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Gender-Based Pragmatic Study of Hedging Devices in Selected Political News Interview of Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton

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Abstract

This research aimed to identify the linguistic items which act as hedges in political news interviews in relation to politicians' gender, as well as to examine the pragmatic functions of these devices. Two transcripts of political news interviews of Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump, randomly selected from CNN official website (see Appendix), were analyzed adopting Salager-Meyer's (1997) taxonomy. The study revealed that the frequent used of hedging devices in the two interviews are modal auxiliaries, if clause, and introductory phrase. The most frequently used hedging device subcategory are the modal auxiliary "can", "will", "would", and "should". Whilst the used introductory phrase are "I think", "I believe", "I guess", "as I said", and "my understanding is that..". The findings suggest that these hedging devices fulfill several pragmatic functions. Hedging devices is used by the two politicians to express indirectness, politeness, lack of commitment and probability. In relation to gender, the findings also reveal that the spread of hedging of the two politicians are similar

Keywords: Hedging Devices, Gender, Pragmatic Functions, Political News Interview..

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1. Introduction

Political language plays a pivotal role in politics. The role of language in politics was emphasized by Plato and Aristotle (Chilton and Schäffner, 2002: 1). Nowadays, various academic fields such as linguistics, sociolinguistics, pragmatics, politics, political communication, critical discourse, psycholinguistics, and linguistic anthropology are concerned with the study of political language (Obeng, 2002: 5).

Politicians can achieve their own political aims, that is, constraining the mass action-environment through physical coercion. However, there is another means, which is more tactful, hence strategic to this end: using political rhetoric to persuade people to act in the way they (politicians) want.

Since "power can only be exercised in social relations" (Garcia- Pastor, 2008: 105) and language has an indispensable role in maintaining these relations, politicians manipulate language to shape people's thoughts. Their language consists largely of

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euphemism and fuzziness. It is "designed to make lies sound truthful and murder respectable and to give an appearance of solidity to pure wind" (Orwell, 1946: 157).

The unfixed feature of political language can be attributed to hedges since they are said to be associated with conveying purposive vagueness (e.g. Dubois, 1987; Lewin, 2004; Powell, 1985; Salager-Meyer, 2000). Downtoners help the addresser to increase the degree of detachment to the value of a proposition (Hyland, 1998). This way hedges enable the speaker to express fuzziness the exigencies of which, according to Markkanan and Schröder (1997), can be politeness, protection, or politics. To hedge is to behave diplomatically and the behavior which protects the face is described as tactful or diplomatic (Bloor & Bloor, 2007). Thus, the concepts of political rhetoric, hedging, and face are interrelated.

Political interviews are part of political discourse. A political interview is a face to face interpersonal role situation in which the interviewer asks a politician questions designed to obtain answers. The receivers of the politicians' answers are not only the interviewers who are present at the scene but the general public who are being represented by their leaders (Bhatia, 2006). Bhatia considers political TV interviews as a kind of dyadic conversation in an institutionalized context, where the interviewer's control over the selection and initiation of topics, turn taking, and so on is more than that of the interviewee's. This definition assigns political TV interviews greater spontaneity than other televised political genres. The content of interviews gets created through the generative process of interaction between interviewers and interviewees (Clayman & Heritage, 2002). This interactional process partly shapes the interviewers' as well as the interviewees' public image.

Many recent researches have been conducted on hedging devices in political discourse. Rabab'ah *et.al* investigated hedging devices in political speeches by king Abdullah II of Jordan (2015). The findings found that modal auxiliary "can" is the most frequently used. The findings also reveal that hedging devices are used to express indirectness, politeness, lack of commitment and probability. Arbawi (2017), on the other hand, discusses about indirectness in political interview. In this research, not only hedging devices is discussed but also other strategies of indirectness. The findings reveal that in most cases, political figures use indirectness strategies for politeness aims.

However, in hedging use, gender seems to take a part on how people express it. As Lakoff (1973:90) asserts that in order to show their femininity, women tend to adopt an unassertive style of communication. That is, they must learn to denude their statements to agree upon the validity of hedging devices in strengthening the arguments by weakening the claims force. He adds: "women's speech lacks authority."

Considering this phenomena, the researcher is interested to investigate the relation between gender differences and the use of hedging devices in political news interview. The researcher will investigate how politicians response to the questions from interviewer.

2. Some Related Studies

There are some previous studies which analyzed political interview as the object of study. First, Arbawi (2017) has investigated four selected interviews with Obama and David Cameron that were taken from CBC, BBC, NBC and public radio NPR. The researcher focused on indirectness used by politicians in respond to interviewer questions. This study is a pragmatics analysis using face and politeness theory by Brown and Levinson and Grice's cooperative principles. The findings in this research reveal that in

most cases, political figures use indirectness for politeness aim. However, they may employ it for various pragmatic functions other than politeness. The findings also reveal that political figures commonly fail to follow the four maxims to achieve a variety of pragmatic advantages.

Secondly, Al-Dulemi et.al (2015) conducted a study with the title a pragmatic study of strategic maneuvering in selected political interview. The researcher investigated pragmatic strategies like initiating stage, response stage, presentational devices and evaluation stage in political interviews of Cheney and Barack Obama. In initiating stage, the researcher focuses on speech acts, cooperative principle, hedges, conversational implicature and politeness. Meanwhile, for presentational devices, he focuses on pragma-rhetorical tropes; metaphor, simile, irony, rhetorical question, overstatement, and understatement. The research reveals that by using hedges of the cooperative principles, the interviewees can convince the audience that they are observing what they are saying. They also evade responsibility of the issues that may put them in a negative characterizations, mostly by using the different kinds of implicatures.

Lastly, Mudhafar (2014) also conducted a study analyzing political interview of David Cameron. It is a pragmatics study. The researcher investigated hedging expressions related to Grice's cooperative maxims. It is a descriptive qualitative study using Fraser and Salager-Meyer's taxonomy of hedging. The findings reveal that David Cameron used some hedging maxims to present the statement as an absolute truth; absolutely, certainly, actually, and completely. He also use hedging expressions like I think, I believe, I don't think, I am not sure to weakening the illocutionary force of the statements and show the speakers' wishes to decline the responsibility for the truth value of the statements. Meanwhile, the hedging expressions like you know obviously are used to do assertion in his statements.

In the other research, Rabab'ah conducted a research on hedging devices in the speeches of king Abdullah II of Jordan. In this study, using Salager-Meyer's hedging taxonomy (1994), the researchers identified the linguistics items which act as hedges in the speeches of king Abdullah II of Jordan and examined the pragmatic functions of the devices. This study reveals that most frequently used hedging device is the modal auxiliary "can". The findings suggest that these hedging devices fulfill several pragmatics functions. These findings contribute to understanding that speaking a second language, neither affects the types of hedging devices nor the functions these devices perform. It also reveals that hedging hedging devices is used to express indirectness, politeness, lack of commitment and probability.

In the other domain, Rahmawati (2016) conducted a research on hedging devices used in "Room for Debate" in New York Times online website. In this research, the researcher examined the types and frequencies of hedging devices used in "Room for Debate" posted in New York Times online website. The researcher examined 150 opinion articles between 2012-2015 including Business, Economy, Politics, Environment, Health and Technology. Hyland taxonomy of hedging was used in analyzing. The findings reveal that modal auxiliary is the most used (42,2%) and the least used is epistemic noun (1%). Hedging in this website has three functions: accuracy-oriented hedge; help writer to present the proposition or statement with greater precision, writer-oriented hedge; reducing the writer's commitment to statement, and avoid personal responsibility for propositional truth. The reader-oriented hedge allows the writer to invite the reader's involvement and personalize the information in the proposition.

In short, although these previous studies are similar to this research on the term of theoretical framework, this study investigates the relation between hedging use and gender. Therefore, this research is expected to add more contribution to the knowledge of hedging use, especially in political interview.

3. The Present Study

3.1 Objectives of the Study

Language plays a crucial role in political discourse since politicians use this valuable tool in a way that enables them to persuade people, to shape other's thought and to achieve certain political goals. In particular, political discourse depends heavily on fuzziness and hedging devices, such as *I think, probably, possible, I believe, sort of, may, can*, etc. The primary concern of this study is to investigate the use of hedging devices in political discourse in relation to gender variable. More specifically, the study aims to find answers to the following questions:

1. How do male and female politicians use hedging devices in political news interview?
2. To what extent male and female politicians are different in the use of hedging devices in political news interview?

3.2 Taxonomy of Hedging Words

Two transcript of political news interviews with Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump were randomly selected, and downloaded on December 17th, 2018 from the official website of CNN (for more, see the Appendix). The selected political news interviews are the interviews with Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump during 2016 presidential election campaign. After obtaining the selected transcript, the researcher identified and classified the hedging expressions found in the interviews' text based on the hedging taxonomy by Salager-Meyer (1997). The data were then analyzed to arrive to the conclusion regarding the patterns of hedging expressed by the two politicians and the pragmatic functions. This research is a qualitative research. Qualitatively, the researchers presented an explanation of how and why such hedging devices are used. The adopted model for analysis was Salager-Meyer's, presented in Table 1. This model was adopted because it includes the most widely used hedging categories expected to be found extensively in political speeches. This model presents hedges in relation to their grammatical categories as shown below.

Table 1. Salager-Meyer's Taxonomy of Hedging Words

No	Taxonomy of Hedging Words	Remarks
1	Modal auxiliary verbs	<i>may, might, can, could, would, should</i>
2	Modal lexical verbs	<i>seem, appear, believe, suggest, assume, indicate</i>
3	Adjectival, adverbial and nominal modal phrases:	a) Adjectival modal phrases; b) Nominal modal phrase: c) Adverbial phrase:
		<i>possible, probable, un/likely</i>
		<i>assumption, claim, possibility, estimate</i>
		<i>perhaps, possibly, probably, likely, presumably</i>
4	Approximators of degree	<i>approximately, roughly, about, often, generally, quantity,</i>

		<i>frequency and time. usually</i>	
5	Introductory phrases	<i>I believe, to our knowledge, it is our view that, we feel that</i>	
6	If clauses	<i>If true, if anything</i>	
7	Compound hedges;	<i>it may suggest</i>	a) Double hedges
		<i>it seems reasonable to assume that</i>	b) Treble hedges
		<i>It would seem somewhat unlikely that..</i>	c) Quadruple hedges

4. Discussion

4.1. Hedging devices in Political news interview with Hillary Clinton

4.1.1. Modal Auxiliary Verbs:

- a CLINTON: *Oh, Anderson, it reminds me of that great saying that Maya Angelou had that when someone shows you who they are, believe them the first time. And Donald Trump has shown us who he is. And **we ought to believe** him. He is taking a hate movement mainstream. He's brought it into his campaign. He is bringing it to our communities and our country*

In the datum above, the interviewer ask the response of Hillary Clinton about Triumph's comment on her policies. Triumph mentioned that Hillary's policies are bigoted or narrow minded policies. This remark seems to be threatening for Hillary Clinton. It was then responded by firstly referring to great saying of Maya Angelou to imply Triumph's attitude.

In the datum, compound hedges "**ought to believe**" is used. **Ought to** is a modal auxiliary verb used to refer obligation and it is compounded with modal lexical verb **believe**. The obligation function of this modal is reduced by the use of pronoun **we**. The use of pronoun **we** in the datum above, aims to avoid speaker's self-positioning as well as persuasion intent.

- b *Now obviously **if I am president, there will be** some unique circumstances and that's why the foundation has laid out additional..*

In the above datum, Hillary Clinton uses **if clause** and modal auxiliary **will** to express future possibility if she is elected.

- c *And, **you know**, someone has questioned the citizenship of the first African-American president who has courted white supremacists, who's been sued for housing discrimination against communities of color, who has attacked a judge for his Mexican heritage and promised a mass deportation force, is someone who is, **you know**, very much peddling bigotry and prejudice and paranoia. I **will** have more to say about this tomorrow when I give a speech in Reno.*
- d *And in 2009, they took steps that went above and beyond all legal requirements and, indeed, all standard requirements followed by every other charitable organization, voluntarily disclosing donors, significantly reducing sources of funding, even to the point of, **you***

know, of those funding being involved in providing medication to treat HIV/AIDS

In the data, verb phrase “**you know**” is used in the initial and middle position. It is used to disclaim assumption that the point of the speaker’s assertion is to inform the hearer.

- e CLINTON: *Well, look, I have the utmost respect for Secretary Powell. And he was incredibly gracious and helpful after I was nominated and before I took the job. I appreciated the time he took when I was preparing to become secretary. And I valued his advice. I'm not **going to** relitigate in public my private conversations with him.*

In the above datum, Hillary uses *not + modal auxiliary “going to”* to show the degree of certainty of the proposition to not happen. Modal auxiliary “going to” in that datum refers to a planned action.

f	<i>And what I've learned is that when I try to explain what happened it can sound like I'm trying to excuse what I did. And there are no excuses.</i>
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In the above datum, modal auxiliary “**can**” refers to possibility. Hillary uses modal “**can**” to describe that her explanation is possible to sound like she is making excuses for what she did. *No wild political attacks by Donald Trump is **going to** change that.*

Similar to previous datum of modal “**going to**”, Hillary uses modal auxiliary “**going to**” to assert future certainty. She argues that Donald Trump’s political movements are not going to fail her movements.

- g *I've been asked many, many questions in the past year about e-mails. **I want** people to know that the decision to have a single e-mail account was mine. I take responsibility for it. I've apologized for it. **I would certainly** do differently **if I could**.*

In the datum above, Hillary uses modal auxiliary “**would**” and “**could**” to state past conditional statement.

- h *But obviously, I'm grateful the justice department concluded there was no basis to pursue this matter further. And, **I believe**, the public **will be** and is considering my full record and experience as they consider their choice for president.*
- i *But **I think**, we **need to** look at the entire context. **We need to believe** him when he bullies and threatens to throw out every immigrant in the country*
- j *So I'm **going to** continue talking with the press and answering questions and many different*

In the data above (i, j, k), Hillary uses modal auxiliary “will”, “need to” and “to be going to” to express future possibility.

4.1.2. Introductory Phrases

- k CLINTON: *Well, first, what Trump has said is ridiculous. My work as secretary of state was not influenced by the outside forces. I made policy decisions based on **what I thought** was right that keep Americans safe and to protect U.S. interests abroad..*

- l *And in fact the State Department has said itself that there is no evidence of any kind of impropriety at all. Now, **I think** it's important to recognize that the foundation which does do life-saving work, and is so well-respected here in our country and around the world has been doing this work for a number of years.*
- m *And **I think** that the announcements that the foundation has made really reflect its desire to continue as much of its important work as possible, but to do it in a way that provide great disclosure. And although, none of this is legally required, the steps go further than the policies that were in place when I was secretary of state.*
- o *And it's important to remember, Anderson, the foundation is a charity. Neither my husband nor I have ever drawn a salary from it. You know more about the foundation than you know about anything concerning Donald Trump's wealth, his business, his tax returns. **I think** it's quite remarkable. His refusal to release his tax returns is even more ...*

In the data above, the use of introductory phrase “**I think**” is in the initial position. The phrase is used to weaken the illocutionary force of the statements that are used and indicates that Hillary Clinton does not take responsibility towards the truth of her utterance.

- p ***Well**, what we did when I was secretary of state, **as I said**, went above and beyond anything that was required, anything that any charitable organization has to do.*

In the datum above (p), phrase “**as I said**” is used as an introductory phrase. Hillary uses the phrase to stress her commitment towards the truth of her previous statement.

- q *No, no. And, **you know, look**, Anderson, **I know** there's a lot of smoke and there's no fire. This A.P. report, put it in context, this excludes **nearly 2,000 meetings** I had with world leaders, with countless other meetings with U.S. government officials when I was secretary of state. It looked at a small portion of my time. And it draws a **conclusion** and made a **suggestion** that my meetings with people like the late great Elie Wiesel or Melinda Gates or the Nobel Prize winner Muhammad Yunus were **somehow** due to connections with the foundation instead of their status as highly respected global leaders. That is absurd. These are people I was proud to meet with, to any secretary of state would have been proud to meet with, to hear about their work and their insights.*

In the datum above, Hillary uses the phrase “**I know**” as an introductory phrase in stating her statement. In the datum, she also uses the noun forms **conclusion** and **suggestion** to avoid self-positioning or to make the statement to sound more objective or certain. Furthermore, the use of adverb **somehow** is used to mitigate the claim that her meetings with Elie Wiesel, Melinda Gates and the Nobel Prize winner Muhammad Yunus due to their connection to the foundation instead of their high status.

- r ***Well, you know, my understanding is that** the comment you just referred to was the third different position he took yesterday on immigration.*

In above datum (r), Hillary uses the introductory phrase “**my understanding is that**” to begin her claim. She claims that to refer to interviewer’s question about Donald Trump’s plan to allow some illegal immigrants to remain in the country. She calls that it is an inconsistency of Donald Trump’s position on immigration issue. By using this phrase, she tries to reduce the illocutionary effect of the statement towards the hearer and to show her own certainty about her own statement as well. Through this phrase, she then tries to persuade public’s opinion. Linguistic particle challenge “**you know**” in the datum above shows Hillary’s confidence on her claim.

- s *Somebody has told him, **I guess**, the latest people that he is consulting, how damaging his statements have been, how terrible his deportation plan is, how offensive his views on immigrants have been from the very first day of his campaign. So, he’s trying to do, **you know**, kind of a shuffle here.*

In the datum (s), the phrase “I guess” is an epistemic modal verb that refers to Hillary uncertainty about the claim. Furthermore, the linguistic particle challenge “you know” is also used and put in the middle position between two phrases. In This datum, the linguistic particle “**you know**” is used by Hillary to mitigate negative politeness function as she makes a claim about Donald Trump’s movement in immigration issue.

- t *And, certainly, when he changes his position three times in one day, it sends a message that it’s just a desperate effort to try to land somewhere that isn’t as, **you know**, devastating to his campaign as his comments and his positions have been up until now.*

The same thing in this datum (t), the particle “**you know**” is also used to mitigate negative politeness function over the claim Hillary makes about Trump.

- u *Well, Anderson, I’m talking to you right now. And I’ve given, **I think**, way in excess of 300 interviews this year. So I’m going to continue talking with the press and answering questions and many different..*

In this datum, the phrase “**I think**” is an epistemic modal refers to Hillary’s certainty that she has done a lot of interviews with the press in that year.

- v *Well, **you know**, I mean, I’ve got a lot that I have been sharing with the press, talking to the press as I’m doing with you right now. So, **you know**, stay tuned, there’ll be a lot of different opportunities for me to talk to the press as well as continuing to talk to the American public.*

In the data above, the linguistic particle “**you know**” is used in the initial position. Based on the context above, the initial position of particle “**you know**” refers to confidence of the speaker.

4.2 Hedging in Political News Interview with Donald Trump

4.2.1 Modal Auxiliary Verb and Introductory Phrase

- a ***I think** they want strength. **I think** they want military. **I think** they want to take care of vets. **I think** they hate Obamacare. **But I would say ultimately** it’s about jobs and the economy.*

In the above datum, “**I think**” is used repeatedly and is put in the initial position. In this datum, Donald Trump use the phrase to weaken the force of illocutionary effect of the statements that are used and indicates that he does not take responsibility towards the

truth of his utterance. In the datum, Donald Trump also uses modal auxiliary “**would**” in a past form to state his opinion.

- b *And **you know**, Michigan has been stripped. You look at those empty factories all over the place. And nobody hits that's message better than me. **I'm going** to take care of it. **I'm going** to stop it. **I'm going** to stop the craziness that is going on.*
- c *If you look at what's happening, how -- even today, I mean, we're just shipping company after company after company is leaving this country and leaving jobs behind. And **I'm going to** get it stopped.*
- d *And I thought he said he was going to drop out if he lost Michigan. I **guess** he's not going to do that. So I **think we are going to** do very well in Ohio. I know Ohio very well. I have many, many friends.*
- e *Well, I **think if** I win Ohio and **if** I win Florida, pretty much, you're **going to** be pretty much assured of doing that.*

In the data above, Trump uses modal auxiliary “**going to**” to state his future plans. The use of this modal auxiliary shows his certainty for his plans. In datum (e), “**if clause**” is used to mitigate his claim about future expectation. Furthermore, in datum (d), Donald Trump uses the phrase “**I guess**” when he gives his opinion about another rival’s plan. This phrase shows his lack of certainty about the claim.

- f *I **think** so, yes. I really **think so**. I don't see the convention going that route. I see **probably** getting the delegates. **You know**, it is like the fighters. That's the ultimate way of doing it. You knock them out. **If** you knock them out, nothing **can** happen*

In the datum above, the use of the phrase “**I think**” has an epistemic modal function. It refers to Trump’s certainty. It reveals Trump’s certainty about the campaign situation.

- g *I **think** this. **If** you go to the convention and because of some artificial number that they said, **if** you go to the convention and you are leading by a lot of delegates, I **think** you **should** get the nomination. And that **will** be me. **I'll** have far more delegates. Now, whether I get to that artificial number, I don't know, but I **think** I **will**.*

In the data above (g), the phrase “**I think**” refers to tentative function. Similar to the phrase “**I think you should..**” On the other hand, the phrase “**I think I will**” refers to Trump’s certainty.

- h *Well, I **think** it's mortally wounded. I **do think** it is mortally wounded. Marco had a very rough night. He had no delegates. He got nothing. And that was a very, very bad night. And, **you know**, when people have hit me, **if** you watch, and it's been the story of my life, (INAUDIBLE), but everybody that's hit me has gone down. They all came at me. Perry came at me. I can go through Lindsey Graham came at me. Bush came at me. Every one of them came at me. And every one of them that's come at me has gone down.*

In the datum above (h), the phrase “**I think**” refers to speaker’s certainty. The linguistic particle “**you know**” is used in the initial position. It refers to Trump’s confidence towards his claim that the rivals who hit him have gone down. This claim is then mitigated by the use of **if clause**.

- i *It turned out to. I didn't know it would. I mean, I **think** I hit him very*

hard. I **probably** hit him much harder. But **maybe** for me it's more natural. It wasn't natural for him. And took him off his game. Amazing, I've never seen anything like it. And he went from being, **you know**, from doing pretty good to now he is at the bottom of the pack

In the datum above (i), the phrase "**I think**" refers to Trump's certainty. Based on the context, the adverb "**probably**" and "**maybe**" is used to mitigate his claim. Furthermore, the linguistic particle "**you know**" is used to mitigate the effect of negative politeness function.

j No, no, I'll tell you what. I'm a conservative person. **I don't think** the labels matter. **You know** they say he is not -- Jeb Bush used to say he is not a conservative, OK. He is not a conservative. I say, what difference does it make? I mean, who cares? I have very conservative views. But one view that **probably** isn't considered conservative, but is it smart trade. I want smart trade.

In the above datum (j), the phrase "**I don't think**" is used to refer to Trump's certainty about the claim. Furthermore, the particle "**you know**" in the initial position refers to Trump's confidence about his claim. The use of adverb "**probably**" reverts to mitigate his assumption about public's opinion on his conservative political view.

k **I think so. I think if I win those two, I think** it's over. **I thought** Kasich said after Michigan he was going to drop out, to be honest with you. He was saying that he will win Michigan, he will win it easily. And he –

l **Well**, even Paul O'Neill of the Yankees endorsed me. He is from Ohio. Great guy. And he endorsed me last night at the press conference. I think **I'll win** Ohio, yes. **And I think - I mean, we just** have better policies. The country is sick and tired of what they are seeing. The country is sick and tired of these politicians that's talk and to all talk, no action. And they are all tired of it, Anderson.

In the data above (k), (l), the phrase "**I think**" is used to show Trump's certainty about his claim.

m **Well**, then you have to fight it out. But, **you know**, it is really unfair. Let's say you get there and are a few short but you have 1200, let's say, and somebody else had 500 or 600. Because I'm way ahead and in all fairness to Ted, he is the only one who beats me, but he doesn't say I beat him two or three times for every time he wins one. And we won the important ones. We won the big ones and we won last night. I mean, last night was a romp.

n So, look. Ted, the problem with Ted is he walks in with the viable, hauls up the viable. **You know**, I call him lying Ted.

In the two data above (m),(n), particle linguistic "**you know**" is used in the initial position. Based on the context, that particle is used to show Trump's confidence about his claim.

o No, Ted. I call him lying Ted. He is lying Ted. And **you know**, that's his name. **And I think frankly that** name has stuck because the evangelicals are on my side. They don't like liars. Evangelicals do not like liars.

- p** *I think* he tried to be Don Rickles, **frankly**. He wanted to be Don Rickles and he's not Don Rickles. And it took me by surprise. I mean, I'm standing at one of the debates and all of a sudden, he got nasty. He was very nasty.
- q** *I think so*. He wasn't only joking. I mean, he was insulting and, **you know**, made up insults, a nasty insults
- r** **OK. Well, I think** the biggest story in all of politics, all over the world right now -- I've been on the cover of "Time" magazine four times in the last short number of months - I mean, because of what's happening.

In the data above (o),(p),(q),(r), the phrase "***I think***" is used to show Trump's certainty on his claim. Meanwhile, the particle "***you know***" in the datum (q) is used to mitigate the effect of negative politeness function, in which different to the datum (o). In datum (o), the initial position of particle "you know" refers to the confidence of the speaker.

5. Discussion

The result of this research shows that both male and female use similar kind of hedging in their statements. The modal verbs used in this result is modal auxiliary "***to be (going to)***", ***will, would, can and could*** and introductory phrase such as ***I believe, I think, I guess, as I said, my understanding is.. etc.*** There is also linguistic particle "***you know***" that often use by both politicians. The particle "***you know***" occurs in two positions in their statements; in the initial and in the middle position. Holmes (1985) finds that there are three functions of this particle; to convey uncertainty, to mitigate negative politeness function and to convey confidence. Based on the data, the initial position of this particle shows confidence of the politicians about their statement whilst the middle position of this particle shows mitigation of negative politeness function of negative politeness function.

The introductory phrase "***I think***" is used mostly by the two politicians in their statements. The initial position of this phrase reveals certainty of the politicians about their statement. This phrase is also used to reduce the illocutionary force of politicians' statements for the hearer. Holmes (1985) in her paper, divides contrasted function of the phrase "***I think***". There are tentative function (expressing uncertainty, softener expressing politeness), and deliberative function (expressing certainty and reassurance).

Based on the data, the spread of these hedging devices is similar. Therefore, it seems contradict the Lakoff's finding that women use more hedges than men do. This is probably due to the power and background of the two politicians and the context of the interview. The political interviewees in this research are presidential candidates. In that case, the candidates appear to be more certain in their statements.

6. Conclusion

From the findings, it can be concluded that modal auxiliary and introductory phrases are frequently used by the male and female politicians. The frequent use of modal auxiliary by the politicians is *to be (going to)*, *will, would, can and could* and the most used introductory phrases are *I think, I believe, I guess, as I said and you know*. The phrase *I think, I believe* in the initial position shows the certainty of the speaker whilst in the middle position shows uncertainty. The use of *you know*, on the other hand, shows confidence if it is put in initial position and shows mitigation of negative politeness if it is put in the middle position.

Based on the data, the hedging devices are used for politeness aims, indirectness, probability and lack of commitment and to show certainty/ politicians' confidence. Although, there is not different in the spread of hedging devices in both of the politicians' statements. This is probably due to the power and background of the two politicians.

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