

Gender Differences in the Use of Hedging Devices in Students' Conversation

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ABSTRACT

Hedging devices function to minimize conflict that might happen during conversation. This study is aimed to 1) identify the types of hedging used by female and male students, 2) to identify gender differences in using hedging, and 3) to analyze the function of hedges used by students. This research used a qualitative method, and the data taken from 24 female students from English Department and 24 male students from Electrical Engineering Department. In analyzing the data, the Pragmatics approach was employed. The findings showed that hedges used by female English students are plausibility shields (30%), rounders (15%), adaptors (7%) attribute (4%), including hedges taken from negative politeness strategies such as a question, hedge (10%), and the imposition, Rx is (7%). The last hedges often used as discourse markers are: 'Hmm' (10%), 'Well' (7%), and 'Oh' (6%). In contrast, male students mostly applied hedges: plausibility shields (12%), rounders (5%), adaptor (4%), and attribute (4%). From negative politeness strategy, question, hedge to express politeness by using indirect question (7%), and the imposition, Rx decreases the imposition of utterance (4%). Male students also apply some discourse markers as hedges such as: 'well' (12%), 'Oh' (6%), and 'Hmm' (5%). From the research, female students often show their hesitations and use long utterances, while male students try to show their self-confidence and mostly utter to the point.

Keywords: hedge, plausible, rounder, politeness, discourse markers

INTRODUCTION

In communication, language plays a vital role in performing utterance between speaker and hearer. In the Pragmatics study, some experts learned hedges as one of the 'cosmetics' that are often employed to make utterances more colorful and not rigid because participants may have some choices to express what they have in their mind. As a communicative strategy, some scholars understand hedging differently. Crismore and Vande Kopple (1988), Hyland (1996), Salager-Meyer (2011) sometimes considered hedging as the expression of tentativeness and possibility (cited in Hardjanto, 2016). On the other hand, Myers (1989, p.12) stated that hedging is a politeness strategy when it marks a claim, or any other statement as being provisional, pending acceptance in the literature, acceptance by the community, in other words, acceptance by the readers (cited in Hardjanto, 2016). No matter what definitions of hedges are, hedges could be employed differently by females and males as it is an observable fact that there is different

interaction between them such as biological, social, and psychological (Halpern, 2000, cited in Dousti & Rasekh, 2016). Lakoff (1973) claims that females use linguistics feature more than males.

The linguistic feature used primarily by females is lexical hedges such as kind of, sort of, and others. Then, tag questions, intensifier such as just, so. Female utterance also shows an indirect request that makes females' utterances are more polite than males. The aims of the research are: the first is to identify types of hedges used primarily on students' utterances. The second is to analyze the role of hedges used in students' utterances. The third is to analyze gender differences in the use of hedges in students' conversations. Some scholars and linguists have researched gender differences in the use of hedges. In this research, participants are also female and male students; however, they come from different departments, that is, English and engineering students. Engineering students were chosen to see significant differences clearer than the previous research, which chose participants also from different gender, but they came from the same society, class, or similar peer group.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Hedging devices are topics that attract linguists and researchers to focus on, especially after some pivotal research on them was conducted almost all over the world. Wang (2010) researched hedges with the title: *Analyzing Hedges in Verbal Communication: An Adaption- Based Approach*. Wang tries to investigate the production process of hedges in verbal communication, and the conclusion is that the adoption of hedges consists of endless choices, linguistic forms, and communicative strategies. During choice-making, the speaker should adapt to contextual correlations that consist of the social world, physical world, and mental world to gain some expectant communicative intention.

The two other researchers interested in hedges are Mohajer and Jan (2015), and they entitled the research: *Preserving Face and the Use of Hedges in Masculine World of Men*. By observing hedges, they want to look at instances of hedges in men's communication to determine how hedges as linguistic features employed by men. 200 minutes of Iranian male participants' conversations that have been transcribed were used

to see how those elements are applied in their faces to conduct in informal conversation. It concludes that Iranian men use hedges in their speech instead of females because they opt to protect their face by using hedges in their communication.

Next, two researchers are keen on observing hedges: Dousti and Rasekh (2016) with their article entitled: *ELT Students' Gender Differences in the Use of Hedges in Interpersonal Interaction: A Mixed-Method Approach*. Their study was an attempt to examine possible differences in linguistic behavior of male and female ELT students. From the study, it could be found out that female students have more tendencies to employ hedging devices. They are friendly and make good rapport with another participant of utterance. However, this group strongly rejects if they use more hedging devices because of their lower social status.

In the same year, Wang and Tatiana (2016) also observed hedges, and they entitled their observation: *Corpus Research on Hedges in Applied Linguistic and EFL Journal Papers*. This research investigated hedging devices based on corpus-based analysis of 750 research articles to analyze types of hedges used. It is concluded that modal auxiliary hedging (44.9%); meanwhile, noun category is used though the frequency is only (2.17%). In this research, the employment of different syntactic features can also be seen if combined with epistemic lexical terms emerge to influence the different interpretations of lexical hedging closely related to politeness strategy.

Other researchers are Namaziandost and Shafiee (2018), who investigated hedges in their study with the title: *Gender Differences in Lexical Hedges in Academic Spoken Language among Iranian EFL Learners: A Comparative Study*. This study tries to make a comparison of the possible differences between female and male EFL students. They consist of 20 female and 20 male students. From the result, it could be concluded that female students tend to use more lexical hedges than males do. Besides, the female group also frequently uses fillers as lexical hedges such as: *hmm, uhh, you know, yeah*. Nonetheless, male students use *I think, uuh, and yeah*. Another case found is that female participant are very productive in picking lexical hedges, whereas male participants are not.

From the previous research on hedging devices above, all of them investigated hedges in spoken communication between female and male students from the same class or study program. In this present research, participants are also female and male students,

but they come from different study programs. They are 24 male engineering students and 24 female English students. Those groups were selected to make distinguished gender differences in the use of hedging devices.

Hedges

Many linguists study hedges, and the first who is considered to make a massive leap in developing hedges is Zadeh (1965). In his article 'Fuzzy Sets', he terms the meaning of fuzziness, connects it with language, and learns fuzziness of language with mathematical methods. Zadeh's work, followed by American linguist Lakoff, published his article (1973) entitled: *Hedges: A Study in Meaning Criteria and the Logic of Fuzzy Concepts*. He considered 'a group of words whose meaning implicitly involves fuzziness or words whose job is to make things fuzzier or less fuzzy are hedges' (Lakoff, 1973, p. 471).

Lakoff's work and his definition of hedges have been used by many linguists and considered the starting point in some hedging phenomena analyses. It is not only Zadeh and Lakoff who is considered as the pioneer of hedges diggers, but Brown and Levinson (1987) also because they have developed hedges that are related to politeness strategies. Brown & Levinson state that 'according to literature point of view, a hedge is 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 it is partial, or true only in certain respects...' Brown and Levinson (1987, p. 145). Another statement on hedges comes from Salvager-Meyer (1995), who stated that hedging is an application in pragmatics and discourse analysis in a general sense of the words to a range of items that show a notion of imprecision or qualification (cited in Vlasyan, 2019). Salvager-Mayer's theory is often used in observing hedges in written texts mostly though we often find few in spoken also. Another theory of hedges comes from Yule (2017). He defines hedges as words or phrases used to indicate that we are not sure that what we are saying is sufficiently correct or complete, as in descriptions such as his hair was *kind of* long or the book cover is *sort of* yellow (Yule, 2017, p.414). From those theories above, we can see that though there are many hedges definitions, we can conclude that hedges are used to express some words that we do not know how to say precisely.

Since this research focuses on pragmatic as a study field of linguistics, the theory of hedges is viewed from the perspective of pragmatics, and it is put forward by Prince, Frader, and Bosk (1982), Chen and Li (1994), Wu (1999). From a pragmatic point of view, Hedges does not make themselves fuzzy, and they do not make a change in the meaning of the statement; on the other hand, they reflect the speaker's communicative intent that can cause the effect of implication. Prince et al. (1980) classified hedges into two types, namely: approximators and shields. Both will be discussed below:

Hedges of Approximators

Approximators can make people's perception of communication change and change the original meaning of discourse structure. Approximators can make a certain degree of amendments or give a specific range of variation to discourse originality. Prince et al. (1980) stated that approximators could be classified into two sub-categories: adaptors and rounders. Approximators are also used as politeness and discourse markers to mitigate the effect of utterances.

Adaptors

Adaptors are the words that make a particular slight improvement to the originality of discourse meaning. He (2000), who has the same theory as Prince et al. (1980), said that adaptors are words that can adjust language that is very close to the truth value of the proposition, such as kind of, somewhat, and others (cited in Ma & Li, 2016). For example, *He looks somewhat handsome*. It shows that the use of somewhat as hedge cannot precisely describe how handsome he is. It only explains that he is not very handsome, nor is he bad. It is used to mitigate the utterance. Below is one example of an adaptor taken from students' utterance:

MJ: 'I think you know him well. How is he like?'

HI: 'Well, He is rather lazy.'

From the utterance, we can see that HI tries to mitigate the imposition of her utterance by using 'rather' so that the meaning is not too strong or too direct because HI knows that 'He' is very lazy, but HI uses 'rather' to avoid directness.

Rounders

Rounders relate to hedges that limit the range of subjects, or it can be said that rounders are used to make a zone for language adjustment. Rounders also give a specific range of variation, such as approximately, roughly, and others. We can read from the students' utterance:

WR: *'Our ex-senior high school will hold a reunion next month.'*

DK: *'Really...?' There would be many hundreds of people come, I suppose.'*

WR: *'Well..., I think the alumni who will come are about 500 persons.'*

From the utterance above that English department students conduct, we can see that WR is not sure how many persons will come strictly; therefore, she uses 'around' as she does not want to be blamed if her utterance is wrong. Also, 'about' means that the speaker wants to tell about the certain range of persons who will come.

Another utterance that uses hedge of rounders could be seen below:

MY: *'The time is closer, how many participants have registered for the exhibition?'*

LU: *'I suppose there will be 30 companies, and all of them are from West Java.'*

MY: *'Are you sure? The last update it is 32 companies.'*

LU: *'Well, could be. It can add until the last day of registration.'*

The example above is taken from engineering students' utterances. We can see that LU is sure about the number of companies that have registered because he is one of the committees who are responsible for that though the number is wrong.

Hedges of shields

The next category of hedges is shields. Shields are the opposite of approximators. It means that shields cannot change the original meaning of nor can they change the intent of discourse structures. Shields are divided into two sub-categories: plausibility shields and attribute shields.

Plausibility shields

Plausibility shields or plausible shields are achieved with modal verbs that can make speakers' tones soften and show hesitation. The functions of plausibility shields are to mitigate the utterance's imposition that can threaten other participants in utterance. The examples are some words and phrases like: *I think, I am afraid*, and as far as I know. - *I am afraid that I can't come.*

(Actually, the speaker wants to say that she/he cannot come, but she/he doesn't want to impose her/his utterance; therefore, she/he uses the hedge 'I am afraid' to mitigate the imposition. Two utterances taken from students' utterances could be seen here. The first is from engineering students, and the second is from English students.

AT: *'We can borrow 4 books from the library, I heard that.'*

OP: *'No, it is not 4 books, but 3 books.'*

DR: *'I think, this second test is not as difficult as the first.'*

GR: *'Well..., I am afraid, I do not agree with you, the second test is more difficult.'*

From the two utterances above, we can see that OP, a male engineering student uses 'No...' to express his disagreement directly to AT's statement. This kind of reply may increase his utterance's imposition and threaten the hearer's negative face. Meanwhile, GR, a female English department, uses 'well' ...and also 'I am afraid' to mitigate the imposition of her utterance in order to avoid FTA or face-threatening act(s)

Attribute shields

Attribute shields do not reveal or show the speakers' view or speculation, but they indirectly reveal the speakers' attitude by stating or quoting the other's statement or idea, or perspective. Attribute shields usually hide the existence of speakers, and they protect the face of speakers during the view. Below are two examples of students' utterances:

TY: *'You know something, that we must bring our laptop tomorrow.'*

PT: *'Tomorrow we work in laboratory all day, how?'*

TY: *'Someone told me perhaps Mr Y**** will not come, so all of us will have theory first.'*

PT: *'But, there is no news...'*

BG: *'I don't believe that there will be no Robot competition this year.'*

AS: *'Is it true?' How do you know?'*

BG: *'Pak S***** told me, but he is not very sure about that also.'*

AS: *'Oh', I think it is final.'*

From the first utterance, TY uses 'someone said' to hide the name of the person who told her about that. She protects her friend's name because she is afraid that it might be wrong as it has not been officially announced.

Politeness

Brown and Levinson (1987) state that politeness is an active serving to enhance, maintain, or protect the face. Brown & Levinson's theory of politeness consists of three

basic notions: face, Face Threatening Acts (FTAs), and politeness strategies. According to Brown & Levinson, 'face is the public self-image that every member of a society wants to claim for himself' Brown and Levinson (1987, p. 61). Face divided into positive face and negative face. Positive face is the desire to be viewed positively by others; on the other hand, negative face is the desire not to be imposed upon others.

The second basic notion of politeness based on Brown & Levinson is Face Threatening Acts (FTAs) are acts that infringe on the hearer's need to maintain his/her self-esteem. The last basic notion of politeness is politeness strategies. Politeness strategies are strategies that try to repair or compensate for the threat to positive and negative public self-image when performing a specific act. Positive politeness strategies are aimed at hearer's positive wants, such as expression of solidarity, informality. Brown and Levinson (1987) divided positive politeness strategies into 15. However, there are only one positive politeness strategy discussed in the research is, Be vague.

Be vague

In this strategy, 'speaker might go off the record with an FTA being vague about who the object of the FTA is, or what the offence is'. Brown & Levinson (1987, p. 226).

- Perhaps *someone had done something bad*

In the utterance above, the speaker and hearer try to make the object of the FTA vague, but actually, **perhaps** is one of hedges to mitigate the imposition of the utterance.

The employment of Be vague could be seen from the utterances of the students below:

RW: *'My watch lost yesterday.'*

GA: *'Who stole it?' Where did you lose it?'*

RW: *'I don't know of course, I left it in my bag while praying.'*

GA: *'Well, perhaps someone took it.'*

From the utterance above, we can see that GA uses perhaps to make vagueness so that she does not accuse someone directly as there a lot of their friends were there at the time.

Negative Politeness Strategies

Negative politeness strategies aim at hearer's negative face wants, and can be described as expression of restraint, formality, and distancing. Brown and Levinson (1987) divide negative politeness strategies into 10. In this research, two strategies are

discussed as both of them use a word, words, *and clauses that function as hedges and discourse* markers. Those two strategies are: Question, hedge, and Minimize the imposition, Rx.

Question, hedge

This negative politeness strategy uses question and hedge to mitigate the imposition of utterance. It uses the question to make indirect questions for showing politeness by using modal auxiliaries such as: could, might, may, and others. The modal auxiliary is also one of the hedges used to avoid FTAs. For example:

- *Can I go now...?*

The use of the modal verb 'can' is an indirect question, and it makes utterance more polite. This kind of hedge is used a lot by students, especially by female students. One of them could be seen below:

AI: 'Hey, finally, I got the contact number of 'S****.'

WS: 'Really, could you send it to me? Please...'

AI: 'Okay...okay, sure.'

The use of question hedge as one of the negative strategies can be seen when WS says, 'could you send me...' Prince et al. (1980) classified question, hedge from Brown and Levinson (1987), into a modal verb, and both have the same function, namely to decrease the imposition of utterance.

The imposition, Rx

According to Brown and Levinson (1987), this strategy shows an action to minimize the intrinsic seriousness of the imposition so that the hearer will see the low impact of someone's utterance. The examples of this strategy can be seen from the students' utterances below:

YR: 'How many days will you leave us?'

RT: 'It is **just** 2 weeks....'

The utterances above show us that the use of 'just' is to mitigate the imposition as 2 weeks will be long enough to be away from school.

Discourse Markers

In general, discourse markers could be defined as a word, words, and phrases that help us share our ideas. According to Aijmer (2002) discourse markers have functions to cue or guide the hearer's interpretation. Discourse markers have many functions, and at the beginning, it is only to fill the 'space' so that there are no 'pauses' during the utterance, making the utterance sound natural. Later on, after more than decades, discourse markers become the favorite topics that linguists, scholars, and researchers deeply dig. Brown and Levinson (1987) have made significant contributions in the development of discourse markers taken from their politeness theory, that is, negative politeness strategies. In this research, only one negative politeness strategy taken that is quantity hedges, 'Well'. 'Well' functions as a face threat mitigator to mitigate the imposition of utterance to avoid face-threatening acts (FTAs). Two others discourse markers that students in their utterances often use are: 'Hmm' and 'Oh'. The use of 'Hmm' as a discourse marker has 2 functions: the first is as filler to fill the space between speaker and hearer, and the second function is to show hesitation of the speaker (Aijmer, 2002). Aijmer (2002) claims that 'Oh' as a discourse marker has 3 functions in conversation: 'Oh' as a pure surprise, 'Oh' as arriving at a realization, and 'Oh' as clarification in sequences. Since in this present research, 'Oh' a pure surprise is found chiefly, so it is explained. 'Oh' as a pure surprise is used if a speaker is surprised for what she/he has just known or realized, and their surprise usually is followed by sympathy, for example:

PR: *'I have just known that he sells goods in his shop more expensive.'*

LU: *'Oh,' that is why his shop has no many visitors.'*

From the conversation above, LU expresses her surprise by saying 'Oh' by adding her sympathy.

The use of discourse markers could be found a lot in students' conversations; two of them are placed below:

LY: *'Have you got the email from Ms. R****?'*

TR: *'Hmm., not yet. I have checked my email, but there is no email'*

LY: *'Well...' perhaps later....'*

TR: *'I hope so, Ms. R**** told us those who get her email will be invited to join the Competition and I am really excited to join.'*

OP: *'She is really difficult to adapt with the new environment.'*

KL: *'Who are you talking about?'*

OP: *'The new student, who is else?'*

KL: 'Oh..., really?' I don't think so. She adapts easily.'

OP: 'Well, let us see....'

From the utterances above, we can see that the use of 'well' is for decreasing the impact of imposition because LY knows perhaps TR will not get an email, and this also happens to OP, who uses 'well' to avoid the conflict with KL as she knows that the new student is difficult to adapt. Meanwhile, 'Hmm' in the utterance above functions as filler to make a bridge between the speaker and hearer.

METHOD

This research uses a qualitative method since the result of the analysis is in descriptive form. According to Berg and Lune (2014, p.8), qualitative research appropriately seeks answers by examining various social settings and the groups or individuals who inhabit these settings (cited in J. Wang, 2018). Nunan (1992, p.10) stated that qualitative research as underlying the development of different research traditions and methods is a debate on the nature of knowledge and the status of assertions about the world. In other words, qualitative understanding research means understanding the lived philosophy behind a research method (cited in J. Wang, 2018). Furthermore, Wang (2018) stated that human activities are examined, and underlying meanings are explored using the qualitative research method. Based on the statements above, the qualitative research method was used in this research because the data were taken from students' utterances that show not only human activities that are observed but also the meanings of their utterances. The participants of this research are 24 male electrical engineering students and 24 female English department students, and both are in the second semester. Electrical engineering students were chosen to compare the different use of hedges between them. From 48 participants, they worked in pairs based on their department. After all, students found their partners, and they were given 5 minutes to decide on free topics for their spontaneous utterances. Then, for 10-15 minutes, each pair made utterances in front of the class. While they were uttering, the researcher recorded their utterances using a mobile phone to save the data from being replayed several times to analyze better. Those activities took a month, including the process of identifying and analyzing the data.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

After all the data were analyzed, it can be concluded that from the 24 students' utterances, some kinds of hedging devices are produced by them. From female English students who produced 12 utterances mostly, they used hedges as follows plausibility shields (30%), rounders (15%), adaptors (7%) attribute (4%). Meanwhile, hedges taken from negative politeness strategy is a question, hedge (10%), and the imposition, Rx is (7%). The last hedges often used as discourse markers are: 'Hmm' (10%), 'Well' (7%), and 'Oh' (6%), and if they convert to percentage, it is (96%). The two female students' conversations that might represent the result of the conclusion above can be read below:

RW: *'I like to study here. All my friends are kind and try to understand me who come from a small place.'*

YP: *'Hmm... we are a big family here, so don't be ashamed to make friends with Every body.'*

RW: *'Hmm..., I'd like too, but I am afraid my friends do not like me.'*

YP: *'Why you think that? Could you tell me?'*

RW: *'Well, hmm... I rather feel unhappy for the first time. I think all of you do not like me.'*

YP: *'I come from a small place also, so be happy. It is perhaps your sensitive feeling.'*

From the female students' utterances above, we can see the use of *plausibility shields* from Prince et al. (1980) such as *I think, I am afraid* that show RW's hesitations. Then, YP uses the hedge of a *question, hedge* as one of the negative politeness strategies from Brown and Levinson (1987) by using indirect question 'Could you...' to mitigate the imposition of utterance as she requests RW to do something for her. Positive politeness strategy from Brown and Levinson (1987) used is be vague, *perhaps, Perhaps* is used to show YP's vagueness on RW's feeling. Meanwhile, discourse markers used are 'Hmm' and 'Well.' YP's first 'Hmm' functions as a filler to make a bridge between YP and RW, so there is no space. The second and the third use of 'Hmm' uttered by RW express her hesitations (Ajimer, 2002).

KL: *'It seems that this English speech contest is not interesting as we did last year.'*

MG: *'As far as I know the participant is more and I think, it more interesting. J***** the Head of the committee told me that participants are more than last year. It is about 60 participants'*

KL: *'I know that, but though participants are more, it is not interesting, say, it is rather a little bit boring'*

MG: *'Well...' I know what you want. If you say something is boring, it show that you*

want to eat.'
 KL: *'Hmm...' actually I am not really hungry, but if you think so, it is ok. I just feel tired.'*
 MG: *'Oh...' Are you ok?' I am afraid that you are sick.'*
 KL: *'Hmm, no... I don't think so...' I am just bored and a little hungry....'*

The above conversation shows us those female students like to use hedges, although their conversation is short. Plausibility shields still dominate, such as: 'as far as I know', 'I think...' that is used several times by speaker and hearer to show their hesitations Prince et al. (1980). One negative politeness strategy, the imposition, RX from Brown & Levinson (1987), namely: 'just' is used twice by KL to mitigate the imposition of utterances.

Meanwhile, after being analyzed, male students' conversations show that hedges mostly used are plausibility shields (12%), rounders (5%), adaptors (4%), attributes (4%). They also use hedges derive from negative politeness strategy, question, hedge to express politeness by using indirect question (7%), and the imposition, Rx to decrease the imposition of utterance (4%). Male students also apply some discourse markers as hedges such as: 'well' (12%), 'Oh' (6%), and 'Hmm' (5%), and the total percentage is (59 %). Two conversations below might represent the result above:

MAR: *'What is your favorite country?'*
 MYH: *'My favorite country is Japan, of course.'*
 MAR: *'Why, tell me why?'*
 MYH: *'Okay... if you ask me why Japan is my country, first it has very high technology, second Japanese people are smart and keep their culture very good.'*
 MYH: *'What about you?' what is your favorite country?'*
 MAR: *'Hmm..., I think my favorite country is America.'*
 MYH: *'Donald Trump...you like Donald Trump?'*
 MAR: *'I like the country....'*

From the conversation above, it shows that the use of hedges is only two. Those are: 'I think' as plausibility hedges to show MYH's hesitation Prince et al. (1980). 'Hmm...' as discourse marker functions as a hedge to express MYH's hesitation (Ajimer, 2002).

DR: *'Have you done the assignment from pak 'S*****?'*
 WW: *'What assignment?'*
 DR: *'About power. He gave us last week, and it submits tomorrow.'*
 WW: *'Oh..., I don't remember at all' I will get some difficulties to do that. Power and Energy is difficult subject, I get 50 in my last test.'*
 DR: *'Well, it is not difficult, but we need to study hard to understand.'*

The students' no hedges from the conversation above except discourse markers function as hedges such as: 'Oh' and 'Well'. 'Oh' expresses WW's surprise because he forgets the assignment. Then, DR uses 'Well' functions as a face threat mitigator as he does not want to increase the imposition of his utterance.'

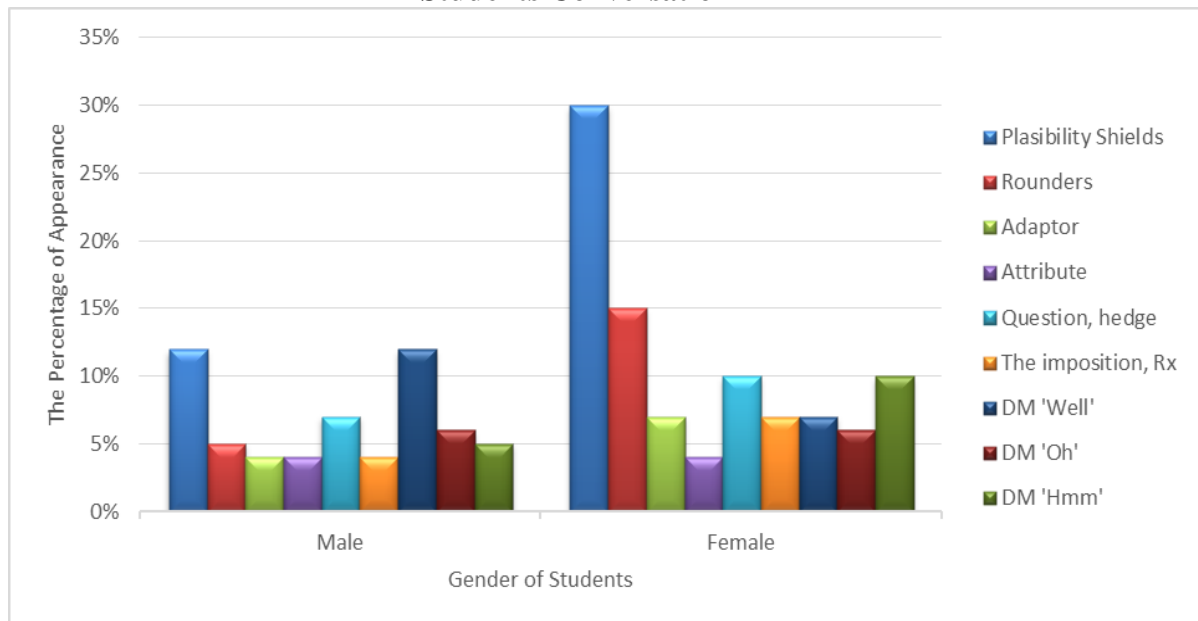
Those results emphasized that conversations taken from students prove Tong's theory (2009, p. 51) that states there are some distinctions between men's and women's speech. In general, men's speech was logical, concise, and dealing with essential topics, whereas women's speech was rated as emotional, flowery, confused, and wordy. Lakoff's theory supported Tong's theory in Holmes (2008, p.297). She claims several linguistic features were used more often by women than men because women often express uncertainty and lack of confidence in speech (cited in Rosanti & Jaelani, 2016).

For seeing the result clearly, we can see the tables and the graph below:

Table 1 The Percentage of Each Type of Hedges Appearances on Male and Female Students Conversation

No	Type of Hedges		Percentage of Appearances	
			Male	Female
1	Plausibility shields		12%	30%
2	Rounders		5%	15%
3	Adaptor		4%	7%
4	Attribute		4%	4%
5	Question, hedge		7%	10%
6	The imposition, Rx		4%	7%
7	Discourse markers as hedges	Well	12%	7%
8		Oh	6%	6%
9		Hmm	5%	10%
Total			59%	96%

Figure 1 The Comparison of Each Type of Hedges Found on Male and Female Students Conversation



CONCLUSION

Mostly hedges employed by both female and male students function to mitigate the imposition of utterance to avoid face-threatening acts (FTAs), including hedges taken from negative politeness strategies and positive politeness, and also hedges taken from discourse markers. However, female students use more plausibility hedges and discourse markers 'Hmm' to show their hesitations. Female students conduct long conversations; on the other hand, male students employ short ones, and they go directly to the point.

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