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An Analysis of Hedging Devices on Students' Presentation of Seminar on Language Based on The Gender

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ABSTRACT

This study focus on the hedging devices types proposed by Namasaraev in relation with the participants' confidence which consisted of female and male participant toward Seminar on Language presentation. The study expects to reveal the propensity of hedging in female and male speeches. This study applied qualitative descriptive method to describe the data in which using documentation by recording the participants' speech. The result, it proved that both participants contributed fifth types of hedging devices. In female participant, those types are modal auxiliary verb, lexical verb, approximation, 'if' clause, and filler. As same as female

participant, the male produced same types unless the type of 'if' clause and produced the adverb type. The findings displayed the female participants were frequently produced the filler type in which indicated the lack of confidence. Meanwhile, the male participants preferred to use modal auxiliary verb in which delivering the assertiveness and certainty. This study expected can be guidance for the readers who want to know more about hedging, also this can be source for further researcher who interested in the same fields.

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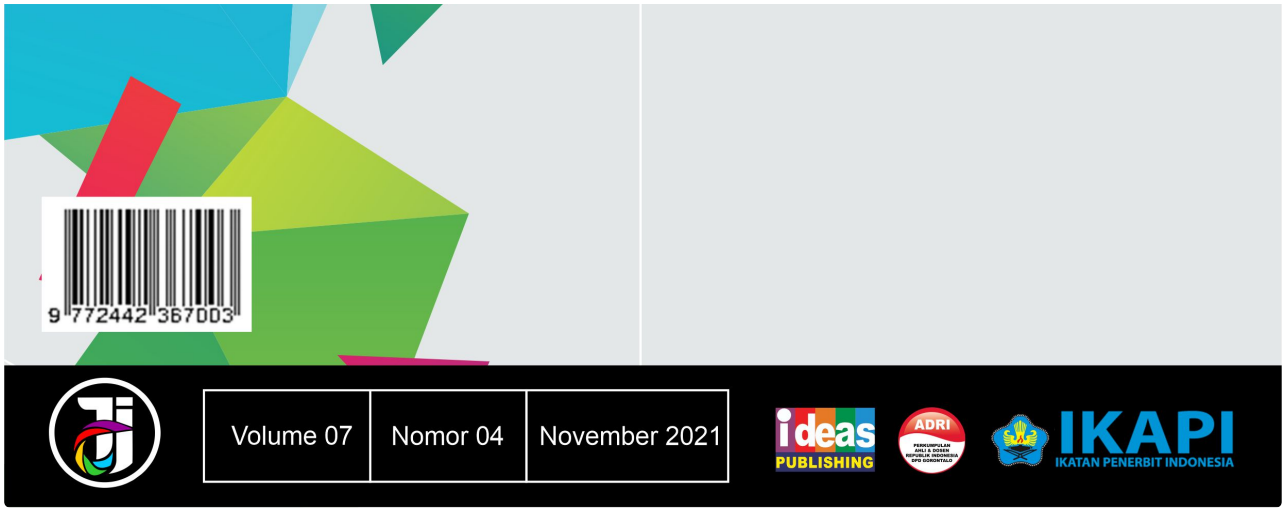

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An Analysis of Hedging Devices on Students' Presentation of Seminar on Language Based on The Gender

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Abstract

This study focus on the hedging devices types proposed by Namasaraev in relation with the participants' confidence which consisted of female and male participant toward Seminar on Language presentation. The study expects to reveal the propensity of hedging in female and male speeches. This study applied qualitative descriptive method to describe the data in which using documentation by recording the participants' speech. The result, it proved that both participants contributed fifth types of hedging devices. In female participant, those types are modal auxiliary verb, lexical verb, approximation, 'if' clause, and filler. As same as female participant, the male produced same types unless the type of 'if' clause and produced the adverb type. The findings displayed the female participants were frequently produced the filler type in which indicated the lack of confidence. Meanwhile, the male participants preferred to use modal auxiliary verb in which delivering the assertiveness and certainty. This study expected can be guidance for the readers who want to know more about hedging, also this can be source for further researcher who interested in the same fields.

Keywords

The types of hedging devices, gender, seminar on language

Introduction

The study about gender usually makes the distinction between women and men. According to Xia (2013), the distinction consists of the different intonation, pronunciation, vocabulary, syntax, and even attitude toward the language, the different in choosing topic, the different psycology, social status, and cultural background. This makes the case interesting to be analysed then raised into research in academic fields, because the language is not being static, but it is dynamic.

The first women's language feature that proposed by Lakoff (1986, 2017) is lexical hedges. The frequent of using hedges is weakening the force of an utterance. An utterance would be strong if there is no any particularly hedge put in. According to Alward (2014) and Resche (2015), hedging can strengthen what the speaker said is. Hedges basically aimed to weaken and strengthen an utterance (Kamyabi Gol & Jamaleddin, 2021; S Alotaibi, 2021). Likewise, the hedges such as *sort of, probably* and *I think* are used by both sexes to express uncertainty. However, women are the one who excessively add these hedges into their propositions as a defense for making an assertion. They do this is because they are lack of exact information. Meanwhile, men are not that much contributes in hedges (Coates & Cameron, 2014).The research postulates the taxonomy devices by Namsaraev (2010). Namsaraev (2010) asserts 9 types of hedging devices. Those are *modal auxiliary verb*, *lexical verb*, *probability adjective*, *noun*, *adverb*, *approximation*, '*if*' *clauses*, *compound hedges*, and *fillers*.The researcher chooses the topic is because the researcher has been seen that students or even lecturer mostly produced the hedging when talking. Also the researcher eager to prove the theory from Lakoff in which emphasize the women is the most who express the hedging. By that reason, the researcher takes two genders as the participant which was female and male students. It was because the researcher has a curiosity whether the hedging appears on male's speech. Thus, at the end, the researcher compared whether male or female students who mostly utter hedges.

Furthermore, the researcher conducted the research in the presentation. The chosen presentation is in *Seminar on Language* event. *Seminar on Language* is an event of semester sixth students which required them to present their own research. It is because in presenting their research, the students are required to use English during the presentation. Presentation can challenge students to be more confident, where students will convey what they

want to convince audiences using academic great structure of language and also powerful words to emphasize their statement. Additionally, it involves confidence when they face in public. Student's confidence is related to hedges utterances that will come out from their mouth which then became the data of this research. Thus, the hedging will easily to be obtained from the students' presentation.

Sociolinguistic

Sociolinguistic is a branch of linguistic which is studying about the relationship between language and society (Holmes & Schnurr, 2005; Holmes & Stubbe, 2015). Language and society is a tool to soften in communication. Society used the language to ask and to give information. Language is a media to create a communication easier in society, because it can minimise the misunderstanding in the society. The society can easily talk to each other by the language. Through language, attitude of women and men can be differentiated by the way they use it. It creates the uniqueness of using the language among women and men. The uniqueness in language can be said as the characteristic that makes different.

Nowadays, if we are talking about women and men, there are many things that can be discussed about them, especially about the differences. The distinction would no longer be a big deal, but the differences are still interesting to be studied and analyzed because there would be changed through the time. As the time change, the differences might have renewal (Xia, 2013). So that it appears the more studies about women and men.

Language Gender

The distinction of gender in language is involves the characteristic of how women and men use the language feature. Dixon and Foster (1997) argued that many researchers have made theoretical claim by postulated Lakoff theory in which emphasized women language. The theoretical claim is women's language is most commonly indecisive. Meanwhile, Alajmi (2015) argued that men are assumed to be more precise, more assertive, and have confidence in their language. In contrary, women are said as lack of confidence Lakoff (1986, 2017).

In recent years, many researchers support the theoretical claim about gender differences in using women language. Furthermore, it also reveals the hedging devices. As we know that, hedging is one of the women language that takes control the degree of fuzziness in delivering statement (Lakoff, 1986, 2017). Holmes and Schnurr (2005), there are two functions of hedges; used as affective and epistemic function. In affective role, hedging used to express the desire of the speaker to maintain the solidarity. Meanwhile, in epistemic function, hedging used to express the degree of certainty involves in statement.

During the past decade, the hedge is not only used by the female, but also used by the male (Alqahtani & Abdelhalim, 2020; Weisi & Asakereh, 2021). However, the female are consistently employ more the hedge than male. So that is why the hedge identically adheres to female as their features (Pebrianti, 2013; Saidi, 2018). Moreover, Holmes and Schnurr (2005) stated that both women and men used the hedges in different ways. Women typically occupy the hedges as positive politeness. For instance, women tend to use *sort of* to carry out emotional function. In this case, it aimed to mitigate the statement in order to concern other's feeling. As well as the hedge of *you know* as facilitative which means to pull out the addressee into the conversation. Instead, men are used the hedges of *sort of* and *you know* literally to display the epistemic function in which involves the uncertainty.

Men Language Features

Men identically describe as masculine, arrogant, etc. In terms of language, they typically do not speak longwinded and straight to the point (Lakoff, 1986, 2017). It is because part of men's nature so that makes them naturally appear more powerful. Moreover, men tend to use more non standard language (Holmes & Schnurr, 2005; Holmes & Stubbe, 2015; Ismail & Harun, 2021).

The example is following.

Jack: Comin' down the club jim?

Jim: Not friggin' likely.

From the sentences above, we can see that men tend to use vernacular form such as *comin'* and *friggin'*. Men prefer vernacular forms because they carry macho connotations of their masculinity and toughness (Holmes & Schnurr, 2005; Holmes & Stubbe, 2015). We can say that the masculinity and toughness of men are part of men's nature. So that, if there are men who have not these parts, then it becomes queer.

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Furthermore, Karlsson (2007) revealed that male usually does not interested in the topic of conversation. Moreover, in answering the question, the male usually utters the taboo words such as *shit* and *damn*. Male also prefer to use sentences in a rude way. From the research, Karsson find out that men character as follow; *no feedback, minimal response, taboo words, commands, interrupting and disputing frequently, making one's point directly and rationally, and the last is incorrect grammar*.

Women Language Features

Lakoff (1986, 2017) claim that women's language features are several aspects of language used by women to differentiate between women and men's language characteristics. Women's language characteristics are not assertive, does not open, and often use words politely. However, men's language characteristics are more assertive, mature, and they talk openly. Lakoff suggested that women's speech was characterized by linguistics features as in this following: *lexical hedges, super polite forms, tag question, empty adjectives, rising intonation on declaratives, precise color terms, intensifier, hypercorrect grammar, super polite form, avoid of strong swear words, emphatic stress.* Moreover, the researcher only investigates one types of women language that is *lexical hedges or hedging devices.*

Hedging Devices

The research postulates the taxonomy devices by Namsaraev (2010). Namsaraev (2010) asserts nine types of hedging devices. Those are *modal auxiliary verb*, *lexical verb*, *probability adjective*, *noun*, *adverb*, *approximation*, '*if*' *clauses*, *compound hedges*, and *fillers*. The types of hedging devices are following.

Modal auxiliary verb

Modal is means to show the degree of certainty and degree of obligation in the speech Coates and Cameron (2014). Moreover, Quirk (2010) categorize modals into three classes according to the similar meaning. The first is modals that expressing exclamatory wish, permission, ability and possibility are *can, might, may* and *could*. Secondly is the modals *should* and *must* which expressing the necessity, obligation, and advisability. Lastly, the modals that show prediction and volition are *shall, would*, and *will.*

Lexical verb

Lexical verb in term of hedging is a verb serves the doubt and presents the opinion or suggestion (Hyland, 1994; Hyland & Milton, 1997). The hedges of lexical verb are *tend, believe, think, assume, suggest, indicate, argue, propose, speculate, appear, etc.* Moreover, Coates and Cameron (2014); Coates (2004) found that women more likely apply lexical verbs than men such as *propose, assume, suggest seem.* Lexical verb in women is considers as hesitant markers in Schmied (2010, p 47). In other words, women use the lexical verb because they are less certainty in speech. In addition, the men, Coates and Cameron (2014); Coates (2004) claimed that men tend to use lexical verb such as *appear*. Men use the lexical verb to indicate the tentativeness. To assume that, both women and men use the lexical verb to indicate the tentativeness or uncertainty in their speech. However, women are more frequently use lexical verb than men. Holmes and Schnurr (2005) also claims that lexical verb is used by both women and men to express doubt.

Probability adjective

According to Wang and Tatiana (2016) Probability adjective is similarly to the adverbs that the speaker characterize the information presented as uncertain, tentative or not quite precise. The probability adjective can display degree of probability between absolute true or false (Varttala, 2001). The utterances of this type are *probable, likely, possible, etc.* Furthermore, Nuyts (1999) claimed that almost all modal adjectives are used by women and men, except *probable*. However, Nuyts (1999) found that probability adjective are used more often by men than women. Moreover, this claim also exist on Schmied (2015) which is men significantly use more probability adjective than women. As similar as lexical verb's function, both women and men use probability adjective to express uncertainty.

Noun

Namsaraev (2010) stated that many of these nouns are used as component of tentative or indefinite meaning in Wang and Tatiana (2016). Tentative or indefinite meaning is refers to the uncertainty (cited in Cambridge Dictionary (Walter, 2008)). Furthermore, the utterances of the hedges are such as *assumption, claim, suggestion, possibility, prediction, implication, doubt, etc.* Moreover, Aston (1997); Biber (2006, 2012); Biber, Conrad, and Reppen (2004) consider that pronoun characterized as women features. Women are more use pronoun such as *I, we, he, she* which followed by verb, adverb, or adjective. On the other hand, men are more frequently use noun

than women (Aston, 1997; Biber, 2006, 2012; Biber, Connor, & Upton, 2007; Biber et al., 2004). Men tend to use noun such as *assumption, possibility, claim* to express their uncertainty (Huang, 2015).

Adverb

The utterances of adverbs are such as *probably, definitely, obviously, possibly, awfully, terribly.* Lakoff (1986, 2017) found that women tend to use the adverbs than men. In addition, Jespersen (1992) in Xia (2013) claimed that women tend to use adverbs like *probably, definitely, obviously, awfully.* Women mostly utter these words to enhance tone and to express attitude. In addition, Schmied (2015) men tend to use *probably, relatively, possibly, apparently*. Men use these adverbs to express high degree of the truth (Hyland, 1994; Hyland & Milton, 1997). In other words, adverb does not express the uncertainty. Both women and men use adverb to boost their claim or it can be used to boost the claim.

Approximation

The speaker generally uses the approximations to indicate the accuracy of information. Those utterances describe the frequency, quantity, and time (Namsaraev, 2010). For instance, *often, occasionally, generally, usually, sometimes, always, rarely, seldom, about, often, a lot of, never, somehow, etc.* The hedges are considered to strengthen the accuracy the information Hyland (1998, p 170).Women tend to use approximation such as *usually, always, never, generally, sometimes.* Dousti and Rasekh (2016) claimed that women tend to utter approximation to avoid the wrong result of information which has delivered as time, place, and quantity. In other words, women use approximation to protect them from the exact information or from the truth. On the other hand, men are less to use approximation.

Filler

Parham (2013) say that women tend to use fillers than men. The utterances of fillers are *well, i think, i mean, sort of, kind of, ehmm, uhmm, ahh, you know* (Lakoff, 1986, 2017). These utterances are discourse marker that used by the speaker when they think or hesitate during the speech Clark and Tree (2002). Holmes and Schnurr (2005) claimed that women use the filler *mm, hmm, ahh, well* as back channelling which is used to encourage the others to speak. It is because women are to be more supportive than men in conversation (Shazu, 2014). Meanwhile, Lakoff (1986, 2017) claimed that men use fillers only to express uncertainty as women. Furthermore, men tend to say *mm, ahh, uhh* which use as back channelling but different with women.

Method

This study aims to answer the following research question:

1. What types of hedging appear on female and male students of English Department class of 2015 in presentation of Seminar on Language?
2. What types of hedging are utters mostly by female and male students of English Department class of 2015 in presentation of Seminar on Language?

This research employed a descriptive qualitative method. It was an approach used to describe something which seeks the cause of phenomenon. The nature of qualitative research is general, flexible, and it emphasizes the developing and ongoing process (Silverman, 2020). Therefore, this qualitative descriptive method was an appropriate type to be used in this study in order to enrich information in which investigating the hedging devices on students' presentation.

This research was conducted at English Department class of 2015 who held the *Seminar on Language* presentation. This was suitable site to collect because this research only concerned in students' speeches.

Technique Collecting the Data

In technique of collecting the data, the researchers provided the observation list of hedging devices. So that the utterances uttered by the participant will be listed. Observation facilitated the researchers to learn the activity of presentation of the participant throughout observing the activity (Kawulich, 2005). In the observation, the researchers provided the cellular phone to record the participant's presentation.

Technique Analyzing the Data

After collecting the data from observation, then the researchers have to analyze the data. The researchers must organize the utterance that the researchers has seen, heard, and read. After that, the researchers tried to make sense of it in order to create explanations or develop theories. There were some techniques of analyzing the data three

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process of analyzing the data; those were familiarizing, coding ad interpreting (Donald, Jacobs, Razavieh, & Sorensen, 2010).

The technique used to answer the research question number one was divided into two; those were familiarizing and coding. The techniques were following:

Familiarizing

The first step in analyzing qualitative data involves familiarization; so that the data can be easily recover. Primarily, the researchers should become familiar with the data through reading and re-reading the transcripts, viewing and reviewing videotapes, and listening repeatedly to audiotapes (Donald et al., 2010). If the researcher became familiar with the data, then it was be easier to analyze the data. The researcher must be absorbed in the data. Therefore, the researcher viewed to the videotapes during the observation for many times to find the evidence of features from male and female students. In addition, after viewed the videotapes then the researcher take notes which part of speech that contain the utterances of hedging devices.

Coding

After familiarizing the data and organizing them for easy retrieval, the researcher started to the coding process. Wiersma (as cited in Donald et al. (2010) suggested that coding was a technique to arrange the sort of feature into categories. This was appropriated with the purpose of the study in which to categorize the kinds of hedging. Thus, the researchers categorized the data by classifying each features of hedging based on its categorization. For example, the researcher put the utterances of hedging such as *you know, I think, well, eh* into the hedging types.

Interpreting

Interpretations was about bringing out the meaning, telling the story, providing an explanation, and developing plausible explanation. Interpreting involved reproducing words and acts of the participant's data and summarizing important understandings from the data (Donald et al., 2010). The researchers interpreted the data into good words after categorized them one by one and explained the data used her knowledge which also supported by theory. Furthermore, on this stage, the researchers only interpret the occurrence features. So, the researchers explained the kind of hedges used by the students of English Department. In addition, the situation and the reason why the participant produced the hedges also involved in this step.

Result and Discussion

Following the completion of the data collecting and analysis procedures, the data revealed that not all of the hedging devices provided by Namsaraev (2010) had been used by the participants. The researchers discovered just six kinds on each female and male participant in their speeches, out of a total of nine types, throughout this investigation. Those types were *modal auxiliary verb, lexical verb, 'if' clause, adverb, approximation, and filler*. This indicates that these six forms of hedging devices were deemed to be the most popular among the various sorts of hedging devices to use. Furthermore, of the six kinds of hedging devices discovered among female and male participants, all of the types were identical, but differed in the 'if' clause in which the female participant was included. Apart from that, males tended to employ adverbs. As can be seen from the data results, the sorts of hedges used on female and male participants are shown in the table 1.

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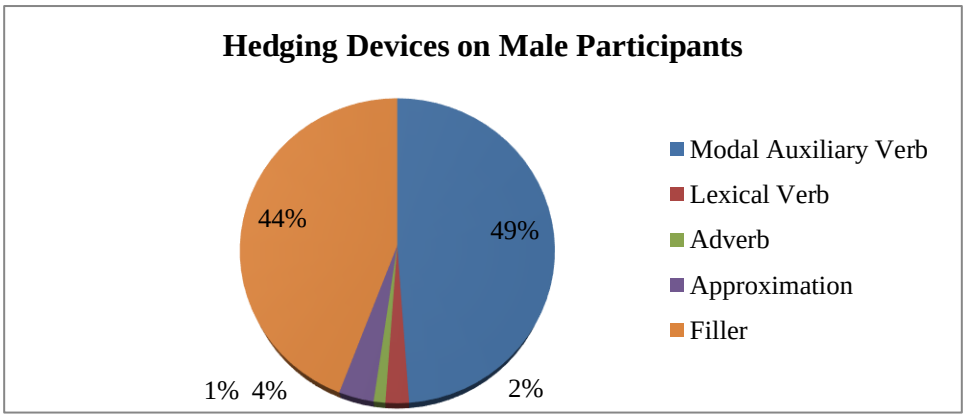
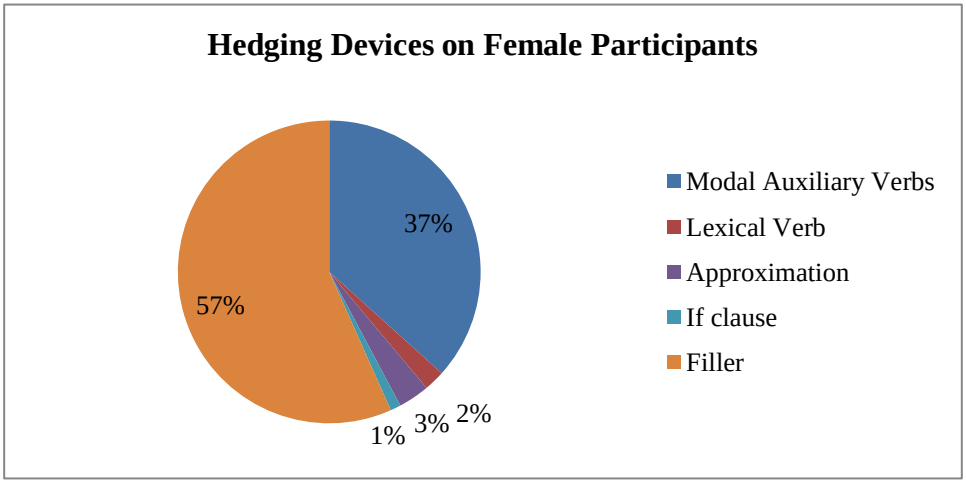
Table 1
Female and male types of hedgin

Date	*Participant*	*Types of Hedging*						
		Modal Aux. Verb	*Lex. verb*	*Approximation*	*If clause*	*Adverb*	*Filler*	*Total*
Wednesday, 09th of june 2018	*Female*	*30*	*2*	*3*	*1*	*0*	*52*	*88*
	Male	*37*	*1*	*2*	*0*	*1*	*25*	*66*





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With respect to the first and second research question, the most frequent types used by female were *filler* type. Whereas, the male participants more employed *modal auxiliary verb* type. Furthermore, the frequent amount of hedge was in female participants (n=88). Meanwhile, the male produced (n=66) utterances.

As we can see in the diagram, it shows that the female prefer to use *filler* type and the male used *modal auxiliary verb* type. In addition, this research has similarity to the previous study of Rosanti and Jaelani (2016) which investigating the lexical hedges in spoken language by male and female participants. The similarity has proven that female participants frequently used *filler* in their speech than male participants. Furthermore, the similarity also existed in study of Namaziandost and Shafiee (2018) which the result showed the female participants tend to use *filler* than male participants. Each participant contributed more in *filler*. However, the female participants mostly produced the utterances of each feature than male participants.

Furthermore, the similarity of previous studies with the present study also existed in Alajmi (2015) and Dousti and Rasekh (2016). Both studies found that male participants were more uttered *modal auxiliary verb* than female participant. Besides, in Alajmi (2015), the female participants were similar to utter more the feature of *if clause*. It assumed that the feature of *filler* and *if clause* was identically to female participants and the male participants was familiar with the *modal auxiliary verb*. In addition, the female participants used more *filler* to deliver the uncertainty (Lakoff, 1986, 2017). While the male participants more contributed *modal auxiliary verb* in which aimed to deliver the certainty (Alqahtani & Abdelhalim, 2020; Sahlberg, 2012).

In this research, female participants showed the smallest number in the feature of *if clause*. Besides, the male participants produced the smallest number of *adverb*. It probably caused by both female and male participants were not familiar to use the feature. Besides, it was proven by the theory Mondorf (1996) which stated that female participants used form of *if clause,* especially *post conditional cause.* The female participants used *if clause* especially the form of *post conditional cause* because female participants made an intonation at the end in orders to put emphasis. It can be said that the emphasis in conditional was aimed to protect the female participants if the claim does not occur.

There were four features did not used by female participant utterance. Those were *adverb*, *probability adjective*, *noun* and *compound hedges* and the male participant did not contributed in the feature of *if clause*, *probability adjective*, *noun* and *compound hedges.* The female and male participant differently produced one feature which means occurred in female's utterances but it was not on male such as *if clause*. On the other hand, male participant produced one feature but female was not found. It was the feature of *adverb*. The comparison existed on frequency of utterance and its function itself. Furthermore, it can be assumed that the female and male participants were used the fourth features as mention above because they might be not being familiar with it. In other words, both participants were not tended to use those features in presentation.

Moreover, the female participants were mostly used the hedging devices than male participants supported by the theory of Lakoff (1986, 2017). Lakoff emphasized the female in using hedges and also the theory of Coates and Cameron (2014); Coates (2004) in which the male was not that much in using the hedges. As we know that hedging devices basically to weaken or to enforce the utterance. Moreover, either weakening or even enforcing an utterance was also involved to express the degree of uncertainty. In this regard, most of female participants delivered the uncertainty and it involved the less of confidence. The female was not feeling confident because they significantly uttered the hedges of *filler* in which indicated that the female's hesitance in giving their argument. The female participants hesitant to what they said because the arguments were less proven. So that they uttered filler of *eh*.

Besides, the male participants do the hedges but not similar cope as female participants. It supported by the theory of Coates and Cameron (2014); Coates (2004) in which emphasized that the male used the hedges but not sensitive as female. In this case, the male only used hedges to strengthen the utterance and also postulated the hedges as the strategy of communication. In other words, the male students tend to use the hedges to express the certainty because the male mostly produced the hedges of *modal auxiliary verb*. The male participants probably have hesitance but not that much as female participants. It was because the male participants produced the *filler eh*.

It assumed that there were not only female who produced the hedging devices. The male also employed the hedges. It is exceedingly caused by the fact that the language can be changed over the times. It can be changed by the environment factor, social and cultural aspects in which can replace the stereotype of both female and male in communication style. So it might be prevailed to gender in using the language specifically the hedging devices. It can assume because there was 1 participant who talking like lady that means they were less gentle in public

speaking and used one of the utterance of *approximation* in which to engage the politeness to the interlocutor. We know that the politeness only adhered to female. Instead, the male did that which means the male did not carry out the masculinity. Therefore, it hypothesized that male participant can be categorized as queer. In others words, the male participant were less of masculinity.

After presented the discussion, the researcher outlined the limitation as following:

1. The researchers aware that this research needs to be elaborated more. It is because this research has weaknesses in number of participant. In this regard, the researchers only limited five participants of each female and male. So, the data is limited. The researchers hope that the next researchers involve more participants in order to obtain rich data. So that it is more convincing in data interpretation.
2. The researchers thought that this research is needs to develop more with some gender issues. The researcher expects the further researcher can expand the gender topic in specific issues. So, it will become more interesting to be investigated.
3. The researchers need to give deep explanation about the distinction between female and male by considering the existence of gender issues.

Conclusion

Furthermore, the researcher highlighted that either female or male participants employed the hedging. However, the female is frequently produced. Furthermore, it can be seen that one of the more significant findings on female participant was the *filler* feature and the male participant was *modal auxiliary verb*. In this case, the female participants were distributed more on *filler* while the male participant distributed more on *modal auxiliary verb*. This proved that the male participants was more confident because they delivered the degree of certainty and more assertive than female participants. It because the feature of *modal auxiliary verb* was involved the degree of certainty. Meanwhile, the female more contributed the *filler* feature because they literally had less confidence in their speeches. The filler feature used to show the hesitation and uncertainty (Lakoff, 1986, 2017).

This research would like to reveal suggestions as the following:

For the learner

For the learner, in this regard the students, the crucial thing that should be understood is the meaning of each features of hedging devices itself. The learner expects to be able to distinguish which utterances are includes in hedging devices features.

For further researcher

This research only focuses on the features of hedging devices in female and male students' presentation of *Seminar on Language*. The researchers hope that the further researcher would found other sources in case of investigating the data. For example, in novel or movie or it can be in daily life of school and college. It will be interesting because the language is dynamic. It can change in every period along with the time changes. So, the researchers hope there would the next research in the same field with the various approaches.

Curriculum[A1]

The research can be a guidance to facilitate the teacher in applying a curriculum. The application of curriculum would be easier when the teacher understand how the female and male students speak especially in using hedges. We know that there is different character of female and male students. There is any over confident students and shy students who exactly different in talk. For instance, the female and male students are different in giving question, giving argument, or etc. So that the teacher should understand the strategy communication of the students through the use of hedging devices.

In light of the fact that this research did not explore the reasons why the participants in this study chose to employ some hedging devices over others, this is an area that should be explored further by other researchers in the future. This is, thus, another consequence of this study for the development of policy, practice, and theory.

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