CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

Hedging has been a primary material in writing, especially academic writing (Hyland, 1994; Hinkel, 2004). In addition, academic writing as evidence of intellectuality of academician makes teaching writing an urgent concern (Alwasilah, 2008). Moreover, most exams that assess one’s degree of education achievement often rely on writing proficiency for measurement of knowledge (Harmer, 2004). Weisser (2002) also regards the compositionists or writers of any kind of text types as public intellectuals. These show how writing is adhered to intellectuality.

In academic context, writing is an important part of university study (Zemach and Rumisek, 2005). There are many writing assignments that administered to students in many taken courses. Furthermore, writing becomes requisite for graduation from most of higher education level institutions, such as, paper, journal, thesis, or dissertation. In this context, academic writing terminology emerges. Hooks (1999; in Murray, 2006) defines academic writing as the desire to think and write more, to fill these gaps that informs the desire to leave academy. In academic writing, one thinks and writes of subject chosen, in the manner that s/he wishes to write in whatever voice s/he chooses. This becomes reason why teaching writing in academic context is necessary in academic environment. Variation of disciplines, for example, results in different typical text types, and this text types expect specific construction and representation of knowledge through the text structure and the use of register (Coffin, et al, 2003).

Hedging plays an important role in academic writing context (Hinkel, 2004; Emilia, 2008). Selecting hedging as one of writing styles to analyze is reasonable since hedging shows writers’ reducing to the truthfulness of a statement; hedging represents the use of linguistic devices to show hesitation or uncertainty, display politeness and directness and defer to reader’s point of view.
(Hyland, 1998; see also Hinkel, 2004). This view about the use of hedging in academic writing shows opportunity to reveal the different tendency of undergraduate students using hedging as rhetorical device in their academic writing. Graduate study as continuation from undergraduate study is expected to produce better writing; the use of hedging as one of language devices becomes one aspect that could measure graduate students’ skill in the awareness of claiming the truth (Hyland, 1998).

Since Lakoff (1972) conceptualizes hedging as rhetorical devices to make fuzzy concept of a thing. This hedge or hedging as linguistic terminology was developed in pragmatist and discourse analysts hand. Meyer (1997) more specifically observes how hedging is used in academic writing as strengthener of arguments by weakening the claim in terms of cooperative principles. Following the observation of Meyer, Skelton (1997) also finds how hedging is used in a particular discipline, namely medical discipline. Skelton figured out that speculative judgment words such as suggest, indicate or imply become technical terms for the sake of modest uniformity of style. Some studies concerning hedging used in academic discourse were conducted in several sites of different nations. Most of them usually focused on certain discipline or the comparison among academic writings of different disciplines (Hyland, 1995; Vertalla, 2001; Martin, 2008; Taweel, Saidat and Saidat, 2011 and Nivales, 2011). Hedging is also used differently in terms of the language speaker, namely, native or non-native speaker (Riekkinen, 2009; Nasiri, 2012).

By this study, some of academic writing features can be displayed and elucidated scientifically. Since there are abundant features that can be explained from this academic writing phenomenon structurally, rhetoric or stylistically, this study focuses on the flow of the text and discourse, more particularly hedging. The use of hedging in academic writing is considerably important. In presenting factuality and truthfulness of statement, the use of hedging is beneficial in that the statement is not too assertive and judgmental. The study about hedging in academic writing across disciplines is already done by many researchers. The
result shows significant difference of the use of hedging in different disciplines (Vertalla, 2001).

On the basis of elaboration about hedging above, there is still question that needs depicting, in terms of the use of hedging in undergraduate students as they use qualitative and quantitative research method. This study qualitatively leads to the realization whether hedging as rhetorical device is acquired differently as writers use different frameworks of seeing phenomena in certain perspectives (qualitative and quantitative research method).

1.2 Research questions

The following research questions realize the problems of hedging used in the skripsi-s employing quantitative and qualitative research method:
1. What surface features of hedging occur in skripsi-s employing qualitative and quantitative research methods?
2. What are the polypragmatic models of hedging used in those skripsi-s?
3. What are the differences of the uses of hedging in quantitative skripsi-s from those in qualitative skripsi-s in terms of their surface features and polypragmatic model?

1.3 Purposes and significances of the study

Regarding the aforementioned background of this study, purposes and significance of the study are:
1. Presenting comprehensive evidence of undergraduate students’ using hedging in their skripsi-s. Hopefully, this can be used as needs analysis about students’ rhetorical skill in written language.
2. In terms of interpersonal metadiscourse, this study clarifies what happen to the use of hedging in academic writing context so that the use of hedging as linguistic devices is more and more realized.
1.4 The scope of study

This study does not widely concern all aspects of hedging in academic writing context. This study touches only some types of hedging and identification of its pragmatic use. The strategy of hedging and semantic exploration is conducted explicitly particularly in necessary condition of explaining and describing hedging based on its surface features and polypragmatic model.

In terms of writing genre, this study concerns only academic writing. However, regarding some researches done by Vartalla (2001) and Taweel, Saidat, Hussein and Saidat (2011) concerning the use of hedging in certain register on politics, economics, medicine and technology, this kind of study focuses on academic writing in applied linguistics context. This study was conducted particularly in English education major. In this academic context, the tendency of undergraduate students’ using hedging in their academic writing becomes the main quest of this study. Systematically, the main body parts of skripsi-s as academic writing in the research site are typically divided into titles, acknowledgment, abstract, introduction, literature review, methodology, findings, discussion/analysis and conclusion. The body parts analyzed in this study are only findings and discussions. They are integrated in chapter 4. The reason of choosing this chapter 4 is based on Hyland’s (1997) and Vartalla’s (2001) who found that hedging are used more frequently in result or discussion sections. It is reasonable since the argumentation is generated from these sections.

1.5 Clarification of terms

Academic writing:
Although there is no explicit definition of academic writing, it refers to writing in academic context and using academic language for the sake of leaving the academy. This writing can be identified through its purposes, namely, documenting and communicating scientific knowledge, research process and research outcomes (Monipally and Pawar, 2010). In the effort of defining academic writing, Murray (2009) emphasizes the conventions of publishing paper in particular discipline. It explains that every academy (discipline) has probably
variation of rules that have to be subjected by those who want to leave the academy.

**Skripsi:**

*Skripsi* in this study refers to scientific composition/writing that has to be written by students as requisite for completing academic education (Kamus Bahasa Indonesia, 2008), usually for undergraduate degree, meanwhile thesis is for graduate degree. In this study, skripsi is the realization of academic writing (Sudjana, 2004). In the beginning, terminology skripsi in Indonesian context refers to writing based on observations, reviewing some literatures and strict methodology as procedure for examining an issue. The differences of skripsi, thesis and dissertation lay in the depth of examination and explanation, and usually skripsi is for undergraduate students meanwhile thesis and dissertation are for graduate students (Suryadi, 1980). In terms of the interpretation of the depth of examination, Nasution and Thomas (2010) warn that it is not about the quantity of the writing but how effective the writing explains the issue. In this study, the skripsi-s used as data sampling are from English language education major of the same university.

**Hedging:**

Hedging or hedges in this study tends to use Hyland’s (1997) definition of hedging, namely, the process, conventionally admitted as academic style, whereby the author reduces the strength of statement. In its use, hedging is realized as rhetorical devices. The function of hedging so as to mitigate the truthfulness of statement is one of reason why Hallidayan includes hedging into epistemic modality, the area of meaning that lies between *yes* or *no*. However, hedging cannot be confused with *booster/intensifier* that has similar ability to modify the modality of statement. Fraser (2010) includes this booster as reinforcement, and differentiates between reinforcement and hedging. Hedging reduces the
truthfulness of statement, while booster/intensifier increases the grade of truthfulness of statement.

**Surface Features of Hedging:**

Surface features exist for the sake of quantification of hedging, practical efforts to identify hedging phenomena are needed. Hedging as pragmatic phenomenon cannot be easily identified without comprehensive judgment and recursive interpretation. This identification of hedging was designed at the first place by Hyland (1997). Those surface features of hedging are lexical and non-lexical items that frequently generate hedged expression. Some classification of this surface features of hedging were developed by Vartalla (2001). Therefore, considering those two experts, the surface features of hedging becomes primary issue in this study.

**Polypragmatic Models of Hedging:**

From the consideration that the use of hedging in research writing setting should regard the writer, the expected reader and the content of the research writing, Polypragmatic models of hedging emerge by considering those three aspects. Hedging is considered to be polypragmatic because hedging as language device often has different semantic interpretation and convey a range of meanings for particular users in particular contexts (Hyland, 1997). In line with Halliday’s (1994) belief above that the speaker, the interlocutor and the situation, at once, affect how language should be interpreted.

**1.6 Thesis organization**

This thesis is presented in five chapters. Chapter I presents introductory elaboration of the stance on which the study was conducted and focus of this study by formulation of research questions their clarification.
The chapter II presents theoretical framework of this study used to interpret the data. It begins from description of academic writing as the setting of this study. The description of academic writing also includes particular characteristics of academic writing that becomes the data source. More specifically, one aspect in academic writing is taken for the focus of this study. This study concerns one of metadiscourses strategies, namely, hedging. Finally, the description of hedging in academic writing is also presented to expose some theories to put into the consideration when interpreting data.

The chapter III explains how the research is conducted from the beginning to the end. The explanation of design of research is presented in order to see how the research problems and the way to interpret it are matched. The data collection follows the explanation of research design is presented to see that data source and the way to gain the data are appropriate as it is related to the focus of this study. In the end, step by step analysis is presented to see how the data are interpreted.

In the chapter IV, answering two research questions of this study that become the guideline for this chapter. The first sub-chapter is to find out distributional information of hedging uses in skripsi-s employing quantitative and qualitative research method. The second sub-chapter is about the polypragmatic models of hedging uses in research reporting.

Chapter V presents the essential points that this study has found through analyzing skripsi-s as discourses. In addition, the recommendations that are realized from the interpretation of data are also presented so that the significance of this study in language education context is visible and the possibility for further research can be attempted.