HEDGES AND BOOSTERS ON COVID19.GO.ID: A STUDY OF DOUBTS AND CERTAINTY IN EDUCATIONAL CONTENT

(HEDGES DAN BOOSTERS DALAM LAMAN COVID19.GO.ID: KAJIAN TENTANG KERAGUAN DAN KEYAKINAN DALAM KONTEN EDUKATIF)

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Abstrak

Kata kunci: konten edukatif, pembatas, penguat, pandemi.

Abstract
During the Covid-19 pandemic, many writings with educational content were produced. To state his position on facts or opinions, the writer needs to pay attention to the selection of hedges and boosters in accordance with the context. Based on 420 educational content presented on the Covid19.go.id, this study describes the forms and functions of hedges and boosters. This research was conducted in five steps, namely careful reading, recording the forms on data cards, data categorization, data analysis, and conclusion. The results are as follows. The Covid19.go.id has more boosters than hedges. The most widely used forms of expression, both hedges and boosters, are epistemic adjectives and adverbs. The functions of hedges in educational content are to show uncertainty, avoid confrontation, show politeness, persuade, and provide alternative choices to readers. Meanwhile, boosters have functions to show a strong commitment, show information reliability, and close opportunities for negotiation between writers and readers.

Keywords: educational content, hedges, boosters, pandemic.
1. INTRODUCTION

During the Covid-19 pandemic, many writings with educational content were produced to provide understanding to the public about how to deal with the virus. The writer often presents the results of research followed by appeals about what the community can and cannot do to reduce the spread of the virus. Whether consciously or not, the writer will use certain expressions to state his position on the facts or opinions contained in educational content. Naturally, readers always expect to get a guarantee of the correctness of the information from the writer. Therefore, the writer has the responsibility to show the degree of certainty through the use of hedges and boosters so that readers can determine the right attitude towards the information (Hyland & Milton, 1997; Hyland, 2000). However, it should be realized that showing doubts or certainty through certain expressions is not an easy job (Hyland, 2005; Hyland & Tse, 2005; Olinger, 2011; McGrath & Kuteeva, 2012), especially in educational content during a pandemic.

Statements that contain certainty conveyed by the writer about the virus in educational content are too risky considering that research on Covid-19 is still being done. On the other hand, the writer’s feeble commitment to the information will reduce the reliability of the information. Therefore, the writer needs to pay attention to the selection of forms of hedges and boosters in accordance with the context so that communication objectives can be achieved. There are various forms of the language used to express hedges and boosters (Samaie et al., 2014; Rabab’ah & Abu Rumman, 2015; Hardjanto, 2016). However, the use of hedges and boosters in educational content that occurred during the pandemic has not been widely studied. The majority of research on Covid-19 still focuses on the medical scope. In fact, hedges and boosters have an important role to play in persuading readers (Lee, 2020) so that, in a pandemic situation, the community will be motivated to follow the appeals set by the authorities. Based on the reasons above, this study tries to answer the two following questions. First, what are the forms of hedges and boosters used in the educational content on Covid19.go.id? Second, how do hedges and boosters function according to the context of their use on Covid19.go.id?

Hedges and boosters are part of the stance in the interactional metadiscourse. As stated by Hyland (2005), interactional metadiscourse is related to how writers build relationships with readers. The interactional metadiscourse consists of stances and engagements. Stance refers to author-oriented linguistic views that show commitment, attitude, and self-position, while engagement refers to the way the writer engages the reader in his writing. Stance consists of hedges, boosters, attitude markers and self-mention. Hedges and boosters, which are the focus of this study, are expressions that represent the degree of doubt or certainty (Holmes, 1990; Hyland, 1998; Vassileva, 2001; Yeganeh et al., 2015). Some researchers use the concept of an epistemic scale to indicate the degree of doubt and certainty, ranging from high to low levels (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014; Takimoto, 2015). Groups of words that are in a high level such as definitely, entirely, always show a high degree of certainty, while other groups of words, such as sometimes, hardly, seldom, are at a low level and show a low degree of confidence. The following is a brief explanation of the definition, function, and forms of hedges and boosters.

Since first introduced by Lakoff, hedges have attracted the attention of many researchers until now (Yeganeh & Ghoreyshi, 2015; Ahmadpour et al., 2017; Poole et al., 2019)40 English research articles written by native speakers of Persian were chosen. Accordingly, Hyland’s (2005) Lakoff said that hedges is a word or group of words used to make something become “more or less fuzzy” (Lakoff & Truth, 1975). Hedges can also be understood as an expression in the form of a particle, word, or phrase, which is used to modify the degree of a predicate in a proposition (Brown & Levinson, 1987: 117). In the context of hedges, modifications are made to reduce the degree of confidence of the writer. As a result, the claims or propositions conveyed by the writer become weak (Horn & Ward, 2006: 414). Hedges often arises through expressing intentions indirectly (implicating) rather than expressing directly (asserting). Hedges have various functions according to the forms and contexts of their use. Hedges show tentative and deliberative functions (Holmes, 1990; Hyland & Milton, 1997). The tentative function means
that hedges provide space for readers to interpret certain facts or opinions. In fact, writers cannot always guarantee the truth of any information they write. Therefore, by using hedges, the writer provides an opportunity for readers to participate in evaluating the information.

The deliberative function means that the hedges show the writer’s caution in conveying information and do not want to create conflicts with readers. Confrontational expressions will reduce the alignment of the reader to the writer. Another function of using hedges is to show politeness as well as a strategy for negotiation (Salager-Meyer, 1994; Wibowo & Yusoff, 2014). We analyzed a corpus of 15 articles drawn from five leading medical journals. Hedges were identified by means of a contextual analysis, their frequency was recorded in the different rhetorical sections of the 15 articles, and their percentages (over the total number of running words. Conveying arguments in the communication process often has the potential to become a barrier to cooperative interactions. Therefore, hedges is used to soften the proposition of the speaker/writer by obscuring the true intention of the speaker/writer (Brown & Levinson, 1987: 117). The use of expressions such as sort of and kind of indicates that the speaker/writer is conveying the intention indirectly. Other studies have also demonstrated the functions of hedges. By dividing hedges into two categories, content-oriented and reader-oriented, Hyland (1996) mention the various potential functions of using hedges. Some of them are to show the level of analysis accuracy, information reliability, writer’s commitment, and also to get readers’ acceptance. The large number of hedges use shows the low commitment and confidence of the writer towards the content.

Hedges can be realized in certain forms. However, it is necessary to understand that the taxonomy of hedges is not something that is fixed and does not change. The taxonomy of differences of hedges is something that cannot be avoided (Hyland, 1996; Yagiz & Demir, 2014). Lee (2020) uses the terms epistemic verb, epistemic adjective, epistemic adverb, and miscellaneous to denote the realization of the hedges. The term epistemic means that it relates to the writer’s interpretation or judgment of information. When presenting information, the writer can choose whether to present it descriptively according to reality (a truth-conditional description) or interpretatively by providing evaluative arguments for the information (Papafragou, 2000: 68). In this context, epistemic verbs can be understood as verbs that relate to the uncertainty of the writer’s interpretation of the information they present, as shown in the forms seem, assume, suggest. This principle also applies to epistemic adjectives and adverbs, which means adjectives and adverbs that relate to the interpretive attempts by the writer to the information they present, as shown in the forms perhaps, likely, mainly. Miscellaneous can be realized through the form in general and to a certain extent. The term epistemic noun is also used to denote the realization of hedges through the form of possibility (Salichah et al., 2015). However, there are not many forms that fit into that category. In addition, hedges can also appear through the use of the if clauses as in the form If true, If anything…(Salager-Meyer, 1994; Rabab’ah & Abu Rumman, 2015) we analyzed a corpus of 15 articles drawn from five leading medical journals. Hedges were identified by means of a contextual analysis, their frequency was recorded in the different rhetorical sections of the 15 articles, and their percentages (over the total number of running words. The forms mentioned above are the realization of hedges.

In contrast to hedges, boosters are expressions that show certainty and provide confirmation of the propositions presented by the writer (Holmes, 1990; Hyland & Tse, 2004; Hyland, 2005). When using boosters, the writer realizes the potential for differences in views between the writer and readers in dealing with information. However, the writer tries to provide limitations, and even tends to close other views of readers to certain information presented by the writer. In other words, boosters are expressions that are used to close opportunities for negotiation between readers and writers. Although facing readers with various attitudes, the writer remains confident and provides confirmation of his ideas. When compared with the definition of hedges from Brown & Levinson (1987: 117), boosters can be understood as an expression in the form of particles, words, or phrases, which are used to modify the degree of predicates in a proposition to increase the degree of confidence of the writer so that the claims or propositions conveyed by
the writer become stronger. Boosters can also be understood as a form of direct communication, in which the writer does not hesitate to convey his intention. This fact also shows that, unlike hedges, boosters are not a tool to show politeness in the communication process (Doncheva-Navratilova, 2016).

Boosters have various functions according to the forms and contexts of their use. A study shows that boosters have an impersonal and confidential function (Holmes, 1990). The impersonal function shows that what is conveyed by the author is not a one-sided claim that seeks to negate alternatives to other claims, but a consensus that cannot be doubted. (Yazdani et al., 2014). With this strategy, the reader is inevitably led to believe the writer’s arguments. Meanwhile, the confidential function shows the writer’s high self-confidence in conveying his propositions. The goal is the same as the impersonal function, which is to make the reader believe in the writer’s ideas, because the writer conveys his ideas with high self-confidence. In subsequent developments, the impersonal and confidential functions become some of the fundamental bases for the emergence of other functions, such as the persuasive function. Through the high degree of confidence instilled by the writer in his propositions, boosters are used to persuade the reader to, not only believe, but also carry out the recommendations of the writer (Lee, 2020; Takimoto, 2015). In an effort to mobilize the masses for certain interests, especially in the context of preventing the spread of the virus, this function has a very important role.

Similar to hedges, researchers’ attention is not only focused on the definition and function of boosters, but also on its forms. However, as previously stated, the taxonomy of boosters is not something static and does not have the potential to change. Therefore, the existence of differences between one researcher and another with regard to the taxonomy of boosters cannot be avoided. Boosters can be realized through universal pronouns and negative pronouns, as in the form of all, nothing (Salichah, et al., 2015). These forms often appear when the writer has to consider many variables when conveying an idea that has a high degree of certainty. In addition, boosters can be realized in the form of statements about certainty, as in expressions actually, certainly, indeed, in fact. It can be realized in the form of statements about probability, as in the words probably quite, and in the form of statements about possibility, as in the words possible, may, might. It can also be realized in the form of statements about usualness, as in the word always (Hyland & Milton, 1997).

There are also other researchers who use the same categorization to show the realization of both hedges and boosters. These categories are epistemic lexical verbs, epistemic adjectives, epistemic adverbs, and miscellaneous. (Hu & Cao, 2011; Wei & Duan, 2019; Lee, 2020) this comparative study investigates the use of such discourse markers in academic article abstracts. Based on a corpus of 649 abstracts collected from 8 journals of applied linguistics, this study examines if hedging and boosting strategies differ. As previously stated, when presenting information, the writer can choose whether to present it descriptively in accordance with reality (a truth-conditional description) or interpretatively by providing arguments against information (Papafragou, 2000: 68). In the context of boosters, the term epistemic means that it relates to the writer’s interpretation of information, as seen in the form of demonstrate, show, prove. This also applies to epistemic adjectives and adverbs which can be understood as adjectives and adverbs that show the writer’s conviction, as seen in the form correct, always. Miscellaneous can be realized in forms It is well known (that) or the fact that. The forms mentioned above are the realization of boosters that often appear in the communication process.

The study was conducted by collecting educational content from the website Covid19.go.id uploaded from March to October 2020. The total number of content uploaded during that period was 568 content. Because there is a lot of content that only presents images and little text, 420 content that has text that allows analysis is chosen. The analysis is carried out by looking at words, phrases, or clauses that indicate the use of hedges and boosters. Based on the concepts in the theoretical framework, hedges are expressions that show the writer’s low degree of confidence in the propositions they convey, while boosters are expressions that show a high degree of belief. Both hedges and
boosters can appear in the form of epistemic lexical verbs, epistemic adjectives, epistemic adverbs, miscellaneous, or other forms.

The function of hedges and boosters depends on the form and context of its use. As stated in the theoretical framework, hedges and boosters among them have tentative, deliberative, confidential, and impersonal functions. Data analysis in this study was done in five steps. The first step is to read each of the educational content that has been carefully collected. The reading is focused on words, phrases, and clauses that indicate the use of hedges and boosters and the forms that precede and accompany them. The second step is recording the forms of hedges and boosters and their collocations on the data card. Corpus AntCont 3.5.8 (Laurence Anthony’s software, 2019) is also used to help finding the forms of hedges and boosters and their collocations. The third step is data categorization. The fourth step is data analysis. The final step is the conclusion.

### 3. Findings and Discussion

Table 1 shows the overall number of hedges and boosters contained in educational content on the Covid19.go.id. The table shows that the official website of the government which is used to educate the public about Covid19 uses more boosters than hedges. Table 2 and table 3 show in more detail the forms of hedges and boosters. The use of hedges in the form of epistemic adjectives and adverbs is the most common, followed by epistemic lexical verbs, miscellaneous, and the use of the *if clause*. Meanwhile, the use of boosters is mostly done in the form of epistemic lexical verbs, universal pronouns, and miscellaneous. Table 2 and Table 3 also show that epistemic adjectives and adverbs are the most widely used forms, both in hedges and boosters.

#### Table 1 Overall Use of Hedges and Boosters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hedges</td>
<td>468</td>
<td>21,35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boosters</td>
<td>1724</td>
<td>78,65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2192</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Table 2 Variations in the Use of Hedges

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Linguistic forms</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Epistemic adjectives and adverbs</td>
<td>344</td>
<td>73,5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Epistemci lexical verb</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>16,03%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1,92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>if</em> clause</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>8,55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>468</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Table 3 Variations in the Use of Boosters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Linguistic forms</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Epistemic adjectives and adverbs</td>
<td>1398</td>
<td>81,1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Epistemci lexical verb</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>5,8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>2,1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Universal Pronouns</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1724</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 3.1 Functions of Using Hedges

Based on data analysis on educational content, hedges have functions to indicate uncertainty, avoid confrontation, show politeness, persuasion, and provide alternative choices for readers. These functions appear as an effect of using words such as *sejumlah, beberapa, sebaiknya, baiknya, and setidaknya* as shown in the following excerpts.

1. **Sejumlah** ahli kesehatan, berdasarkan fakta penelitian, sudah mengatakan “stop merokok!”
   
   ‘A number of health experts, based on research facts, have said “stop smoking!”’

2. **Kabar baik**: berdasarkan hasil evaluasi, pelaksanaan PSBB di beberapa provinsi diikuti dengan turunnya jumlah pasien rawat inap secara signifikan.
   
   ‘Good news: based on the evaluation results, the implementation of PSBB (large-scale social restrictions) in several provinces was followed by a significant decrease in the number of patients.’

3. **Termasuk ke layanan kesehatan, bila tidak untuk keperluan yang mendesak, sebaiknya ditunda.**
   
   ‘Including visiting health services, if not...’
for urgent needs, it has to be postponed.’

(4) Bila tidak memiliki kepentingan untuk berada di tempat dengan salah satu dari kondisi tersebut, baiknya hindari.

‘If you do not have any interest in being in a place with one of these conditions, you have to avoid it.’

(5) Jika tak sempat lakukan bisnis tersebut, setidaknya kita dukung dan bantu sesama dengan membeli dan mempromosikan jasa/produknya.

‘If you don’t have time to do the business, at least you support and help others by buying and promoting their services/products.’

In sentence (1), the writer tries to show that, medically, smoking is harmful to our health. This statement has been conveyed by health experts. However, the writer does not clearly or specifically refer to who the health expert is because the writer only uses the word sejumlah. In addition to the excerpt, there are 23 forms of another sejumlah contained in educational content about covid-19. Sentence (2) also indicates uncertainty, in which the writer chooses to use the word beberapa rather than mentioning definite provinces that have experienced a decrease in the number of hospitalized patients. Meanwhile, sentences (3) and (4) show the writer’s efforts to direct the reader’s behavior. However, the writer tries not to confront the reader by not imposing these directions. Through words sebaiknya and baiknya, the writer’s direction becomes a kind of persuasive effort that is not mandatory. These two sentences also show politeness at the same time, in which the writer does not state his orders directly, but is carried out through suggestions. Sentence (5) indicates that the writer tries to provide the readers with alternative choices or provides an opportunity to negotiate the actions that need to be taken during the pandemic.

3.2 Functions of Using Boosters

The use of boosters in educational content has the function of showing the writer’s strong commitment to their propositions, showing high self-confidence, showing information reliability, and closing alternative choices that have the potential to emerge from readers or closing opportunities for negotiations between writers and readers. In this condition, the reader has no other choice but to believe in and implement what the writer says. The excerpts below represent these functions.

(6) Protokol kesehatan tetap harus terus dijaga, seperti #JagaJarak, #DiRumahAja, #CuciTanganPakaiSabun, dan #MaskerUntukSemua.

‘Health protocols must keep being maintained, such as #KeepDistancing, #AtHome, #WashHandswithSoap, and #MasksforEveryone.’

(7) Untuk tetap mendorong kemajuan ini, mari tetap disiplin terhadap aturan PSBB dan taati protokol kesehatan seperti #JagaJarak, #CuciTanganPakaiSabun, dan pakai #MaskerUntukSemua!

‘To keep encouraging this progress, let’s remain disciplined towards PSBB rules and adhere to health protocols such as #KeepDistancing, #WashHandswithSoap, and use #MasksforEveryone!’

(8) Tiap tahapan pengembangan vaksin menjunjung tinggi kaidah ilmu pengetahuan, sains, dan standar-standar kesehatan.

‘Each stage of vaccine development upholds scientific principles, science, and health standards.’

(9) Bangun pagi tentu bagus bagi kesehat karena sinar matahari pagi memberikan asupan vitamin D untuk imunitas tubuh kita.

‘Getting up early is certainly good for the health because the morning sunlight provides us with vitamin D which is useful for our immunity.’

Sentences (6) and (7) show that the writer has a strong commitment to maintaining the continuity of the health protocol implementation through words tetap and tetus. The use of these two forms of boosters also shows the writer’s attempt to close the opportunity for negotiation between the writer and the reader regarding the application of health protocols. This means that readers inevitably must continue to apply health protocols such as maintaining distance, washing
hands, and wearing masks. The sentences (8) and (9) show that the writer has high confidence in the propositions conveyed through words tentu. Meanwhile, the use of word tiap in sentence (8) shows that the writer tries to present reliable information. This means that the information conveyed by the writer, in this case about vaccine manufacturing, can be trusted and accepted by readers.

The research results presented above indicate that hedges and boosters are important components in educational content about Covid-19. Epistemic adjectives and adverbs being the most prevalent linguistic forms. It means that the writer tends to modify the degree of the predicate by using the forms of epistemic adverbs and adjectives. As stated by Brown & Levinson (1987: 117), modifying the degree of the predicate is one strategy that can be used to show hedges and boosters. Through epistemic adjectives and adverbs, the writer tries to modify the degree of action, process, or state/condition conveyed in a sentence. Strategically, hedges and boosters in educational content Covid19.go.id are used to direct readers’ attitudes and actions, especially during the pandemic. The writer does not only present information descriptively, but also interpretatively.

The writer presents information in a certain level of belief, shows a polite attitude in conveying it, believes in what he is writing, shows the reliability of information, and also consistently tries to persuade readers to believe and implement the writer’s recommendations. These methods actually play a vital role in educating the public to suppress the spread of the virus. This research also strengthens the results of research conducted by Lee (2020) that the higher the use of hedges and boosters shows the higher the efforts of writers to influence or persuade readers according to the writers’ intentions. In this context, with a total of 2,192 hedges and boosters, the writers have a strong intention to influence or persuade readers. By believing in the writers’ ideas and implementing their recommendations, the writers hope that the spread of the virus can be suppressed and the public understanding of the virus will get better. In addition, the frequency of using hedges and boosters in educational content shows a high difference. The high difference can be understood as follows.

First, the writer prioritizes information reliability. Hyland (1996) states that the use of hedges and boosters can show the reliability and the accuracy of information as well as the commitment of the author. Reliability is an important criterion because, as an official information channel, the educational content on the Covid19.go.id is the main reference for other pages that also provide educational content during the pandemic. The existence of other pages that also provide educational content cannot be denied because Indonesia has a large population. Efforts to educate the public cannot be done by just one website. Other websites, as well as social media, have an important role to play in expanding the reach of educational content on the internet. It cannot be denied that, on the internet, there are various information channels that are more popular than the official website used to convey information to the public about Covid-19. To suppress hoaxes related to Covid-19, the Covid19.go.id puts forward information reliability, as shown in the excerpts below. The public can confirm the correctness of information circulating on the internet through Covid19.go.id.

(10) Beredar kabar di Facebook bahwa MUI sudah melarang penggunaan vaksin COVID-19 dari Tiongkok.

INI HOAKS

Faktanya klaim tersebut salah karena Sekjen MUI Anwar Abbas menyampaikan per 3 Oktober 2020, MUI belum membahas soal vaksin COVID-19 dikarenakan vaksin masih dalam tahap uji klinis dan MUI belum bisa keluarkan fatwa atau putusan apapun terkaitnya.

News circulated on Facebook that the MUI (Indonesian Ulema Council) had banned the use of the COVID-19 vaccine from China.

THIS IS HOAX

In fact, the claim is false because MUI Secretary General, Anwar Abbas, said that as of October 3, 2020, MUI had not discussed the COVID-19 vaccine because the vaccine was still in the clinical trial stage and MUI could not issue a fatwa or any decision related to it.

INI HOAKS

Faktanya Dr Faheem Younus, Kepala Penyakit Menular Universitas Maryland Upper Chesapeake Health Center, menyebutkan bahwa terapi uap adalah bentuk penipuan. WHO juga tegaskan bahwa terpapar temperatur lebih tinggi dari 25 derajat selsius tidak dapat menyembuhkan COVID-19.

On social media, videos of steam therapy in India are circulating which are believed to protect themselves from COVID-19. The video shows several people inhaling steam emanating from a pressure cooker.

THIS IS HOAX

In fact, Dr. Faheem Younus, Head of Infectious Diseases at the University of Maryland Upper Chesapeake Health Center, mentions that steam therapy is a form of fraud. WHO also stressed that exposure to temperatures higher than 25 degrees Celsius cannot cure COVID-19.

Second, the writer shows a strong commitment. As has been shown through previous studies (Holmes, 1988; Hyland, 2000; Hu & Cao, 2011) boosters represent the strong commitment of the author to his propositions. A strong commitment comes from a strong belief in the reliability of information. Because the writer feels that what is conveyed can be tested for truth and can also be trusted, the writer holds tightly to the propositions he conveyed to the reader. The word tetap which appeared 168 times, mostly collocate with information about health protocols, implies that the writer is firmly committed to implementing the health protocol. It means that the writer guarantees the truth of the information conveyed and that the reader does not need to worry if they participate in carrying out what the writer states. During a pandemic, a sense of security or a guarantee of safety is the most important thing, especially in carrying out physical activities aimed at preventing virus transmission.

Third, the writer shows assertiveness of attitude. The assertiveness of attitude appears in the word harus, which appeared 78 times. When using the word harus, the writer closes the space for other alternative options or to negotiate with the reader. This expression shows that the writer is very serious about what he writes. As can be seen in the excerpts below, the writer is very serious when advising readers to change behavior at work in order to avoid the risk of virus transmission. Behavior change is meant to harmonize behavior in the workplace according to health protocols. At present, there are many health protocols that apply in various public places, such as hospitals, offices, supermarkets and other places. Each public place asks its visitors to comply with the health protocols that apply according to the conditions of the place. The writer feels the need to emphasize what he wrote and not provide other options so that readers are willing to pay serious attention to the health protocols that apply in those places.

Fourth, the writer persuades the reader through his beliefs. As stated by Lee (2020), hedges and boosters have a persuasive effect. There are various ways to influence a person’s behavior. On the Covid19.go.id page, through the use of boosters, the author chooses to influence readers through belief, commitment, and optimism rather than through doubt, skepticism, and threats. The writer invites readers to look at the problems that arise during a pandemic as a
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challenge that needs to be faced optimistically. However, even though he prioritizes information reliability, commitment, assertiveness of attitude, and beliefs that build readers’ optimism, the author does not eliminate politeness aspects in the content. Through hedges, as stated by Brown & Levinson (1987: 117), the writer tries to respect the choice of attitude of the reader’s. The writer realizes that, as beings who have freedom, readers have various choices in behaving according to their beliefs. Therefore, the writer also uses words such as sebaiknya, setidaknya to declare imperativeness. Those forms indicate an indirect delivery of intentions from the writer as a form of appreciation for the choice of attitudes of the readers.

In addition, the use of hedges on the Covid19.go.id page also indicates that the writer provides the opportunity for readers to participate in evaluating the propositions of the writer’s. Hedges, as stated by Hardjanto (2016) also serves to provide an opportunity for the reader to evaluate the propositions of the writer’s. It means that the writer does not want to monopolize information related to Covid-19. Until now, research on this virus is still being done. This means that the findings that have been published by researchers still have the potential to change. Stating claims unilaterally without considering the development of research will actually show the arrogance of the writer. Based on this fact, the writer tries to give readers the opportunity on certain topics to participate in evaluating whether the information stated by the writer is in accordance with the latest research about Covid-19. In the information age, readers have opportunities to access information quickly from reliable sources, both domestic and foreign sources. Therefore, through the information that has been obtained, readers can participate in evaluating the correctness of the information presented by the writer.

(14) Perokok Lebih Mungkin Terjangkit COVID-19 daripada Non-Perokok
Smokers are More Likely to Catch COVID-19 than Non-Smokers

(15) ADE (Antibody-Dependent Enhancement) adalah fenomena yang mungkin terjadi pada pemberian antibodi (vaksin atau
antibodi lain) berupa reaksi yang memperkuat infeksi sehingga terjadinya suatu kejadian imunopathologis yang berat.
ADE (Antibody-Dependent Enhancement) is a phenomenon that may occur in the injection of antibodies (vaccines or other antibodies) in the form of reactions that amplify the infection resulting in a severe immunopathological event.

In addition to providing opportunities for readers to evaluate the propositions conveyed by the writer, the use of words lebih mungkin and mungkin indicate that the writer is trying to avoid direct confrontation with the reader. The writer is fully aware that the educational content on the Covid19.go.id is intended for the entire community. In an effort to persuade readers, the use of confrontational expressions will only make it difficult to achieve the writer’s intention to educate the public. Naturally, confrontation will lead to an attitude of attacking each other to defeat other entities. In fact, the persuasive effect will be more likely to be achieved if the writer puts forward a cooperative attitude, inviting readers to cooperate respectfully to achieve certain goals. Therefore, the writer realizes that the use of expressions that lead to confrontation in educational content needs to be avoided so that the writer’s guidance can be understood and applied by the reader without being accompanied by efforts to face the writer’s challenges.

Conclusion

From the explanation above, it shows that the forms of epistemic adjectives and adverbs are the most widely used ones to express both hedges and boosters. Following that, hedges and boosters appear in various forms. Epistemic lexical verbs, the use of the if clause, as well as miscellaneous, are forms that are widely used to convey hegdes, other than epistemic adjectives and adverbs. In addition, universal pronouns, epistemic lexical verbs, and miscellaneous become forms that are widely used to convey boosters, other than epistemic adjectives and adverbs. In terms of function, hedges have functions to show uncertainty, avoid confrontation, show politeness, persuade, and provide alternative choices to readers, while boosters are used to
show the writer’s strong commitment to his propositions, show high self-confidence, show reliability of information, and closing alternative options that could potentially emerge from the reader or closing the opportunity for negotiation between the writer and the reader. In an effort to educate the public to suppress the spread of the virus, hedges and boosters have an important role. If used appropriately, hedges and boosters can provide a persuasive effect to guide people in dealing with the virus so that the spread of the virus can be suppressed.

References


