CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

1. The Background of Analysis.

New thoughts demand new words. This is the message of Immanuel Kant in the introduction of his second book “Critique”. This message, however, should not be viewed as an expression of philosophical courage of creativity. It was inspired by the need of Kant to defend himself against the accusation of introducing a new language. Kant essentially notices that it is really critical to acquire new words firstly ahead of acquisition of new knowledge or new thought.

The acquisition of knowledge as explained above affects the ability of interpreting meaning in some discourses. The ability of acquiring meaning is supported by some particular fields in language science. To sum it up, a simple sentence is presented here as a case of interpreting meanings.

Father : Are you hungry?

Kid : I had my lunch at 2 pm.

That is a kind of abstract meaning which the second speaker is involved in that short conversation do not express the real as expected by the first speaker. In that conversation, father sends an interrogative statement to his kid and father expects for the clear answer in a package of “Yes “ or “No”, since the question was delivered in a simple way that only needs one of those couple answers. Interestingly, however, the Kid does not send a direct answer as expected by his Father. Instead, the Kid said, “I had my lunch at 2 pm”. In a glance, it is hard to see the connection between the question and the answer. But, the communication still works. Even though, the
meaning was sent in an abstract way, father still could figure it out and would not buy a meal for his kid.

A simple case above has proven the statement “being meaningful is really essential in a linguistic expression”. In linguistics, meaning is deeply studied by using semantics theories. According to Locke, semantics is a branch of linguistics that deals with the study of meaning. In studying meanings, semantics deals with prior types of expression and not focus on the properties of speakers’ utterance. It means semantics study focuses to observe a construction of each sentence and then after observing it, the meaning included in could be found. Hence, when doing a study of meaning by using semantics approach, recognizing the units of language that constructs a text is the first step that should be done. Those units could be phonemes, syllable, morphemes, and words and so on. They are some of units of language that involved in building a text.

As other fields of study, semantics also has a branch of sub-unit of study that supports semantics in doing an observation of various meanings in every text. The branch named pragmatics. Pragmatics, like semantics, is also a study that treats meaning as its major observation. However, the thing that distinguishes pragmatics from semantics is pragmatics deals with meanings included in a speaker’s utterance or conversation while semantics deals with pure linguistics concern such as the units of language, types of expressions, and so on. Based on its use, pragmatics is often called as the speakers’ meaning. When someone utters he delivers two meanings, surface and deep structure of meanings. Here pragmatics is required to help us in understanding the deep meaning of the speaker since it usually occurs that the deep meaning has a different understanding than its surface structure. A clear example of
this case is shown above in the conversation between father and his kid. In this case the problem arises since the listener is not able to catch the meaning intended by the speaker because the speaker puts his intention beyond the linguistic structure of his speech.

In solving this problem, pragmatics as a field of study offers some theories that may be used in analysis of sentences. In this thesis, a particular theory to solve this problem is appeared. The theory named hedges. Hedge is one of the theories in pragmatics focusing to analyze level of sureness or vagueness in someone’s speeches. Hedge is a part of maxims theories in which this theory deals with endeavoring meanings through abstract words. Hedge is also commonly called as the truthfulness-theory since as it has been explained above that hedges may measure the vagueness of someone, whether he or she doubts or not with his own utterances. By reflecting to the hedges results it is easily known the level of sureness from someone to his own sentences.

The analysis is focused on some selected speeches of world figure. The option is based on a common consideration that whatever the situation is, a leader should not tell even a single hesitation in his or her utterances since it easily says that every single word from a leader gives significant and big impacts to his people. When a leader delivers a single hesitation in his or her speech ahead, his or her reliability will go down as a consequence. By reflecting on that fact, a leader needs much consideration before delivering his speech. As a leader, his position is much like someone standing on the highest perch on a hill. Everyone easily sees him and also judges him simultaneously. A leader cannot avoid that thing. That is the risk of being a leader. All he can do is preparing, collecting, verifying, and the reconsidering
his speech. When she or he meets their confidence about their speeches, then they may move and deliver it. Long consideration and good-persuasive words will place a leader to the most comfort place in his people’s heart.

As a proverb says: “even a superman has his own cloudy and dreary day”, a leader also has his own bad moments. The moments that put them into the corner and they cannot escape from the trouble. Something goes so unexpected and as the stakeholder of his people, a leader should take the responsibility. They should report the problems to his people. If he or she is not able to convince his or her people that problems running can be solved a support for him will be decreased and even his or her people could do a rebellion against their leader. The rebellion is the embodiment of their disappointment toward his leader’s work. Hence, in this condition a leader, as also a politician, chooses a safe way in their speeches by using some very particular words that could save a leader from the bad judgments of his people.

Those very particular words are called hedges. Hedge seems like the only one way for a politician to save their own lives. Hedge becomes the last option since this technique does not provide the direct answer of something. When a leader is being asked for his responsibility toward a trouble, they are not necessary to answer “yes” or “no” of being suspected against the trouble. They use hedges since hedges place them between “yes” or “no”. There is no direct answer. Only a man with a special thought could interpret someone who uses hedges. By hedging the words a leader seems to give a direct answer toward a trouble but actually they do not. Hedge is often called as “a politician language”. This technique is commonly known among the politicians since they always seek a way that places them on a comfort place in the eyes of people.
The example of the use of hedges could be considered as the statement below, taken from one of Barack Obama’s speeches:

“Now, even if we provide these affordable options, there may be those – particularly the young and healthy – who still want to take the risk and go without coverage.”

In the italicized words above, Obama implicitly delivered a statement which conscious or unconsciously contains hedging words. When the statement elaborated further, it will be easily seen that the statement is constructed in the form of conditional sentence indicating by the use of if. It is grammatically known that when conditional sentence is appeared, the fact is standing contrastly with the sentence. When Obama flouts that if we provide these affordable options the fact is the affordable options do not exist yet. The same condition occurs when Obama delivers the modal verb may.

The leader’s option to use hedges as the safe way from a problem clearly reflects the weakness of the leader himself. As a leader, he is insisted to be a tough man that claims both failure and success. If a leader does not confess honestly his weakness or his guilty, he simply does not deserve to be a leader. People depend on their decision. Every single decision issued by a leader determines a destiny of million people. People always reflect on their leader’s words and we can imagine the mess that would be arisen when a leader uses hedging words when delivering a speech ahead his people. People cannot trust him since he will not be able to give a way out of a problem. He just wants to save himself as a leader and does not have enough bravery of confessing his weakness.

Lying upon those issues, considering hedging words contained in the selected leader’s speeches would be an interesting discussion since by finding and counting
hedges in their speeches; the level of vagueness of the leader may be honestly revealed. Barack Obama’s, the 44th President of United States and the first Afro-American man that could reach the position, is the object to be analyzed. He is the leader of superpower country and we may argue that he is the number one man in this world. In this thesis, the way of Obama delivers his speech will be elaborated scientifically based on hedges theory. After elaborating the choosing of words in Obama’s speeches, then the focus moves to other side, considering the profile of hedges in his speeches, and then, ultimately, revealing the real meaning of hedges used in these speeches.

There are some selected speeches which are going to be disputed. The option is done randomly based on the urgency in time when the speeches were delivered since Obama was inaugurated as 44th American men that could reach that position on 20th January 2009. America is facing a big social problem now since the economic depression, wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, people-health Act, and other social problems. Reflecting on those problems, most of Obama’s speeches discussed in this thesis are focusing on it.

As the number one man, Obama is seen as a measurement of most vital things in this world. Through the elaboration in this thesis; it will be revealed how tough and how frank Barack Hussein Obama is.

1.2. Problems of Analysis.

In elaborating the hedges problems in this thesis, the problems will be intentionally centered into three questions below. Lying upon these three questions, the elaboration will be expanded by not only answering those questions but also exploring theories that solve the problems. These questions are below:
1. How is profile of hedges in Barack Obama’s speeches?
2. What does every hedge in Obama’s speeches presuppose?
3. What does every hedge in Obama’s speeches implicate?

1.3. Objective of Analysis.

To make the analysis in this thesis become successful; it is necessary to make some definite objectives that could be used as guidelines to do the analysis. The objectives are arranged based on some kinds of problems appeared in daily life. The objectives lead to the something that should be found out and solved. The objectives that are intended to be stated are:

1. To find out the profile of hedges in Barack Obama’s speeches
2. To find out the implicature appeared in Obama’s speeches.
3. To find out what the hedges presuppose to.

1.4. Scope of the Analysis.

In discussing a certain problem in a certain field, giving a limitation in the explanation of problem is absolutely needed. The scope or the limitation is aimed to make the elaboration more focus to the problems that are discussed about and avoids the ambivalence in linking the problems and theory to solve it.

There are two scopes that are proposed here. First, the profile of hedges in Obama’s speeches would be stated further. The profile of hedges could be in form of words, phrases, clauses, or sentences. Secondly, then, the elaboration moves to present meanings implied in those hedges. The meanings-implied are called presupposition. Presupposition reflects what speakers actually imply when using
hedging words. Through this scope of analysis it will be more easily for the readers to figure out the problems and the ideas systemically.

1.5. Significances of the Analysis.

In this natural world, the significances of doing something could be viewed in miscellaneous ways. All of consideration about significances of something merely depends on someone’s perspectives. Yet, one thing that always happens is in doing something there is always a significance which influence to others, included this analysis. This analysis hopefully could give worth significances where:

1. This analysis could enrich the scientific research of hedges and gives another point of view in hedges analysis.

2. This analysis could give some information about hedges contained in Barack Obama speeches.

3. This analysis may give a significant consideration for readers in considering their political decision and political leaders.

4. This analysis practically could be used as a consideration for the readers who are working in the entertainment and political fields such as advertisement to use hedges theory in making their advertising words. For politician, it is useful to arrange their speech in order to maintain their position in the eyes of people.