham, 132).

11. We believe that this inconsistency that marks all textbooks to some extent is not due to ignorance of or in attention to sociolinguistic concerns (prefaces demonstrated awareness of these aspects and several of the textbook authors are renowned sociolinguists).

When writers assume personal responsibility, they present the claims from their own point of views, giving the acceptability of other possible opinions.

2. Hedging

The term hedge originated from the work of Zadeh (1965) about fuzzy logic. At that time, hedge could not be related to any linguistic category. However, only in 1972 George Lakoff, who is now considered to be the pioneer of this phenomenon, referred to the hedge as a device that made expressions more or less fuzzy, thus beginning to examine hedges from linguistic point of view (Makejeva, 18). Hyland stated that a hedge is any linguistic means used to indicate either (a) a lack of complete commitment to the truth of an accompanying proposition or (b) a desire not to express that commitment categorically. Hedges are therefore the means by which a writer can present a proposition as an opinion rather than a fact. According to Schroder and Zimmer in Florea (2017) a hedge can be one or more lexico-syntactical category or a strategy to modify a proposition and ‘hedging’ is used to refer to the textual strategy of using linguistic features as hedges in certain context for specific
communicative purpose. In addition, *hedge* has later been defined by Brown & Levinson as a particle, word or phrase that modifies the degree of membership of a predicate or a noun phrase in a set; it says of that membership that it is partial or true only in certain respects, or that it is more true and complete than perhaps might be expected (Boncea, 8).

3. **Hedges as Hedging Strategies in Pragmatics Perspective**

   Different authors have used various phrases and opinions to define hedges. Mauranen (173) referred to hedges or hedging as a pragmatic phenomenon and connected it to politeness. According to Hübler (1983) hedges are used to increase the appeal of the utterance, to make it more acceptable to the interlocutor and thus increase the probability of acceptance and reduce the chances of negation. This could also explain the actual term *hedge* as the attitude of the speaker trying to protect him/herself from potential rejection on the part of the interlocutor. House & Kasper believe (1981) that “both these functions – one defensive and ego-oriented, the other protective or alter-oriented are fulfilled by politeness.” (157).

   In recent studies that deal with hedging, it is this interpersonal aspect of the phenomenon that has been given prominence. For instance, addressing hedging in news writing, Zuck and Zuck (172) define the strategy as “the process whereby the author reduces the strength of what he is writing” in case the information reported turns out to be incorrect. Here, hedging is viewed as a rhetorical means through which writers seek protection for their image. In another cross-linguistic study of
hedges in philosophical texts, Markkanen and Schroder (48) define hedging as a strategy of “saying less than what one means”. In this instance too, like the previous, hedging is presented as a strategy used to modify writers’ responsibility for the truthfulness of an utterance, to modify the definiteness of an utterance, and to modify the attitude of the author to the propositions put forth in a text or even to hide this attitude. Crismore and Vaude Kopple (1988) also see hedges as items that “signal a tentative or cautious assessment of the truth of referential”, which allow senders to reduce their responsibility toward information presented. All of these descriptions above undoubtedly capture some essential discourse function of hedging (i.e. the primary concern writers have about how to present themselves in a text).


Prince et al.’s in Jingwei Tang (155) classified hedges into *approximators* and *shields* in the field of pragmatics. Approximators can change peoples’ perception on topics of conversations and the original meaning of discourse structure according to the communicative context. That is, approximators can change the true value of discourse, or make a certain degree of amendments based on the given facts, or provide certain range of variation to the original discourse. Shields don’t change the content and true value of discourse, simply conveying speakers’ doubt or reservations towards the discourse and showing speakers’ attitudes indirectly to moderate the tone. The details classification of hedges by Prince will be showed in the following diagram (P.29)
On the diagram below, *approximators* can be classified into two subcategories: *adaptors* (words that make certain amendments to the original meanings of discourse) and *rounder* (words that provide certain range of variation).

As approximators are, shields can be divided into two subcategories: plausibility shields and attribution shields.

Table (2.5) Hedges based on Prince et. Al’s.


The taxonomy of hedging devices which Martin-Martin (2008) proposes draws on the different classifications that can be found in the literature. For the analysis, he primarily considered the socio-pragmatic context in which hedges occur,
as it appears that it is virtually impossible to attribute a function to a hedge without considering both the linguistic and situational context. A preliminary analysis of the corpus revealed that the linguistic devices which the writers in both languages use at a lexico-grammatical and syntactic level for the explicit function of hedges can be described as realizing the following basic strategies: (Rashady, 34).

1. Strategy of Indetermination, by giving a proposition a coloring of lesser semantic, qualitative and quantitative explicitness as well as of uncertainty, vagueness and fuzziness. This strategy may comprise:
   a. Epistemic modality, which can be realized by means of: - Modal auxiliary verbs expressing possibility, such as *may, might, can*. - Semi-auxiliaries such as *to seem, to appear*. - Epistemic lexical verbs such as *to suggest, to speculate, to assume*, that is, verbs which relate to the probability of a proposition or hypothesis being true. - Verbs of cognition such as *to believe, to think*. - Modal adverbs (*perhaps, possibly, probably*) - Modal nouns (*possibility, assumption, suggestion*). - Modal adjectives (*possible, probable, likely*).
   b. Approximators of quantity, frequency, degree and time such as *generally, approximately, most, relatively, frequently, etc.*, which indicate an unwillingness to make precise and complete commitment to the proposition expressed.
2. Strategy of Subjectivation. This includes:

a. The use of first personal pronouns (I/we) followed by verbs of cognition (think, believe) or performative verbs (suppose, suggest), that can be interpreted as the writers sign what they say are simply their personal/subjective opinion. In this way, the writers show respect for the reader’s alternative opinion and invite the reader to become involved in the communicative situation. In this subcategory, Martin-Martin (2008) also included those linguistic devices which express the author’s personal doubt and direct involvement such as to our knowledge, in our view, in my experience. Ruzaitė (2007) asserts that ‘Hedges with I convey the speaker’s stance and his/her attempt to distance him/herself’.

b. Quality - emphasizing adjectival and adverbial expressions such as extremely interesting, particularly important that is, emphatic expressions that Hyland (1998) names —booster and which are equivalent to what Salager - Meyer (1994) terms as —emotionally charged intensifiers, which are used to convince the readers of the importance / truth of the propositions expressed by revealing the writer’s emotional state. At the same time, these expressions can be considered as a positive politeness strategy (Myers, 1989) as they show solidarity with the discourse community by exhibiting responses that assume shared knowledge and desires.

3. Strategy of Depersonalization. This refers to those cases in which the writers diminish their presence in the texts by using various impersonal, agentless and
passive constructions in order to relieve themselves of responsibility for the truth of the propositions expressed. This strategy is syntactically realised by means of:

a. Agentless passive and impersonal constructions such as *an attempt was made to see..., it seems/appears that.*

b. Impersonal active constructions in which the personal subject is replaced by some non-human entity such as findings, results, data, as in the following examples: *The findings suggest/reveal..., these data indicate...;*

### 3.3. Hedge and Hedging Strategies by Ken Hyland

Hyland (1996-a, 1996-b, 1998-a) in (Marta 882) classified hedges according to their pragmatic function into two main types: content-motivated and reader-motivated. The distinction depends on how writers anticipate the possible objections of the target audience in an academic context that grants readers of scientific research articles the power to accept or deny the knowledge claims introduced by these hedges. Content-motivated hedges were further subdivided into accuracy-based hedges, which include attribute and reliability hedges, and writer-based hedges. Content-motivated hedges are generally related with the writers’ wish for their claims to meet adequacy conditions in order to be accepted by the target audience while reader-motivated hedges work towards the fulfillment of acceptability conditions for facilitating the successful acceptance of newly introduced information.

While, content-motivated hedges must be expressed in such a way that the target readers perceive claims as adequate (appropriate, accurate, precise, objective),
through the use of reader-motivated hedges, claims can be accepted by the audience because they were assigned a provisional character and introduced as personal opinions pending the ratification of the writer’s peers within the interactive process of knowledge creation.

As last but not least, Hyland classified forms of hedging devices into two: lexical hedges and strategic hedges. Lexical hedges include epistemic lexical verbs, nouns, adverbs, epistemic adjectives, and modal verbs while strategic (non-lexical) hedges contain “admission to a lack of knowledge, reference to a model, theory or methodology, and reference to limiting experimental conditions” (Darim, 54-55).

1. Lexical verbs,

According to Boncea, lexical verbs are used to perform acts like evaluating, assuming or doubting rather than merely describing: the epistemic seem and appear, also believe, assume, suggest, estimate, tend, think, argue, indicate, propose, speculate, suppose etc. When used epistemically as hedging elements these verbs express the speaker’s strong belief in the truth of the utterance or, on the contrary, the speaker’s unwillingness to vouch for understanding the utterance as more than a personal opinion.

Lexical verbs, the most common hedge terms in Hyland’s corpus, can be described, according to Palmer (1986), as speculative, deductive, quotative, or sensory. Speculative verbs are verbs of prediction or subjectivity (e.g. believe). They convey the author’s opinion on a matter without committing to stating it as truth.
Deductive verbs suggest that the author arrived at a proposition through logical reasoning (e.g. *conclude*). These verbs also called subjectivizers and are markers of stance and attitude expressing a speaker’s subjective opinion. Four subjectivizers are considered: *I think, I guess, I don’t know, and I believe*. *I guess* are normally used in informal situations (Sabet & Zhang, 47). These verbs, when used as hedges, are intended to outline a path from an observation to a conclusion. Quotative verbs express attribution to a source other than the author (e.g. *suggest*). These verbs can reference another person or the data obtained by the author. Finally, sensory verbs describe the author’s perception (e.g. *appear*). Such terms suggest that trust in the author’s perceptive abilities is necessary to accept the conclusions drawn from these propositions (Cassidy, 13).

2. Epistemic Adjectives

Hyland stated that the epistemic meaning of an adjective would attribute to an interpretation if only the result is “imaginable rather than likely”. However (Boncea, 10) added that modal adjective functions as device to reduce the strength of the noun such as *likely, possible, probable*.

3. Epistemic Nouns

Boncea (10) states that modal nouns are used to render certainty, it consists of words such as *tendency, possibility, assumption, claim*...
4. Epistemic Adverb

Hyland explained that adverbial forms function to reduce the force caused by the verb acting as downtoners and he also stated that it might act as disjunct that conveys comment about the truth-value of the proposition. He also added that when the epistemic adverb is put in initial, it would mark what follows as hypothetical and subjective. It consists of *slightly, presumably, almost, usually, relatively, probably, practically*.

5. Modal Auxiliaries

However, modal auxiliaries were excluded from further investigation because they express one type of epistemic meaning *possibility/probability* (Takimoto 95). Palmer (2007) considered epistemic and evidential modalities as a propositional modality that relates to the speaker's/writer's attitude toward the truth-value of the proposition. According to Palmer (2007), included under epistemic modality are three types of judgment: "One that expresses uncertainty (e.g., John *may* be in his office), one that indicates an inference from observable evidence (e.g., John *must* be in his office), and one that indicates inference from what is generally known (John *will be in his office*). In other words, epistemic modality concerns the way speakers or writers communicate their doubts, certainties, and guesses. These are identified as speculative, deductive, and assumptive and overlap with hedging and boosting. (Takimoto, 96).
(Boncea 10) stated Modal auxiliaries: *may, might, can, could, should, would, must*, particularly in their epistemic senses. Modal verbs reflect the speaker’s attitude and help them express ideas indirectly, which makes modal verbs perfect candidates as hedging devices. Moreover, they allow speakers to be fuzzy about an informational content, avoid face threatening acts and formulate illocutions so as not to offend the hearer.


Although not totally comprehensive nor categorically watertight, the scheme below represents the most widely used hedging categories, at least in scientific English. Typically, hedging is expressed through the use of the following —strategic stereotypes: (Rashady, 35).

1. Modal auxiliary verbs (the most straightforward and widely used means of expressing modality in English academic writing), the most tentative ones being: *may, might, can, could, would, should.*

2. Modal lexical verbs (or the so-called —speech act verbs used to perform acts such as doubting and evaluating rather than merely describing) of varying degree of illocutionary force: *to seem, to appear* (epistemic verbs), *to believe, to assume, to suggest, to estimate, to tend, to think, to argue, to indicate, to propose, to speculate.* Although a wide range of verbs can be used in this way (Banks 1994), there tends to be a heavy reliance on the above-mentioned example especially in academic writing:
3. Adjectival, adverbial and nominal modal phrases:
   
a. Probability adjectives: e.g., possible, probable, un/likely

b. Nouns: e.g., assumption, claim, possibility, estimate, suggestion

c. Adverb (which could be considered as non-verbal modals): e.g., perhaps, possibly, probably, practically, likely, presumably, virtually, apparently.

4. Approximators of degree, quantity, frequency and time: e.g., approximately, roughly, about, often, occasionally, generally, usually, somewhat, somehow, a lot of.

5. Introductory phrases such as I believe, to our knowledge, it is our view that, we feel that, which express the author’s personal doubt and direct involvement.

6. If clauses, e.g., if true, if nothing.

7. Compound hedges. These are phrases made up of several hedges, the commonest forms being:

   a. Amodal auxiliary combined with a lexical verb with a hedging content (e.g., it would appear).

   b. A lexical verb followed by a hedging adverb or adjective where the adverb (or adjective) reinforces the hedge already inherent in the lexical verb (e.g., it seems reasonable/probable). Such compound hedges can be double hedges(it may suggest that; it seems likely that; it would indicate that; this probably indicates); treble hedges (it seems reasonable to assume that); quadruple hedges (it would seem somewhat unlikely that, it may appear somewhat speculative that), and as can be seen all the forms presented above imply that
the statements in which they appear contain personal beliefs based on plausible reasoning (or empirical data). Without these — strategic stereotypes, readers would imply that the information conveyed pertains to universally established knowledge.

Several linguists proposed hedges types into two main categories, conventional and conversational hedges. The synthesized classification cited in Laurinaitytė (2011) that will be presented as follows:

1. Conventional hedges:
   a. Modal auxiliary verbs such as *may, might, can, could, will, would, should*:

   *A second reason for the large gains may be that the learners were more skilled in guessing a word from context.* (Šinkūnienė, 102).


   i. *Can* would express possibility if it is served in the construction of *inanimate noun + can + linking verb/verb.*

   ii. *Will* would express prediction if it is used in the construction of *will + be + adjective / noun.*

   iii. *Could* would express possibility when it is constructed as *could + be + adjective / noun* and *could + perfect infinitive.*

   iv. *Should* only expresses probability when it is constructed in *should + be* and *should + perfect infinitive*
b. Modal lexical verbs such as *to seem, to appear, to believe, to assume, to suggest, to estimate, to tend, to think, to argue, to indicate, to claim, to propose, to speculate, to predict, to calculate, to infer.*

c. Adjectival, adverbial and nominal modal phrases: probability (or, according to Hinkel, possibility)
   i. Adjective such as *possible, probable, un/likely.*
   ii. Nouns such as *assumption, claim, possibility, estimate, suggestion.*
   iii. Adverbs such as *perhaps, possibly, probably, practically, likely, presumably, virtually, apparently, partially, partly, in (this/that) case, by (some/any) chance, in a way, quite, barely, actually, clearly, comparatively, essentially, indeed, normally, potentially, relatively, theoretically, maybe, fairly, almost, nearly, merely, slightly, sufficiently, hopefully, broadly, somehow, somewhat.*

2. Hedging by passive voice. Salager-Meyer did not include it in his taxonomy; however, Clemen (2002), Hagge and Kostelnin (1989) and Hyland (1996) did on the basis that passive voice is agentless. Moreover, Hyland (2005) adds that passive constructions serve as the insurance against overstating the assertion.

3. Modal-adverb expressions. According to Hoye (1997), modal-adverb expressions such as *could kindly, will kindly, could possibly* function as hedging devices or negative politeness strategies.

4. Hedging realized by concessive conjuncts. This is a category found in one linguist’s taxonomy only. Clemen (2002) states that there are conjuncts such as *though, although, despite, in spite of, notwithstanding, whereas, while, even if,*
even though which attenuate the strength of the statement by giving an equivocational support.

5. Hedging by particles. Only Clemen (2002) included particles into the taxonomy:

Surprisingly, only 1,650 jobs have been axed along the way.

6. Hedges realized by approximators of:

a. Degree such as approximately, roughly, about:

Fever is present in about a third of cases and sometimes there is neutropenia.

b. Indefinite quantifiers such as a lot of, a bit of, many/much, some, little/a little, a few/few/fewer, less (than), a number of, a good/great deal of, more or less, more (than), most, at least, over, under. For example:

Many/Some/A few scientists around the world seem to compete with each other for inventing new technology.

7. Hedging realized by conditional clauses. Conditionals are included in taxonomies of several linguists. Clemen explains this category by saying that such clauses refer to hypothetical situations. Moreover, Hyland notices that conditional sentences offer a possibility. For example: (p. 41)

If we had free rein, he would undoubtedly be trying to push inflation lower.

8. That clauses. Buitkienė (2008) notices that that clauses in combination with modal verbs also belong to hedges.
9. Comments on value-judgment is a category mentioned by Clemen that is not included in anyone else’s taxonomies. The example of this category:

Interestingly, although local authorities refused to recognize conscientious objection to fire-watching, there are anomalous cases where they simultaneously acknowledged self-identification objector.

10. Comments on truth-judgment is also a category included in Clemen’s (2002) taxonomy only:

Second, the clear assumption throughout is that leading Welshmen (and, one must assume, women) would unquestionably reflect more accurately the needs and desires of the Welsh nation than any persons from outside the country—this without reference to any possible wider experience in broadcasting or other related fields.

11. References. According to Hyland, it is a conscious strategy to mark a statement as an alternative view; thus, a hedge signals a personal opinion. The linguist distinguishes between impersonal expressions that comment on others’ works and reference to methods, models, or the conditions under which the results were obtained.

12. Qualification. In Hyland’s words, it can indicate the precise standpoint from which to judge the truth of a claim:

Finally, from a practical point of view, the tRNA_{sp} extended transcript could serve to produce large quantities of wild type tRNA_{sp} transcripts.

By using the first person pronouns, writers decide to take a stance and adopt different roles in the text. Generally, the first person pronoun *we* can have either inclusive or exclusive semantic reference. While an inclusive *we* makes reference to the writer and the reader, an exclusive *we* excludes the reader. The use of inclusive *we* by writers suggests that readers are considered as colleagues or as fellow researchers and that writers want to reduce the gap between themselves and their readers. Bringing readers into the text. The use of the inclusive *we*, therefore, shortens the distance between writers and readers and stresses solidarity with readers. The inclusive pronoun *we* was identified in the data analysed (Laurintie, 22). The example below shows how the inclusive *we* was used as a positive politeness strategy:

*Thus, in this paper, we have tried to identify and discuss the semantic implications of the following personal pronouns (and their variants) and how they affect the message put across by the doctors:* (Agbalo, 36).

14. Questions. According to Hyland, questions draw the reader into the deductive process.

15. Tag questions. According to Holmes (1995), who studied hedges as devices expressing politeness, tag questions also serve as hedges.

16. Pragmatic tags. Holmes (1995) adds tags such as *um, er, eh* to the taxonomy. According to the linguist, such tags express varying degrees of confidence:

17. Conversational hedges. Quaglio (2009) and Hinkel (2004) distinguish yet another group of hedges, *including sort of, kind of, like, kinda, to be supposed to,*
by (some/any) chance, hopefully, if you know/understand what I mean, if you
catch/get my meaning/drift, as everyone (else)/you know(s), (as (far as)) we/I
know, as (is) well known, (as) everyone/people say(s), as the saying goes, from
what I hear/now/see/understand, almost, at all, at least, basically, enough, (a)
few, hardly, just, (a) little, only, pretty, quite, actually, anyway, in a way, less,
more, something, lots.

6. Hedging Test

Some problems arise as it comes to determine the lexical categories that play
roles as hedges but also overlap with the other linguistics concepts such as vagueness
and modality. Several tests were proposed by some linguists. Vold (2006)
recommend having other mitigatory lexical expression to be added or taking several
test such as substitution, reformulation and syntactic test. These tests are used to
determine the epistemic meaning of the linguistic expressions. Vold in (Laurinaitytė
33) stated if adding an ‘uncertainty phrase’ felt natural, the occurrence was classified
as epistemically modal.

a. We therefore assume that these default preferences for the null complements in
(19a), (20a) and (21a) have been established as part of the conventional
meanings of the relevant verbs, but we are not sure.
b. I assume Hornstein’s approach, but I’m not sure.

The examples above (a) and (b) illustrate how to determine the meaning of a
word which supposedly has epistemic meaning by adding other mitigatory lexical
expressions. In this case but we are not sure was added. It helps to determine that
assume in sentence (a) is used in its epistemic sense while assume in sentence (b) is not. For further understanding, the following explanation is shown to comprehend how Vold’s test works.

Hedging Test by Vold’s System Test

1. **Substitution**: the substitution test suggests replacing one word which meaning is in question, with another one with a definite epistemic meaning, for example, *may* with *perhaps*.

2. **Reformulation**: reformulation test might be used when the proposition can be changed into more ‘certain’ way by changing the polysemic marker as in *we assume that*... into the non-hedged expressions *we know that*... it means the essence of the reformulation test is to reformulate the same word in question with a less hedged or non-hedged version.

3. **Syntactic test**: the syntactic test deals with semantic patterns which either express epistemic modality or not, for example, *assume(ing) that* and *be assumed to* are epistemically marked while *assume + noun* is not. The same case is with another lexical modal verb *appear* which functions as a hedge when it is used in constructions such as *appear to be, it appears that*; however, it loses its epistemic meaning in a construction *appear + preposition*.

However, not every linguist agreed upon the proposed test as Salager-Meyer in Heiniluoma (30) conveyed that there is no definite, error-free way to identify a
hedge. Although these tests are not applicable in all the cases, they might be used as the guideline to recognize hedges (Laurinaitytė 34).
CHAPTER III
RESEARCH FINDINGS

A. Data Description

This chapter is going to explain lexical expressions which act as hedge and how hedges are used as politeness strategy. The data is fetched from online newspaper, The New York Times, with selected article entitled *U.S. Says Syria Has Used Chemical Weapons at Least 50 Times During War*. Therefore, the selected data which might act as hedges will be analyzed using the classification of hedge theories by some linguists. In order to ascertain the lexical expressions that act as hedges, however, Vold’s testing system is applied in this research. Furthermore, to analyze hedges function as politeness strategy, the writer uses Slager & Mayer’s and Levinson’s theory.

In this research, there are 17 representative data which fulfill the condition that are not included in direct quotation of one’s utterance and they must be within the sentence in the body text of the articles will be analyzed in this paper. The data contain the words, phrases, or clauses that are identified as hedges taxonomy. Therefore, only eight sentences will be analyzed in order to avoid the repetition of the data. Briefly, the data are shown in the table below: (p. 47)
### 3.1 Table of Classification of Hedges

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Hedges</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Lexical Expression</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adjective</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Possible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approximator</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>At least (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concessive Conjunct</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Although</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lexical Verb</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Estimates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Appeared to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modal Auxiliary Verb</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Might</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passive Voice</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Has been accused</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Had been used</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>has been sent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>was echoed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reference</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>President Trump has expressed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>the Independent International</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Commission of Inquiry on the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Syrian Arab Republic,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The Russian envoy also asserted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>regardless of the number of attacks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>American military officials expressed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Through the process, the 17 lexical expressions that act as hedge will be analyzed into politeness strategy. Here, the research uses Salager & Mayer’s and Levinson’s theory of politeness strategy. The details of the data can be seen in the following table: (p. 48)
### 3.2 Table of hedges function as politeness strategy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Data</th>
<th>Sentence Code</th>
<th>Politeness Strategy</th>
<th>Function</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1  | Datum 1  
*President Trump has expressed*  
outrage over the deadly assault in the suburb, Douma, and threatened a military response. | Stc-1 | Negative politeness | Dissociate from the statement |
| 2  | Datum 2  
President Trump has expressed outrage over the deadly assault in the suburb, Douma, and threatened a military response. When that *might* happen remains unknown. | Stc-1 | Negative politeness | Avoid being imposing |
| 3  | Datum 3  
The United States *estimates* that Assad has used chemical weapons in the Syrian war at least 50 times. Public *estimates* are as high as 200. | Stc-2 | Negative politeness | Claiming common ground |
| 4  | Datum 4  
The United States estimates that Assad has used chemical weapons in the Syrian war *at least* 50 times. Public estimates are as high as 200. | Stc-2 | Positive politeness | Emphasize indefiniteness |
| 5  | Datum 5  
Using chemical weapons is a war crime, and the Syrian government is not the only actor in the war that | Stc-3 | Negative politeness | Avoid being imposing |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Datum</th>
<th>Text</th>
<th>Politeness</th>
<th>Note</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Mr. Nebenzya also said there was no confirmed evidence that chemical weapons <em>had been used</em> in the April 7 Douma attack.</td>
<td>Ste-4</td>
<td>Negative politeness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>…and that the United States and its allies had demonstrated they have no interest in an investigation, <em>although</em> international chemical weapons inspectors have been sent to Syria to conduct an inquiry.</td>
<td>Ste-5</td>
<td>Positive politeness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>…and that the United States and its allies had demonstrated they have no interest in an investigation, <em>although</em> international chemical weapons inspectors have been sent to Syria to conduct an inquiry.</td>
<td>Ste-5</td>
<td>Negative politeness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Ambassador Karen Pierce of Britain said her government believed Mr. Assad’s forces had used chemical weapons consistently, persistently, <em>over</em> the past five years.</td>
<td>Ste-6</td>
<td>Positive politeness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td><em>The Russian envoy also asserted</em></td>
<td>Ste-7</td>
<td>Negative politeness</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
that Russia, Mr. Assad’s biggest ally, had done far more than the West to achieve peace in the Syria conflict.

**Datum 12**

Her criticism of Russia and Syria was echoed by the envoys of Britain and France, who collectively form the brunt of the Western diplomatic response.

**Datum 13**

It found that Mr. Assad’s forces had conducted at least four, in April 2014, March 2015, March 2016 and April 2017, and that the Islamic State had conducted two, in August 2015 and September 2016.

**Datum 14**

Another panel, the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, established by the United Nations Human Rights Council, has asserted that at least 34 chemical weapons assaults had been committed, by various sides in the conflict, as of January.

**Datum 15**

Stc-11 Negative Dissociate from
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Datum</th>
<th>Text</th>
<th>Politeness</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Political analysts said that regardless of the number of attacks, Ms. Haley’s assertions appeared to be part of a broader Western effort to create the basis for a military strike on Mr. Assad’s forces.</td>
<td>Politeness</td>
<td>the statement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>American military officials expressed concern during a video conference call about Moscow’s possible reaction to a strike on Syrian facilities — particularly in light of Russian threats to shoot down incoming cruise missiles.</td>
<td>Negative politeness</td>
<td>Being tentative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>American military officials expressed concern during a video conference call about Moscow’s possible reaction to a strike on Syrian facilities — particularly in</td>
<td>Negative politeness</td>
<td>Being tentative</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
light of Russian threats to shoot down incoming cruise missiles.

B. Data Analysis

In data analysis, the writer uses synthesized classification theory of hedges by several linguists. By using those theories, it helps the writer identify categories of hedge. However, in order to prove lexical expressions might act as hedge, Vold’s test system is applied. Regarding the politeness strategy, this analysis employs theory of politeness strategy by Salager & Mayer’s and Black & Levinson’s theories. In this term, the writer describes hedging phenomenon creates an FTA and serves function as politeness strategy, not only positive but also negative politeness strategy within the New York Times’s article “U.S. Says Syria Has Used Chemical Weapons at Least 50 Times During War”. From the data description above, the data analysis will be described on the following below:

Datum 2

President Trump has expressed outrage over the deadly assault in the suburb, Douma, and threatened a military response. When that might happen remains unknown.

Hedges : Modal Auxiliary Verb (might )

Based on the context, this datum contains lexical expression of modal auxiliary verb – might. The possibility indicator might here is acknowledged as one of
the hedge. It is verified by using substitution test proposed by Vold. In order to provide an evidence, if might is likely to be substituted with other linguistic expression which convey epistemic meaning, it means that might in this datum is within its epistemic sense. Epistemic sense here related to the degree of possibility. Therefore, might will be replaced with probably to test the degree of possibility. In other words, showing another epistemic sense difference. Hence, the sentence would result is:

President Trump has expressed outrage over the deadly assault in the suburb, Douma, and threatened a military response. When that probably happen remains unknown. Summing up, the expressions might and probably are within the same notion of possibility. Moreover, it shows that might does not refer to sense of permission instead of possibility, this factor support the use of might as hedge.

In politeness strategy, writer threaten and give warning to the reader about the effect of Mr. Trump’s response over deadly assault in Douma, President Trump has expressed outrage over the deadly assault in the suburb, Douma, and threatened a military response. Then, the threaten and warning show in prior statement as in clause; When that might happen remains unknown. It seen that there is nothing remains when military response happened. The word that in the datum refers to military response. This datum creates an FTA to the participant, Mr. Trump. In order to reduce the FTA that might happen to the negative face of the participant, Mr. Trump to avoid presuming the sense of being abstained by giving option of using hedge of modal auxiliary verb - might. Then, the politeness strategy that is formed in the datum is
negative politeness with hedging strategy. Besides, by using this hedge indicates that the writers do not want to impose their views on readers and dissociate themselves from the statement.

**Datum 4**

The United States estimates that Assad has used chemical weapons in the Syrian war **at least** 50 times. Public estimates are as high as 200.

Hedge: Approximator of Indefinite Quantifier (*at least*).

Hedge of approximator *at least* is an indefinite quantifier also called as rounders. It is used to express uncertainty of the precise number that Mr. Assad has used chemical weapon. Hedges indefinite quantifier of approximator *at least* indicates the minimum number that identified. In order to provide evidences that category is included as hedge, the reformulation test will be applied to presents the different sense when the sentence is non-hedged. The non-hedged sentence would be: *The United States estimates that Assad has used chemical weapons in the Syrian war 50 times. Public estimates are as high as 200.* It is seen that the FTA threaten more than the hedge is used.

This datum forms critical statement about the use of chemical weapons by Mr. Assad. In order to emphasize appoint, the writers attach other opinions. The opinions are showed from Mr. Trump and public’s judge as the participants. Furthermore, since the datum is critical statement, then it builds positive politeness strategy with
hedging strategy to emphasize indefiniteness about the amount of using chemical weapons. Therefore, in order to avoid doing the FTA to the participants, the writers hedge the sentence by using the approximator- at least and over. By using this type of hedge in the datum, it opens the possibility that there might be more chemical weapons which were used by Mr. Asad so that it does not give negative impact to the credibility of the proposition. As a result, using this hedge avoids the writers being imposing. Besides, at least and over here to protect writers if someday would be found that Mr. Asad has used chemical weapons less or more than 50 times.

Datum 5

Using chemical weapons is a war crime, and the Syrian government is not the only actor in the war that has been accused of doing so.

Hedge: Passive Voice (has been accused),

This datum contains hedge. The hedge is formed in passive voice instead of using an active voice. In order to provide evidence that category is included as hedge, the reformulation test will be applied to presents the different sense when the sentence is non-hedged, as the datum is presented in passive form the non-hedged version would be provided in active form. Since United States and its allies accused Syria by using chemical weapon, therefore, the non-hedged sentence is United States has accused Syria of doing so. It can be seen that the FTA threaten more than when the hedge is used.
Moreover, in this case the passive form is also used as the strategy to avoid the FTA to the participant, the United States, that accused Syria Government of using chemical weapons during war. The imputation to Syrian Government by stating Syrian government is not the only actor in the war that has been accused of doing so creates FTA to the participant, United States positive face as they are suspected for using chemical weapons. Additionally, the author used passive voice, as Mayer called in (Agbalo 33) as impersonal construction 2 (passive form) to indicate that the author do not want to impose their views on readers.

Datum 16

Political analysts said that regardless of the number of attacks, Ms. Haley’s assertions appeared to be part of a broader Western effort to create the basis for a military strike on Mr. Assad’s forces.

Hedge: Epistemic Lexical Verb (appeared to),

The lexical expression appeared to above acts as hedge. In order to distinguish to appear as a hedge, the writer attempts to make use of the syntactic test that is proposed by Vold to determine the sense of hedges. Vold proposed the comparison of two different syntactic forms in using one linguistic expression. When to appear is proceeded by to be instead of preposition as in “New shoots are just appearing at the base of the plant” which provides meaning of being visible while in the datum to appear gives the meaning of to seem describing that Ms. Haley is to be part of a
broader Western effort to create the basis for a military strike on Mr. Assad’s forces. *To appear* is used to emphasize the speculative nature of the statement (Salager – Meyer 1997) and also avoids the accusation towards the participant. Interestingly, this hedge of epistemic lexical verb, either being used in the same time or not will keep the hedges sense. According to (Boncea 11), the verb *appeared to* expresses the writer’s strong belief in the truth of the utterance or, on the contrary, the writer’s unwillingness to vouch for understanding the utterance as more than a personal opinion.

Within the range of politeness strategy, the datum serves impeachment towards the participant, *Ms. Haley* by using negative politeness to avoid direct accusation that *Ms. Haley’s assertions appeared to be part of a broader Western effort to create the basis for a military strike on Mr. Assad’s forces.* In addition, by using this hedge, the writers serve tentativeness. The hedge *appeared to* is kind of tentative verb constituting a typical way of expressing possibility. The verb serves as markers of tentativeness when the writer’s or another author’s findings are described (Agbaglo 37). In this datum, the writers adapt the statement from the political analyst.

**Datum 7**

Mr. Nebenzya also said there was no confirmed evidence that chemical weapons had been used in the April 7 Douma attack, and that the United States
and its allies had demonstrated they have no interest in an investigation, although international chemical weapons inspectors have been sent to Syria to conduct an inquiry.

Hedge : Concessive Conjunctions (although)

The hedge within the datum is concessive conjunct, although, presenting a different view by stating a supporting statement towards the contradiction in the sentence “...although international chemical weapons inspectors have been sent to Syria to conduct an inquiry. Besides, in order to prove although as hedges, Vold’s test seems incompatible to be applied, therefore the only supporting factor to include the concessive conjunct as hedge is the classification stated by Clemen (2002) and Hinkel (2004) that it provides different point of view and balancing the main clause and supporting clause. This clause also acts as the external mitigation as it is connected to the proceeding sentence which provides evidence for the main argument in the datum “Mr. Nebenzya also said there was no confirmed evidence that chemical weapons had been used in the April 7 Douma attack, and that the United States and its allies had demonstrated they have no interest in an investigation.”.

The strategy is applied in order to mitigate the face-threatening towards the positive face to the participant, United States Government due to indirect criticism conveyed by supporting evidence “...although international chemical weapons inspectors have been sent to Syria to conduct an inquiry.” Within the politeness
strategy, the hedging strategy is used to avoid the FTA towards the positive face due to the criticism delivered by the author in the datum to the United States Government. However, hedging by using concessive conjunction form attenuates the strength of the statement by giving an equivocal support to the main argument Mr. Nebenzya also said there was no confirmed evidence that chemical weapons had been used in the April 7 Douma attack, and that the United States and its allies had demonstrated they have no interest in an investigation.

Datum 14

Another panel, the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, established by the United Nations Human Rights Council, has asserted that at least 34 chemical weapons assaults had been committed, by various sides in the conflict, as of January. Hedge : Reference (the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, established by the United Nations Human Rights Council).

The hedge within the datum above is reference hedge. To prove this datum act as hedge is not covered by Vold’s test. The only way to mark this clause as hedge adapts the classification of hedges proposed by Hyland (1996). However, when the writers avoid of being imposing, they normally dissociate themselves from their reports. Writers dissociate themselves from their findings in three main ways (Getkham, 2013). First, in reporting their findings or other’s findings, writers distance themselves by using impersonal active constructions in which the personal subject is
replaced by some non-human entity such as findings, results, and data (Martin-Martin, 2008 in Agbaglo 37). In this datum, the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, is as data bear by the writers.

Within the range of politeness strategy, it is clear since the writers provide some non-human entity as the data and findings indicates that the writers dissociate themselves from their claims. By doing so, these writers are able to avoid imposing their findings on their prospective readers, thus achieving negative politeness.

Datum 1

President Trump has expressed outrage over the deadly assault in the suburb, Douma, and threatened a military response.

Hedge: Reference (President Trump has expressed).

The datum above contains hedge reference (President Trump has expressed) by mentioning the figure of President Trump. The hedge reference acts as external mitigating device in the sentence. President Trump has expressed is used by the writer to avoid committing himself to the claims. In this datum, using Vold’s test seems unsuitable to be applied, therefore the only supporting factor to include the reference as hedges is the classification stated by Hyland (1996), it is a conscious strategy to mark a statement as an alternative view; thus, a hedge signals a personal opinion to achieve negative politeness.
Datum 18

American military officials expressed concern during a video conference call about Moscow’s possible reaction to a strike on Syrian facilities particularly in light of Russian threats to shoot down incoming cruise missiles.

Hedge: adjective (possible).

This datum uses conventional hedge using the use of an adjective possible. The adjective marks the possibility of Moscow reaction to a strike on Syrian facilities. By using this type of hedges, the author attenuates the possible commitment that the effects will happen, as in its natural sense, possible has already having the epistemic meaning which convey possibility. To prove the datum acts as hedge, the substitution test will be applied to the adjective hedges by replacing the lexical expression possible with an adjective which conveys epistemic meaning of possibility, probable. This would result in American military officials expressed concern during a video conference call about Moscow’s probable reaction to a strike on Syrian facilities — particularly in light of Russian threats to shoot down incoming cruise missiles. Furthermore, the lexical expressions possible and probable are within the same notion of possibility. Moreover, it shows that possible does not refer to sense of degree of certainty instead of possibility, this factor supports the use of possible as hedge.
Within the politeness strategy, this datum creates negative politeness with hedging strategy in order to reduce the FTA that might happen to the negative face of the participants, American military officials and Russian to avoid presuming the sense of being abstain by giving them options using the hedging strategies of possible.
CHAPTER IV
CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

A. Conclusions

By combining the classification theories of hedges by some linguists and Vold’s test in analyzing the hedges succor the writer to ascertain whether the lexical expressions are used as hedge or not. Thus, it helps the writer to identify the possible epistemic meaning in the expressions. In the meantime, by applying politeness theory reflects profound understanding on the use of the hedges itself. Additionally, within politeness strategy provides new evidence that hedging phenomenon creates an FTA and serves function as politeness strategy, not only politeness strategies, but in this research covers negative strategies as well.

According to analysis, there are 17 data containing hedges in the article; *U.S Says Syria Has Used Chemical Weapons at Least 50 Times During War*. As a result, the article indicates that there are seven categories of hedges: a. Adjective; b. Approximator; c. Concessive Conjunct; d. Lexical Verb; e. Modal Auxiliary Verb; f. Passive Voice; g. Reference. In broad terms, the table shows that reference hedge has the highest frequency than others which has five data. Next, hedging strategies provide various functions in the article, namely: a. Avoid being imposing; b. Disassociate from statement; c. Claiming common ground; d. Emphasize
indefiniteness; and e. Being tentative. As the result of study, the majority function of hedge phenomenon in politeness strategy is avoid being imposing.

However, the existence of hedges in mass media field in order to fulfill the objective in writing article. The hedging strategies help the author in the newspaper to sound neutral and objective since there are a large number of criticisms and accusations as common things conveyed in the mass media. It also avoids on damaging the face of the participants mentioned in their data.

**B. Suggestions**

In suggesting for further research, especially through news corpus, firstly, hedges can be found in interview video from outstanding people who have great authority in the world or in particular country. However, in the interview, the researcher will be easier to explore hedges which realize on the speaker utterances since the analysis employs verbal communication approach and non-verbal communication approach as well, for instance: identify speaker’s gesture, body movement, facial expression and so forth. In this research, the researcher can apply Grice Cooperative Principle theory, particularly, conversational implicature. In relevant to Grice Cooperative Maxim Theory that hedges enable speaker to follow the maxim. Secondly, since hedge is vague and vague language is natural language, it could be better to investigate hedges through field study: for example: to analyze hedges in English language learning classes from two vastly different socio-cultural
and linguistic background, such as: Sundanese and Batak-speaking learners of English, compared with L1s (American English Speakers). In this study, the researcher can also investigate the impact of using hedges by EFL Learners. Here, the researcher is able to use Ruzaitė’s theory (2007) carried out a useful study in educational settings, the scope of the research is limited to quantifiers and approximators. To help deeper analysis on hedges, the next researcher can apply Salager-Meyer and Hyland-Clemenn studies regarding the use and the function of hedges. Besides, hedges as linguistic expression cannot only be proved by Vold’s theory, pragmatics topics such as implicature and speech acts enable to be applied in analyzing the hedges usage as it correlates to both topics.
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APPENDIX

U.S. Says Syria Has Used Chemical Weapons at Least 50 Times During War

Nikki R. Haley, the United States ambassador to the United Nations, speaks during a Security Council meeting on Syria on Friday. Credit: Eduardo Munoz/Reuters

By Rick Gladstone

April 13, 2018

The United States accused the Syrian government on Friday of using banned chemical arms at least 50 times since Syria’s civil war began seven years ago — substantially higher than previous official estimates.

The accusation, made by the American ambassador to the United Nations, Nikki R. Haley, came during a vitriolic exchange with her Russian counterpart at a meeting of the Security Council, which focused on a suspected chemical weapons assault in a Damascus suburb last week. The United States and its allies have blamed the assault on President Bashar al-Assad of Syria.

President Trump has expressed outrage over the deadly assault in the suburb, Douma, and threatened a military response. When that might happen remains unknown.

“Let’s be clear: Assad’s most recent use of poison gas against the people of Douma was not his first, second, third, or even 49th use of chemical weapons,” Ms. Haley said. “The United States estimates that Assad has used chemical weapons in the Syrian war at least 50 times. Public estimates are as high as 200.”

Using chemical weapons is a war crime, and the Syrian government is not the only actor in the war that has been accused of doing so.

“Our president has not yet made a decision about possible action in Syria,” Ms. Haley told the council. “But should the United States and our allies decide to act in Syria, it will be in defense of a principle on which we all agree.”
The Russian ambassador, Vasily A. Nebenzya, accused the United States and its allies of reckless Middle East warmongering by threatening Syria with military force.

Mr. Nebenzya also said there was no confirmed evidence that chemical weapons had been used in the April 7 Douma attack, and that the United States and its allies had “demonstrated they have no interest in an investigation,” although international chemical weapons inspectors have been sent to Syria to conduct an inquiry.

The Russian envoy also asserted that Russia, Mr. Assad’s biggest ally, had done far more than the West to achieve peace in the Syria conflict. He accused Washington of having adopted “a categorical policy to unleash military force against Syria” and contain Russia.

Mr. Trump’s threats of a strike on Mr. Assad’s forces, the Russian envoy said, were “unworthy of a permanent member of the Security Council.”

Ms. Haley said she was incredulous at Mr. Nebenzya’s defense of the Syrian government and his overall portrayal of events. “I’m in awe of how you say what you say with a straight face,” she told the Russian ambassador.

Ms. Haley called the use of chemical weapons in Syria “a violation of all standards of morality.”

Referring to the Douma assault, Ms. Haley said: “We know who did this. Our allies know who did this. Russia can complain all it wants about fake news, but no one is buying its lies and its cover-ups.”

Her criticism of Russia and Syria was echoed by the envoys of Britain and France, who collectively form the brunt of the Western diplomatic response.

Ambassador Karen Pierce of Britain said her government believed Mr. Assad’s forces had used chemical weapons “consistently, persistently, over the past five years.”

“The use of chemical weapons cannot be allowed to go unchallenged,” Ms. Pierce said. “We will not sacrifice the international order we have collectively built to the Russian desire to protect its ally at all costs.

Ambassador François Delattre of France, which has asserted it has proof of chemical weapons use by Syrian military forces, said Mr. Assad’s government had “reached a point of no return” and that the world must provide a “robust, united and steadfast response.”
The number of confirmed chemical weapons assaults in the Syria conflict — and who was responsible for them — is one of the most contentious issues.

In 2015 the Security Council established a panel, the Joint Investigative Mechanism, to determine who was carrying out such attacks. It found that Mr. Assad’s forces had conducted at least four, in April 2014, March 2015, March 2016 and April 2017, and that the Islamic State had conducted two, in August 2015 and September 2016.

Vasily A. Nebenzya, the Russian ambassador to the United Nations, exchanged harsh words with the American ambassador at a Security Council meeting on Friday. Credit Justin Lane/EPA, via Shutterstock

The panel was disbanded last November after Russia disputed its findings of Syrian government responsibility. The council has been unable to agree on a replacement.

Another panel, the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, established by the United Nations Human Rights Council, has asserted that at least 34 chemical weapons assaults had been committed, by various sides in the conflict, as of January. Human Rights Watch, based on information from seven sources, has put the number at 85 between 2013 and February of this year.

Mr. Assad and his allies, Russia and Iran, have denied that Syrian government forces carried out any chemical weapons attacks, including the reported assault in Douma.

Political analysts said that regardless of the number of attacks, Ms. Haley’s assertions appeared to be part of a broader Western effort to create the basis for a military strike on Mr. Assad’s forces.

“All of this points to an established pattern by the Syrian regime in the conflict,” said Andrew J. Tabler, a Syria scholar at the Washington Institute For Near East Policy. “The justification for a strike is going to be based on this pattern, not just this incident.”

Trump administration officials worked on Friday to come up with a strategy for what to do in the event that an American-led military strike against the Syrian government’s suspected chemical weapons facilities and its airfields sparks a retaliation from Russia and Iran.

The White House scheduled another meeting Friday afternoon of the president’s top national security advisers, as American officials and their allies in Britain and France,
who are expected to join any strike, grappled with how to handle concerns expressed by Defense Secretary Jim Mattis about having a Day 2 strategy ready.

American military officials expressed concern during a video conference call about Moscow’s possible reaction to a strike on Syrian facilities — particularly in light of Russian threats to shoot down incoming cruise missiles. During the call, officials also said that it was imperative to take steps to protect American naval destroyers from Russian counterattacks.

One destroyer, the Donald Cook, is in the Mediterranean and another, the Porter, has been heading to region. Both could take part in a strike, as a launch for Tomahawk cruise missiles.

In addition to preparing for a military counterattack, Mr. Mattis has also said that it is important to prepare for a post-strike propaganda campaign by Syria, Russia and Iran. In particular, Defense Department officials want to be able to present convincing evidence that Mr. Assad’s forces indeed used chemical arms in the Douma assault.