CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter will cover the background of the research, statement of problems, research objective, research significance, definition of key terms, and organization of writing.

1.1 Background of the Research

Hedges are a pragmatic strategy to soften the effect of a statement. Instead of making strong or confident statements, speakers may use words like "maybe," "I think," or "it seems" to show that they are not sure, want to appear polite, or show flexibility. Hedging can help manage tone, avoid conflict, and show politeness in conversation. Researcher like Lakoff (1975) say that women tend to use hedges more than men, not because they lack confidence, but because they often have to follow social norms that expect them to be polite, indirect, and accommodating like in some research (Mahmud & Nur, 2019; Joseph et al., 2021; Lunaeldira, 2021).

These factors are particularly important in the context of political communication. People usually expect politicians to speak clearly, but women politicians often face a double standard. They need to act like they are in charge while also meeting expectations of being agreeable and non-confrontational (Lakoff, 2003; Tannen, 1990). In this situation, hedges can be used on purpose to find a balance between power and politeness, so women can lead without seeming aggressive.

YouTube has become a significant platform for public and political discourse in today's digital media landscape. For example, CNN's global YouTube channel features interviews with well-known politicians from around the world. These interviews are not scripted, easy to find, and conducted in real-time. It gives valuable information for studying how female politicians handle unexpected political communication on a global stage. Women are expected not only to

respond quickly and clearly in these interactions but also to speak in a manner that is polite, careful, and measured, which aligns with social norms for gendered speech.

Numerous studies have examined how women use hedges in other contexts. Chai (2022) examines female speakers in podcast conversations and finds that hedging occurs more frequently when men and women interact with each other. Safdar et al. (2024) investigate a televised group talk show and demonstrate how the excessive use of hedges, such as "you know," can make speech appear less clear.

Dewi et al. (2024) study the female characters in the animated movie Encanto and investigate how hedges and intensifiers are used to convey emotions and influence interactions. Wardoyo (2024) examines the giving of advice in Islamic sermons and finds that men and women speak differently, particularly in terms of tone and focus. These studies primarily focus on casual, fictional, or religious speech.

This research, on the other hand, uses interviews to show how female politicians handle real-time interviews in global media spaces like YouTube, which has millions of viewers from different cultures and countries. This research examines the frequency and types of hedges used and their relationship to the topics discussed through a corpus-based analysis. The research's goal is to demonstrate how female politicians utilize language to address public expectations, establish credibility, and maintain their persuasive influence on global media platforms.

1.2 Statement of Problem

Based on the research background, the researcher determines that two questions will be the primary focus of this study:

1. What types of hedges occur in female politicians' utterances on the CNN YouTube channel?

2. How are the functions of hedges used by female politicians on the CNN YouTube channel?

1.3 Research Objective

Based on the formulation of the research question above, the researcher is intended:

1. To find out the types of hedges used by female politicians on the CNN YouTube channel.

2. To explain the functions of hedges used by female politicians on the CNN YouTube channel.

1.4 Research Significance

The research has two significances: theoretical and practical. The study's findings should be valuable. Theoretically, the findings of this study are expected to (1) Contribute to linguistic research, particularly in sociolinguistics and pragmatics, by exploring women's language in the use of hedges. (2) Serve as a bibliographical resource for researchers or readers interested in women's communication styles and the use of hedges across various communicative settings. (3) Provide a reference point for future studies on conversational structures, such as the pragmatics functions of hedges in different discourses and settings.

In practice, this study is expected to (1) Offer an authentic example of how female speakers in natural spoken interactions use hedges. (2) Help readers and researchers gain deeper insights into analyzing spoken discourse from a linguistic and pragmatics perspective, specifically through the lens of gender-based communication styles. (3) Inspire further research into conversational dynamics, particularly using hedges, focusing on diverse subjects, speech genres, or cultural contexts.

1.5 Definition of Key Terms

To explain the title words and prevent misunderstanding in this research. The definitions of key terms are as follows:

1. **Pragmatics** is the study of the meaning conveyed by speakers or writers and interpreted by listeners or readers (Yule, 1996.)

2. **Hedges** is a theory introduced by G. Lakoff that defines hedging as a word or expression that "makes something more vague or less vague", and states that hedging is used to dilute the meaning of an expression (sort of, a little) or underline its specific features.

3. **Interview** is to talk to someone and ask questions in a formal meeting to determine if they are qualified for a job, course, etc. (Oxford University Press, n.d.)

4. **CNN** is an acronym for Cable News Network: a US organization that distributes news on television globally (Cambridge University Press, n.d.)

5. **YouTube** is a popular video-sharing site YouTube allows viewers to watch videos created by various media. (de Bérail et al., 2019).

6. **Corpus Linguistics** is a broad framework of methods and concepts for utilizing corpus in language study and teaching (McEnery and Wilson, 2001).

1.6 Organization of Writing

This paper consists of 5 chapters, each of which addresses the following:

Chapter I: This chapter explains the introduction, which consists of the background of the research, statement of problem, research objectives, research significance, definition of key terms, and organization of the paper.

Chapter II: This chapter discusses several things, such as the theoretical framework, which includes explaining pragmatics, hedges, types of hedges, and hedge taxonomy. The focus of this research is the type and function of hedges, especially in politics.

Chapter III: This chapter discusses the research methodology, which includes research design, sample of data, source of data, technique of collecting data, and technique of analyzing data.

Chapter IV: This chapter contains data analysis relating to the research findings and discussion. The analysis responds to the research question about the types of hedges that occur in female politicians' utterances on the CNN YouTube channel

and the function of hedges used by female politicians on the CNN YouTube channel.

Chapter V: This chapter concludes this undergraduate thesis in two parts. The first section contains the research's conclusions. It gives a complete understanding of the concerns highlighted in this research regarding The Use of Hedges by Female Politicians on the CNN YouTube channel, which was analyzed in the previous chapter as the answer to the research question. Meanwhile, the second section contains suggestions for other academics interested in a similar topic of study on pragmatics.