Hedging in CNN News: January 6 Coronavirus Pandemic and Omicron Variant News

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Abstract: This study aims to analyze the pragmatics-linguistic of hedges and to describe the type of hedges used in CNN News: January 6 Corona Virus Pandemic and Omicron Variant News. The data focuses on the types of hedges used in CNN News. This study adopts Salager-Mayer's (1994) theory as a framework and employs a qualitative descriptive method. The data were collected by downloading the article in the internet purposively. In this study, it was showed that several types of hedges were used in the article. They are modal auxiliary verb; modal lexical; adjectival, adverbial, and nominal phrases; approximators of degree, quantity, frequency, and time; introductory phrases; if clause, e.g., if true, if anything; and compound hedges. Modal auxiliary is used to express modality in English academic writing. Modal lexical verb is used to perform the act such as doubting and evaluating. Adjectival, adverbial, and nominal phrases are used to reduce the strength of the claims since they represent possibility, probability, and uncertainty. Approximators of degree, quantity, frequency, and time is not all served to make things vague, some are used when exact figure are irrelevant. Introductory phrases are used to express the writers' personal doubt and direct involvement. "If clauses" show uncertainty or doubt concerning a proposition. Compound hedges are hedges that made up from several hedges. Furthermore, the result also showed that the most dominant types of hedges used is modal auxiliary verb. It is indicated that the writer want to express modality in their writing.

Keywords: *CNN News, Hedges, pragmatics*

RESEARCH BACKGROUND

Language is the important roles in the communication. (Halabisaz et. Al, 2014: 211). Suwandi, 2008:97 stated that language is the primary tools that human use to express and understand thoughts and feelings so human can do the communication with well. In daily life, both written and spoken languages are commonly used (Felicia, 2001:1). It is possible because language can allow people to interact with others by conveying messages, feelings, opinions, intentions, and ideas (Walija, 1996: 4). However, in developing the interaction with readers is very difficult. Hyland (2005:1) said that managing social relationship is important in writing because a text communicates can be accepted by the readers when the writers and the readers have correctly assessed (resources for interpreting it and their likely response to it).

According to Salager-Mayer (1994), hedging is a linguistic resource which conveys the fundamental characteristics of science of doubt and skepticism. Yule (1996:130) states hedges (or hedging strategy) are the speakers' expression of a caution expression about how an utterance is interpreted. Additionally, Thorat said 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). Hedges are also used in writing communication not only in verbal communication. Addressing hedging in news writing, Adamu (5), zuck and zuck stated that hedges are the process where the author would to reduces the strength of his writing in case the information that is reported in the writing turn out to be incorrect in which it is used to protect the writer's face or image. It is proved by Selager-Mayer (1994), he affirm that hedging is the process whereby the authors turn down their statement to reduce the risk of opposition and minimize the "threat-to-face" that hide in every act of communication. As a result, it can be conclude that language has an important role both in spoken and written language. The usage of hedge also important in produces language to reduce the risk of incorrect statement both in verbal and writing language.

Hedges can be realized in certain form. Salager-Mayer (1994) divided the taxonomy of hedges into seven types: modal auxiliary is to express modality in English academic writing; modal lexical is used to perform acts such as doubting and evaluating rather than describing of varying degree of illocutionary force; adjectival, adverbial, and nominal phrases e.g. possible, assumption, claim, perhaps, pratically; approximators of degree, quantity, frequency and time; Introductory phrases such as I believe, we feel that; if clause, compound hedges is made up from several hedges. For example, the using frequency is much higher than many other linguistics features which have received more attention (Hyland, 1994). More specifically, modals appear to be the typical means of marking epistemic comment in research papers (Gosden, 1990). Hanania and Akhtar (1984) report that they found all finite verb accounting for 8,1% (can and may being the most frequent). Banks (1994) argues that certain degree of hedging has become conventionalized. This study focuses on seven types of hedges proposed by Selager-Mayer's (1994) theory as a research framework.

Many researchers have conducted on hedges analysis such as in Zakia (2018) made a research on "Pragmatic Study on Hedging as Politeness Strategy in Online Newspaper" using Mayer's and Levinson's theories of politeness. This study aims to analyze hedges do function on politeness strategy in the New York online newspaper entitled: U.S Says Has Used Chemical Weapom at Least 50 times during War. This research also used Vold's system test in order to prove selected lexical that act as hedges. Next is Wahyudi (2015) conducted on "Meaning-Making of Hedges in The Gossip Colums of The Jakarta Post." This study examines the used types of hedges in the gossip column of Jakarta Post as well as to find the function and the meaning of the hedges in a gossip column, using Holmes (1990), Hyland (1996 a-b), and Lakoff (1973) theory as framework. Meanwhile, Hidayati and Dallyono did a research on "Analisis Hegdes dalam Kolom Opini Surat Kabar "The Jakarta Post" terhadap Kampanye Pilpress 2014. This study aims to identify the types of hedges in News of the 2014 presidential campaign and to analyze purpose of using the hedges. Next is Sulistiyo and Setiawan (2021) conducted on "Hedges and Booster on Covid-19.go.id: a Study of Doubts and Certainty in Educational Content. This study aims to describe the form of hedges and booster in the Covid-19.go.id and to find the function of hedges and booster. Based on the previous studies, this research conducted on "Hedging in CNN News: January 6 Corona Virus Pandemic and Omicron Variant News." This study focuses on the types of hedges expressed by the writer in the CNN News and it also uses Salager-Mayer's (1994) theory of 7 hedges points as the research framework.

As technology advances, newspaper has been online since the 1970s. Information can be accessed easier. People can access information any time, both the local or international news. (Nurohmah, 2021). According to Erlindson (1995), online newspaper has more advantages than print news because they can provide news instantaneously. It doesn't need time period to update the press deadline or new edition. CNN News is one of the online newspaper. As a

result, the research team is interested in analyzing the types of hedges in online newspaper, in which online newspaper is media to inform people about the news that happen in the world. In general, the research focuses on the hedges analysis of the online news "January 6 Corona Virus Pandemic and Omicron Variant News" proposed by Salager-Mayer's (1994) theory as a framework. This study can be used for learning about pragmatics, particularly types of hedges, and as a reference in the future research. This study is aimed to answer the following question: what types of hedges can be found in the CNN News: January 6 Corona Virus Pandemic and Omicron Variant News? Then, the goal of this study is to identify and describe the types of hedges used in CNN News: January 6 Corona Virus Pandemic and Omicron Variant News?

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed descriptive qualitative method. The object of this study was the sentence of the article in the online news. The data of this study were collected by downloading the article entitled *January 6 Corona Virus Pandemic and Omicron Variant News* from CNN News Purposively. There are 34 articles that are included in CNN News: January 6 Corona Virus Pandemic and Omicron Variant News. In collecting the data, the researcher analyzed the sentence of the article in the CNN News: January 6 Corona Virus Pandemic and Omicron Variant News. After collecting the data, the researcher analyzed the types of hedges in the 34 articles from CNN News: January 6 Corona Virus Pandemic and Omicron Variant News and classified the data into 7 types of hedges. In analyzing the data, the researcher used Salager-Mayer's (1994) theory as a framework to classify the types of hedges. The analysis of this study was focused on the types of hedges in the online newspaper. Moreover, the most dominant type of hedges used in the CNN News: *January 6 Corona Virus Pandemic and Omicron Variant News* was also described in this study.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The study focuses on the types of hedges in CNN News: January 6 Corona Virus Pandemic and Omicron Variant News. According to Salager-Mayer (1994), hedging is a linguistic resource which conveys the fundamental characteristics of science of doubt and skepticism. He also classified the types of hedges into seven categories. They are modal auxiliary verb; modal lexical; adjectival, adverbial, and nominal phrases; approximators of degree, quantity, frequency, and time; introductory phrases; if clause, e.g., if true, if anything; and compound hedges. The data analysis is presented as follow:

Table 1. The percentage types of hedges

No.	Types of Hedges	Hedges	Quantity	Percentage(%)
1.	Modal Auxiliary Verbs	will, would, may, can, could, should	62	49,6%
2.	Approximates of degree, quantity, frequency, and time	about, that, at least, around, over, almost, a lot of, less than, approximately	36	28,8%
3.	If clause	If, Even if	14	11,2%
4.	Modal Lexical Verbs	assume, show, advice, think, proposed	8	6,4%
5.	Compound Hedges	Should just assume, will probably, can possibly	3	2,4%
6.	Adjectival, adverbial, and nominal phrase	Possible	1	0,8%

7.	Introductory phrases	I believe	1	0,8%
	TOTAL		125	100%

1. Modal auxiliary verbs

Salager Mayer's (1994) states that modal auxiliary verb is the most straightforward and widely used in English academic writing that the function is to express modality. The examples of modal auxiliary verb that is the most used are may, might, can could, would, should. In this study, the researcher found 62 hedges and categorized it into modal auxiliary verbs. It consist 45 of will, 7 of would, 4 of may, 4 of can, 1 of could and 1 of should. Here are the examples of modal auxiliary verbs

Excerpt 1

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Chicago Public Schools (CPS) informed parents Thursday evening that classes will be
canceled again on Friday for the third consecutive day as the district and Chicago
Teachers Union failed to reach an agreement

I expect we'll have more in the next 24 hours
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The examples above are categorized into modal auxiliary verbs because they used verb "will". The verb "will" is used to express intention.

Excerpt 2

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Sununu announced that 70 National Guard members would be deployed to help hospitals
where the need is most severe,….
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The example above can be categorized into modal auxiliary verbs because it used verb "would". The verb "would" is used to express prediction.

Excerpt 3

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In-person learning and activities may be available at a small number of schools
tomorrow
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The excerpt 3 included in the modal auxiliary verbs because the writer of the article uses the modal "may be". The verb "may be" is used to express possibility. The writer uses that hedging because he wants to express some possibility in the sentence.

Excerpt 4

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We don't want to put the website up before we know we can provide,….
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The excerpt 4 included in the modal auxiliary verbs because it uses the verb "can". The verb "can" is used to express ability.

Excerpt 5

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……that Americans could order online for free.
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The verb "could" is used to express a possibility so it is categorized into modal auxiliary verbs.

Excerpt 6

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……people should work from home.
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The verb "should" is used to convey weaker proposition.

2. Modal lexical verbs

Modal lexical verb can be called "speech act verbs". Verbs that are used to perform acts such as doubting and evaluating rather than describing of varying degree of illocutionary force are called modal lexical verb. The examples of the modal lexical verb are to appear, to seem, to think, to indicate, to argue, to propose, to tend. There are 8 hedges that are categorized into modal auxiliary verbs. It consists 1 of assume, 2 of show, 1 of advice, 3 of think, 1 of proposed. Here the examples of modal auxiliary verbs.

Excerpt 7

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In the first 45 minutes I think, he was communicating to the family and team, and
that abruptly stopped…
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Excerpt 8

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French Prime Minister Jean Castex said Thursday that the country's proposed vaccine
pass….
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Excerpt 9

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….the prudent thing to do is just assume you have Covid and isolate away from other
people.
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Excerpt 7, excerpt 8, and excerpt 9 are categorized into modal lexical verbs. Excerpt 7 is categorized into modal lexical verbs because it uses the verb "think". Excerpt 8 included in modal lexical verbs because it uses modal lexical verb "proposed". Excerpt 9 included in modal lexical verbs because it uses modal lexical verb "assume". The writers used modal lexical verbs because they want to give their opinion and express their doubting and evaluating.

3. Adjective, adverbial, and nominal modal phrases

Adjectival, adverbial, and nominal phrases are used to reduce the strength of the claims since they represent possibility, probability, and uncertainty. There is 1 hedge that is categorized into adjective, adverbial, and nominal modal phrases. It consists 1 of possible. Here are the examples of adjective, adverbial, and nominal modal phrases.

Excerpt 10

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Whenever possible, people should work from home….
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The use "possible" in the sentence above is used to express possibility. The writer want to reduce the risk of his claimed if the sentence above did happened and he wants to make it acceptable to the readers by saying possible.

4. Approximators of degree, quantity, frequency, and time

Approximators of degree, quantity, frequency, and time is not all served to make things vague, some are used when exact figure are irrelevant. There are 36 hedges that are categorized into Approximators of degree, quantity, frequency, and time. It consists 10 of about, 6 of more that,

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9 of at least, 2 of around, 4 of over, 1 of almost, 1 of a lot of, 2 of less than, 1 of approximately. Here are the examples of Approximators of degree, quantity, frequency, and time.

Excerpt 11

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Fully vaccinated: 62.4% of the total US population (all ages), about 207 million
people.
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Excerpt 12

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More than 3,000 cruise ship passengers and staff were allowed to disembark in Hong
Kong…
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Excerpt 13

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The country has inoculated around 74% of its total population…
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Excerpt 14

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…. over 20,000 new daily cases forecast for the week after next
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From the four examples above, the use of Approximators of degree, quantity, frequency, and time can be seen from the words *about*, *more than, around,* and *over*. The approximators that are used in the examples above are used for the reason that the writers don't want to indicate the precise extent to which the information applies.

5. Introductory phrases

The author's personal expression of doubt and direct involvement is called introductory phrases. There are 1 hedges that is categorized into introductory phrases which is called believe. Here, the example of introductory phrases.

Excerpt 15

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The family believes the tennis player wishes to stay in Australia and "seek justice"
after "being treated like a criminal…
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The using of the word "believe" in the example above is used to show some of kind of respect to the readers' opinion.

6. If clause

"If clauses" show uncertainty or doubt concerning a proposition. The examples of is clause are if true, if anything. There are 14 hedges that are categorized into if clause. It consists 13 of if clause and 1 of even if clause. Here are the examples of if clause.

Excerpt 16

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…even if they are fully vaccinated.
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Excerpt 17

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If you have trouble getting a test, a take-home test particularly, and you do have
symptoms,…
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From the two examples above, the use of if clause can be seen from the words *even if* in the excerpt 16 and *if* in the excerpt 17. The writers used even if and if clause to form uncertainty as in the examples above.

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7. Compound hedges

Compound hedges are the phrases that are made up of several hedges. Introductory verbs – seem, tend, look like, appear to be, think, believe, doubt, be sure, indicate, suggest. Certain lexical verbs – believe, assume, suggest. There are 3 hedges that are categorized into compound sentence. It consists 1 of should just assume, 1 of can possibly and 1 of will probably. Here are the examples of compound hedges.

Excerpt 18

…they **should just assume** that they have Covid and isolate accordingly," Kanter said. "When you're in a surge like we are right now and Covid is everywhere- and it is everywhere right now…

The excerpt above is categorized into compound hedges because it used hedges "should just assume." The hedges is made up from 2 hedges, they are "should" as modal auxiliary verb and "assume" as modal lexical verb.

Excerpt 19

Tuesday we **will probably** reach on somewhere between 28,0000 and 29,000 registered infections which is unprecedented in this pandemic

The sentence above is categorized into compound hedges because the used "will probably" is made up from 2 hedges which are "will" as modal auxiliary verb and "probably" as adjectival, adverbial, and nominal modal phrases.

Excerpt 20

We **can possibly** do together to prevent another lockdown

The sentence above is categorized into compound hedges because it uses "can possibly". "can possibly" is made up from 2 hedges which are "will" as modal auxiliary verb and "possibly" as adverb.

CONCLUSION

This study focuses on hedges analysis in the CNN News: January 6 Corona Virus Pandemic and Omicron Variant News. Based on the analysis, the result shows that the writers of the article in the CNN News: January 6 Corona Virus Pandemic and Omicron Variant News used 7 types of hedges. They are modal auxiliary verb; modal lexical; adjectival, adverbial, and nominal phrases; approximators of degree, quantity, frequency, and time; introductory phrases; if clause, e.g., if true, if anything; and compound hedges. Moreover, this study also describes the most and the least used hedges in the CNN News: January 6 Corona Virus Pandemic and Omicron Variant News. The most dominant types of hedges used in the online newspaper about the CNN News: January 6 Corona Virus Pandemic and Omicron Variant News is Modal Auxiliary Verbs counting for 49,6%. The writers of the online news article want to express modality. The least dominant used are Adjectival, adverbial, and nominal phrase counting for 0,8% and Introductory Phrases counting for 0,8%. The writers want to reduce the strength of their claims and to express the writers' doubting. Moreover, this study also describes the most to the least types of hedges that is used in online newspaper about Covid-19. Here, the percentage of the most to the least types of hedges used in online newspaper about Covid-19 is Modal Auxiliary Verbs (49,6%); Approximators of degree, quantity, frequency, and time (28,8%); If clause (11,2%); Modal Lexical Verbs (6,4%); compound hedges (2,4%); Adjectival, adverbial, and nominal phrase (0,8%); Introductory

Phrases (0,8%). as a result, the writers of the article tend to use Modal Auxiliary Verbs and Approximates of degree, quantity, frequency, and time than the other types of hedges.

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