# CHAPTER I

# INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the general description of the research. It consists of the background of the study, research questions, objectives, significance to knowledge, and framework of the theory.

## 1.1 Background to the Study

"*Language is the dress of thought*." –Samuel Johnson.

Language is one of the devices that people use to communicate. To communicate means to convey a thought; it can be an idea, an argument, an opinion, or anything else. However, a thought that people are willing to communicate may not always be appealing to the others if they use inappropriate language. Thus, the language sometimes may be taken, for example, as an offensive thing. Therefore, people should be careful using their language.

To make things less offensive in communicating a thought, there is a language device called hedges introduced by expressions namely *as far as I know*, *probably*, *I think, sort of, too, maybe*. Lakoff (1972:194) uses the term hedge itself for the first time to mean, "*Words whose job to make things more or less fuzzy*." Lakoff's definition of hedge indicates that, "*what the speaker is saying may not be totally accurate*" as stated by Yule (1996:38). It means, *"a hedge is an expression used to make things more or less fuzzy for what the utterance stated may not be totally accurate or not really what the speaker means."* (Lakoff 1972; Yule 1996).

By making things fuzzy, hedges can mean to show politeness as seen in a previous research by Aruma (2011). Here is an example of a hedge used to show politeness:

> *At the Christmas party, Vincent got the chess set, which would have been a very decent present to get at a church Christmas party, except it was obviously used and, as he and his mother discovered later, it was missing a black pawn and a white knight . His mother graciously thanked the unknown benefactor, saying , "**too** good. Cost too much". When they got home, his mother told him to throw the chess set away.* Aruma (2011:13-14)

The situation in the example above is that someone named Vincent gets a present, a chess set. He and his mother find out that it has missed a black pawn and a white knight, and it is obviously used. His mother graciously thanks the benefactor who gives her son a present by saying the expression, "*too good*." However, by saying that, it does not necessarily mean that she is pleased for what the benefactor gives because, later on, she tells her son to throw it away. Therefore, by using the hedge "***too***," she would like to refuse the benefactor politely.

However, when hedges make things fuzzy, they do not always mean that they are used to show politeness only. Here is an example taken from Sandova (2010:157-158):

> *JON SOPEL: What I want to ask you is are you for or against nuclear power.*
> *ALAN DUNCAN: **The, the government is not looking at that.** Tony Blair's saying he is, but if you look at the terms and conditions of the Energy Review, there's no money on offer. Now we've never before seen a nuclear power station built in Britain by the private sector alone.*
> *So the question is what are the terms and conditions and what is the investment climate which we agree with Dieter Helm, should be a long one, in which this might happen and could happen fairly and it would need a number of things. It would need a proper solution to the handling of nuclear waste.*

The example shows that the use of hedge, ***"The, the government is not looking at that."*** leads to the evasiveness. The hedge may be considered *"very evasive and he [Duncan] claims that it is not what the government is dealing with right now"* as stated in Sandova's research (2010).

Hedges functioning as evasiveness are argued for the first time in Sandova's research (2010). What interesting is that the form of evasiveness is different from the other functions' suggested by Sandova (2010). The form of evasiveness may be the whole clause or even more than one; which means it may be the whole utterance. Unfortunately, Sandova only discusses the form of evasiveness and does not discuss the proposition hedged in the utterance.

Thus, this research continues Sandova's discussion about evasiveness by analyzing the proposition hedged in the utterance. Moreover, this research classifies the hedges' orientations based on their uncertainty.

In addition, there is another previous research about hedges by Helmi (2010). However, she discusses the hedges relating to maxims in the movie *Daddy Day Camp*. Thus, it may differentiate this research from hers for this research does not discuss maxims.

To make it more different, the data source for this research is taken from the script of TV SITCOM called *Friends*. *Friends* is a comedy where the jokes mostly delivered in verbal, not practical; it means that the jokes is conveyed with utterances. Interestingly, the verbal jokes in *Friends* frequently conveyed with the use of hedges. Thus, it is chosen as the data source because hedges are applied in *Friends*.

By hedges frequently conveyed in *Friends*, it leads to the assumption of this research that there are hedges functioning as evasiveness occurring in *Friends* script. Therefore, as suggested, the writer decides to title this research *Hedges Functioning as Evasiveness in Friends Script.*

## 1.2 Research Questions

1. What are the propositions hedged in the utterance in *Friends* script?
2. What are the orientations of the hedges relating to their uncertainty in *Friends* script?

## 1.3 Objectives

1. To analyze the propositions hedged in the utterance in *Friends* script.
2. To analyze the orientations of the hedges relating to their uncertainty in *Friends* script.

## 1.4 Significance to Knowledge

This research means to analyze the hedges used in Friends script. It is conducted to show another function of hedges besides showing politeness, as often used; it is to show hedges that may function as evasiveness. Moreover, the relation of the hedges as evasiveness with the orientations of their uncertainty is also suggested. Thus, this research is expected to be useful for the readers in conveying a communicative message. By understanding hedges, they may also

learn how to convey things without being offensive and they can still be in a safe communicative situation because of the indirectness of the hedges.

### 1.5 Framework of the Theory

This research uses the definition of hedges referring to Lakoff's (1972). As he states that hedges are "*words to make things more or less fuzzy*." Sandova (2010), based on the definition, suggests many functions of hedges. One of the functions is evasiveness. Thus, the theory by Sandova serves as the grand theory for this research supports hers (2010).

Moreover, Sandova proposes the classifications of hedges based on the orientations of their fuzziness/uncertainty. They are speaker-oriented hedges, hearer-oriented hedges, and content-oriented hedges. Speaker-oriented hedges are to express speaker's doubt or uncertainty. Hearer-oriented hedges are to express hearer's uncertainty. Content-oriented hedges are to express an uncertainty of the content.

This research also applies the theories by Yule (1996) supporting Lakoff's (1972), Urbanova (2003), Hyland (1996) and Holmes (1984) supporting Sandova's (2010), and some others that support these theories. These theories applied in this research may be represented in figure 1 below.

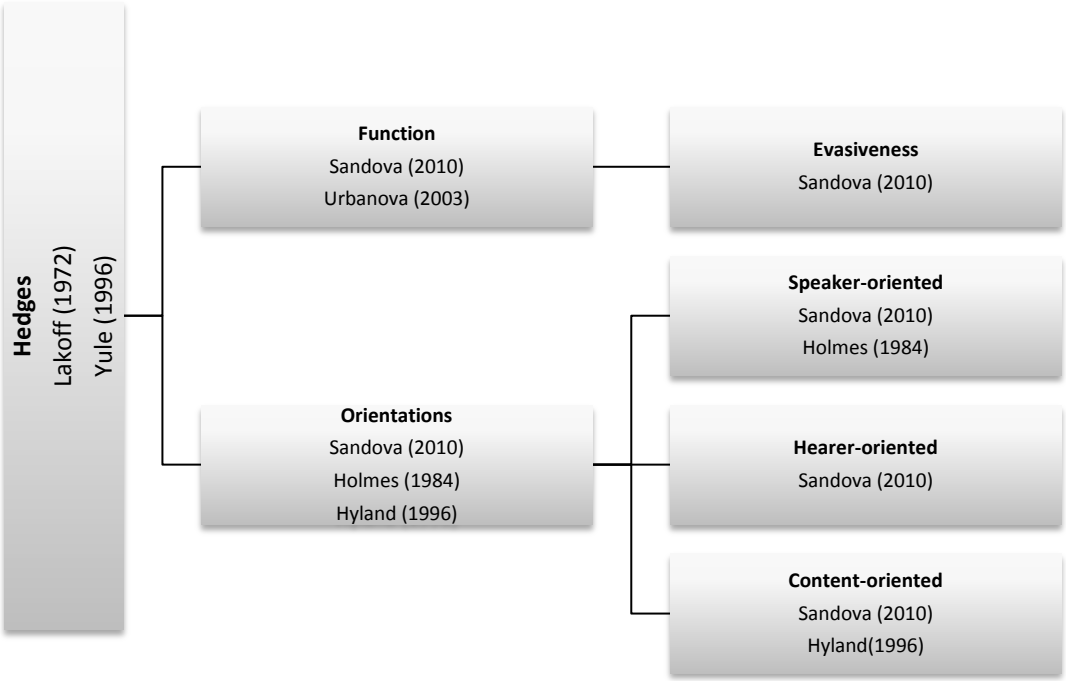



*Figure 1. Framework of the theory*