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'Hedges' and Media Ethics: A Case in Indonesian Newspaper

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Abstract

This paper attempts to reveal the use of 'hedges' as the realization of media ethics on newspaper. Hedges, expressing 'grey' meaning, are widely used by the journalists to convey certain information related to ethics. According to ethics, sensitive case associated with 'ethnicity', 'race', 'religion', and 'social group' should be presented in prudent way to avoid conflict which might appear among parties involved in the news. Accordingly, such information might not clearly and explicitly expressed. This paper will discuss the relationship between hedges realized in impersonating and protecting participants and journalistic ethics codes. This is a case study of 'hedges' employed in the editorial of *Solopos*, local Indonesian newspaper published in Surakarta.

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Keywords: 'Hedges'; media ethics; journalism; newspaper

1. Introduction

'Hedge' is a term commonly used in economics to mean a method to anticipate risk that might happen due to the possible price changes (Winardi, 1989). Literally, the meanings of 'hedges' are 'barrier, limit, or defense' (Cabanes, 2007). There are similarities of underlying meaning of hedges used in economics and in linguistics. Watson and Hill (1997) state that 'hedges are linguistic forms which express the speaker's certainty or uncertainty about the proposition under discussion. As a matter of fact, the term 'hedges' in linguistics was firstly proposed by Lakoff (1972), which means words whose job is to make things more or less fuzzy. Swan, Deumert, Lilis, and Mesthrie (2004) suggest that *'a hedge or hedging involves the use of words or phrases that express some degree of*

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