Grammatical and Functional Hedges Devices in Joe Biden's Speech

Nagham Ali Hassan

Department of Environmental Engineering, College of Engineering, University of Baghdad, Iraq

nagham.ali@coeng.uobaghdad.edu.iq

Abstract

The concept "hedging" is one of the most objective characteristics of human's language which makes language flexible and reliable, then it helps to keep communication on. The main objective of this paper is to study the use of hedges tools in political speech. More precisely, the paper aims to answer the following questions: First, what are the most well-known consulted hedges tools in the speech of Joe Biden, the president of America, in the interview done by ABC on (19th /8/2021) retrieved on (1st /10/2023). Second, what are the functions and the linguistic categories that work as hedging devices in his speech? Third, the reasons of using hedges devices. The researcher will adopt an eclectic model represented by Crompton (1997), Salager-Meyer (2000) and Fraser (2010) for grammatical devices and Prince et al's (1982) model for functional devices. The study reveals that the most frequently used hedges devices in Joe Biden's speech are negation and adaptor devices. The findings suggest that these hedges devices fulfill several functions as: First, soften speech by revealing some sort of uncertainty; Second, showing absence of full commitment; Third, looking for aid and believe from the hearers and showing politeness; and finally, keeping away from face-to-face negative remarks concerning the discussed topic.

Keywords: Communicative value, Direct criticism, Fuzzy concepts, Hedges, Political interviews, Pragmatic functions

أدوات التحوط النحوية والوظيفية في خطاب بايدن

نغم علي حسن ⓘ

قسم الهندسة البيئية / كلية الهندسة /جامعة بغداد /العراق

nagham.ali@coeng.uobaghdad.edu.iq

المستخلص :

يعد مفهوم "التحوط" من أهم الخصائص الموضوعية للغة الإنسان، فهو يجعل اللغة مرنة وموثوقة، مما يساعد على استمرار التواصل. الهدف الرئيسي من هذا البحث هو دراسة استخدام أدوات التحوط في الخطاب السياسي. وبتعبير أدق تهدف الدراسة إلى الإجابة عن الأسئلة التالية: أولا، ما هي أشهر أدوات التحوط التي تم الرجوع إليها في خطاب جو بايدن رئيس أمريكا في المقابلة التي أجرتها قناة ABC بتاريخ (١٩/٨/٢٠٢١) تم استرجاعه بتاريخ (١/١٠/٢٠٢٣). ثانياً، ما هي الوظائف والمصنفات اللغوية التي تعمل كأدوات تحوط في كلامه؟ ثالثاً: أسباب استخدام أجهزة التحوط. وستتبنى الباحثة النموذج الانتقائي المتمثل في كرومبتون (١٩٩٧) وسالجر ماير (٢٠٠٠) وفريزر (٢٠١٠) للأجهزة النحوية ونموذج برينس وآخرون (١٩٨٢) للأجهزة الوظيفية. وتكشف الدراسة أن أدوات التحوط الأكثر استخداما في خطاب جو بايدن هي أجهزة النفي وادوات اخرى. تشير النتائج إلى أن أدوات التحوط هذه تؤدي عدة وظائف: أولاً،مرونة الكلام من خلال الكشف عن نوع من عدم اليقين؛ ثانياً، إظهار عدم الالتزام الكامل؛ ثالثاً: طلب المعونة والتصديق من السامعين واظهار التأدب؛ وأخيرًا، الابتعاد عن التصريحات السلبية وجهًا لوجه فيما يتعلق بالموضوع المطروح.

الكلمات المفتاحية: القيمة التواصلية، النقد المباشر، المفاهيم الغامضة، التحوطات، المقابلات السياسية، الوظائف التداولية

1. Introduction

The current paper tackles a very important topic faced so many people as common or political people as presidents. The president of America Joe Biden– in this research – deals with language in different ways. He tries to be flexible, moderate and convincing. He uses hedging devices in different functional aspects. He conveys intentions in clear way in certain instances or makes them less sever. He conveys politeness in straight way. He tries to keep away from vagueness in some instances and alluding to full commitment in other instances.

The main objective of this paper is to follow the use of hedging tools in political speech to answer the following questions: First, what are the most commonly used hedges devices in the speech of Joe Biden, the American president, in his speech delivered on (19th /8/2021). Second, what are the functions and the linguistic categories that work as hedging devices in his speech? Third, the reasons behind using hedges devices.

The paper displays hedges devices and related topics. The model is an eclectic model based on Crompton (1997), Salager-Meyer (2000) and Fraser (2010) for grammatical categories from one side and Price et al's (1982) model for functional devices from the other side. In the analysis, these hedges devices will be shown and statistical analysis of these devices is listed in a table and revealed throughout diagrams. Finally, justifications of the occurrence of the devices are presented. The paper ends with the conclusions.

The study, therefore, focuses on observing and analyzing the types, function and meaning of Hedging. This will be shown in the finding and discussion section. The readers will be acquainted how these devices work and affect them in one hand and the real intention behind these devices from the other hand.

2. Theoretical Framework

This part falls in the following items:

2.1 History of Hedges Devices:

Hedges devices are rhetorical strategies in which the consulted utterances (or sounds) are worked to soften the force of an addresser's speech in order to enable it to be more acceptable to the hearer choosing a particular pattern, or consulting certain linguistic device in the utterances (Nikula, 1997 as cited in Hassan & Said, 2020, p. 61). In the 1970s, hedging was chiefly thought as a "word type". Zadeh (as cited in Yang, 2019, p.1) was the first linguist to investigate hedges. In 1965, Zadeh presented the theory of fuzzy set, and introduce the mathematical concept as "membership function",

Nagham Ali Hassan ✉ *Email:* *nagham.ali@coeng.uobaghdad.edu.iq*

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"fuzzy set", and "grade of membership" into linguistics, that started a new term of investigating of fuzziness in every day languages. In 1971, Zadeh tackled linguistic hedging devices for the first time. In 1972, Zadeh classified English hedging into two kinds from logic and semantics perspectives. As for hedges of the first kind, typical hedges as "slightly, more or less, highly, much… etc". The second kind is words like: "practically, regularly, essentially… etc". From the addresser's side, hedging devices could help them to deliver as much speech as possible and reveal uncertainty as possible with a few thoughts that might help to improve the efficiency and modality-expressing ability of utterances (Yu & Wen, 2022, p.1). The first linguist who presented the term hedges to the linguistic side was Lakoff who defined it as "words whose meaning implicitly involves fuzziness, words whose job is to make things fuzzy or less fuzzy" (Lakoff, 1973 as cited in Hassan & Said, 2020, p. 61).

(Boginskaya, 2022, p. 10) sees that hedges as context-dependent and should be comprehended at a communicative state which is used in. Markkanen & Schröder agree with him and say "no linguistic items are inherently hedgy but can acquire this quality depending on the communicative context or the co-text" (1997, p. 4). The presentation of this term as a linguistic concept has relation to the early 1970s, when George Lakoff announced the expression in his (1972) paper *"Hedges: A Study in Meaning Criteria and the Logic of Fuzzy Concepts"*. Lakoff consulted the concept to allude to the utterances that "make things fuzzier or less fuzzy" (Lakoff, 1972, p.195). He did not only pay attention to the communicative essence of hedges only but also pay attention to the logical characteristics of words and phrases like 'rather', 'largely' , 'sort of', 'very' in their ability "to make things fuzzier or less fuzzy". Hedging is termed as "a mitigating device that is used to lessen the impact of an utterance. It is kind of rhetorical strategy". Hassan & Said (2020, p. 60) consider the concept of hedge as one of the main feature of human's utterance that enable it to be more flexible, moderate and convincing. Rashed (2020, p. 506) asserts that communication is based on managing the 'face' of the speakers through the application of politeness strategies i.e. using methods to soften effect.

Hyland (1996, p.15) states that hedging tools are used to show a lack of complete commitment to the reality of the context of speech and a tendency not to reveal the commitment categorically. Abbas (2018, p.1) observes that all modern important methods try to cover the meanings and highlight of the text, claiming that they are better than others in the analysis and attainment of the real intentions of the text.

Tracing Lakoff, many scholars as Brown & Levinson (1987, p. 40); and Leech (1983, p.140) show that the concept "hedging" is a tool of gaining a

Nagham Ali Hassan ✉ *Email:* nagham.ali@coeng.uobaghdad.edu.iq   62
http://jcoeduw.uobaghdad.edu.iq/index.php/journal

linguistic vagueness. Their different definitions showed different impact in consulting tools, for instance, face-saving methods which is used to gain "speaker's or writer's acceptance, mitigation or modification of utterances, avoidance of commitment and intentional vagueness". Jovic et al. (2023) state that the key to an effective persuasive speech is based on the artful use of weakening expressions (i.e., hedges) to produce a speech that keeps a balance between being neither too forceful nor too ambiguous (p .200). Selezneva et al. (2022, p.1) see that uncertainty, indirectness and mitigation have always worked as an important base of communicative act for British speakers. In the pragmatic field of linguistics, these devices are currently termed as hedging.

The term 'hedging' in its main term presents the theme of 'barrier', 'limit', 'defense', or to the devices which are used to protect oneself. It is generally consulted to reveal those tools in language which reveal speech indeterminate, i.e., they do not transform the same, or in one aspect or another to strengthen the assertions of that speaker's or listener's language (Rounds, 2000, p.6). Sujana et al. (2020, p.251) state that hedging devices are the tools that alter the expression of a speech. These devices could be in the shape of single word or compound words. In the contrary, Alwan et al. (2021, p.13) state that weak or failed states are close to the basis of many of the world's most serious problems. Saleem, & Alattar (2020, p. 331) notice that at the blame avoidance phase, British politicians primarily consult hyperbole, but Iraqi politicians deploy shifting blame.

2.2 Principles of Hedges Devices

Sarsarabi & Zolfaghari declare that hedging exists in every language but the degree of its use is different from one language to another (2021, p.76). Hedges devices are comprehended as connect devices to the kind of the conversation topic. (Azizah, 2021, p.61). Getkham (2011, as cited in Jabbar, 2019, p.347) believes that hedging is a tool whose main work is to manage the tone, point of views, and information within spoken or written discourse. Gomaa (2019, p.11) and Lateef &Hussein (2023, p.355) state that avoiding hedges devices can cause unsuccessful communication between the writer and the reader. Salager-Meyer (1995, as cited in Sujana et al. 2020, p.248) indicates compound hedges are one of the hedging devices that express politeness. McCready (2015, as cited in Varsanis, 2020, p.9) sees that hedging could be rather seen as a cooperative tactic. Many scholars like Hyland (2000, p.156); Meyers (1997, p.52); Rounds (2000, p.14); Channell (1994, p.25)..., etc. agree that in order to make speech less sever, in a different method of measuring diverse linguistic and non-linguistic methods are used. They (ibid.) do their best to reach the multi-functional nature of

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hedges tools which make a range of meanings gathered simultaneously. Hedges tools combine the relationship between propositional content and a representation of reality (Donadio& Passariello, 2022, p.2). The main aim of hedging tools is to combine the speakers' point of view towards the contents and statements (Shafqat et al., 2019, p.130). Saddiq & Toma (2023, p.20) see that the acceptable and successful methods of communication need a suitable recognition and utilization of hedges tools. Speakers use these tools for different reasons like: to avoid the commitment to the truth according to the statement, to be hesitant and less direct in what they say and write and show their politeness towards their readers and listeners. Salager-Meyer (1994, p. 152) suggests types of "strategic stereotypes" for hedges devices which are shown by grammatical categories like modal lexical verbs, approximations and introductory phrases. He mentions that hedges devices can be defined like "the product of a mental attitude which looks for prototypical linguistic forms". Some scholars decide to consider "adjectives as one of the grammatical categories used as hedges". One of them is Quirk et al. (1999, pp. 121-122) who mention that adjectives can height or lower the effects of the theme they describe. They subdivide adjectives according to semantic basis into three kinds: first, emphasizers that show a general heightening impact, as, "a real hero, a certain winner"; Second, amplifiers that take away from usual. They denote the upper extreme of the range, as, "a complete victory"; Third, limiters that refer to the noun, as, "the precise reason". Lakoff (1975, as cited in Nuraniwati & Permatasari, 2021, p.206) distinguishes three various uses of hedges. First, hedges are consulted when the speakers are not sure of the information. Second, hedges devices can show potential unfriendliness or unkindness of speech as somebody is speaking. The third usage does not include uncertainty, but more of linguistic component to show apology for making certain assertion. Johansen (2020) states that hedges enable the speaker to lower the potentially of face-threatening acts through mentioning tentativeness or possibility and to avoid sounding too categorical by lowering the commitment to the content (p.30).

2.3 Functions of Hedges Devices

Hasani et al. (2022, p. 12) state that hedges devices cannot be used randomly because they affect the meaning of a conversation. The matter is that by consulting hedges devices within the content of conversations shows that they achieve different interpersonal functions throughout interaction, like showing politeness, opening up subjects to communicate, overcoming personal effects in giving decisions, showing reality in smooth ways, etc. (Yu, 2020, p.129). Sujanaa et al. (2020, p.253) mention that hedging can have various functions that can alter according to the propositional content itself. One of them is Lakoff, (1972, as cited in Johansen, 2021, p.84), he

Nagham Ali Hassan ✉ *Email:* *nagham.ali@coeng.uobaghdad.edu.iq*
http://jcoeduw.uobaghdad.edu.iq/index.php/journal
64

interprets the word "hedges" as semantic function. He sheds light on the two meanings of a word which is able to make the impact fuzzier or less fuzzy. As for this basis, the meaning will depend on part of the utterance meaning (Markkanen & Schröder, 1997, p. 48). According to this basis, the speaker will change his responsibility or to alter the meaning and it's denotation of utterance. Yu & Wen (2022, pp.12, 13) consider hedge as socio-cultural act that has similarities and differences consulted by speakers with various social and cultural situations. Hellspong & Ledin (1997, as cited in Norlund, 2022, p.38) state that hedging devices are affected by solidarity, and often worked as a precautionary strategy. Gribanova & Gaidukova (2019, p. 86) note that hedges devices are claimed as linguistic of full commitment or precision commonly used in academic writing to offer the suitable uncertainty. Hedges devices are an application in pragmatics and discourse analysis in a general sense of the utterances to a range of items that show an idea of imprecision or qualification.

Other scholars (Prince et al., 1982, p.56; Myers 1989, p.345; Markkanen & Schröder 1997, p.67) see that there is a pragmatic function for hedging. As for them, hedging can be analyzed according to the relation between the speakers and the hearers. Hedging will soften the effect of the conversation between the speakers and the hearers to gain the other side's approval on the words for the speaker impolite in the method of transmitting the speech (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p.116) i.e. the speakers try as they can to be polite and minimize the face threatening acts to reach an acceptable end away from opposition (Salager-Meyer, 1995, P. 3). The skill of using vague language is thought as a pragmatic competence. Almusaway (2019, p.164) states that vague language has many possible pragmatic functions, i.e., marking politeness, indicating solidarity with one's listener, or even to soften a request. Brown & Levinson (1987, as cited in Depraetere & Kaltenböck, 2023, p.209) describe hedging tools as revealing a negative politeness method. In short, the speaker will pay attention to his/her speech according to cognitive aspects on one hand and on social aspect on the other hand. Hinkel (2005, as cited in Bayraktar-Çepni, & Kulaksız, 2022, p. 63) sees related findings has different kinds of hedges devices to politeness, vagueness, hesitation, and indirectness, emphasizing that hedges are an element of pragmatics.

As for social aspect, hedging should be based on linguistic resource of any culture and controlled by social basis which are up to date to the moment of writing or speaking (Salager-Meyer, 2000, p.180 & Channell, 1994, p.199). Hedges use has gained a great attention in the pragmatics of literary works in these years due to its relation to conversational maxims and social basis because it represents the main method consulted to make turn-taking method easy, reveal politeness and avoid rudeness (Dontcheva-Navratilova, 2017,

p.8).

As for Hyland, (1996, pp. 34-35), there are three main functions of hedges devices:

 First, hedges devices are consulted to reveal propositions with greater precision. Hedging devices are used by the speaker to mention uncertain information with a suitable way.

Second, hedges devices tackle the willingness of the speaker to speculate possible negative consequences of being wrong.

The third function of hedging is to share the development of the speaker/ listener relationship, showing the need for protection and cooperation to enable the listeners to believe the speech.

The researcher believes Skelton's (1988, p.38) quotation which summarizes the whole situation. He states that the world without hedges will be definitely savage and uncivilized but with including hedges devices the world will be more subtle and communicative and there is strong social relationships.

2.4 Related Works

Gherdan (2019) presents "HEDGING IN ACADEMIC DISCOURSE" in a paper. Hedges devices are revealed and defined in the paper within the academic writing discourse. As these tools have important features, hedges are often seen as characteristics in academic writing method that can cause problems, being often a serious person is a reason of pragmatic failure. Letting the writer to have a method expressing his true theme in the mentioned discourse.

 Hassan & Said (2020) write "A PRAGMATIC STUDY OF HEDGES IN AMERICAN POLITICAL EDITORIA" in a paper. This paper calls for specifying the pragmatic functions of hedging devices and their formal basis in the American political editorials. The consulted model is a group of views of the authors. The paper comes to conclude that hedging devices are used in the American political editorials is done for three main reasons like: First, content-oriented hedging; Second, writer-oriented hedging, and third, reader-oriented hedging, and the type content-oriented hedging is the most used functional type.

Hasani et al. (2022) introduce "AN ANALYSIS OF THE USE OF HEDGES BY YOUNG CHILDREN" in a paper. This paper is based on the use of hedges devices in young children and show some of the causes and factors to answer the question "why young children can use hedges like adults". The consulted strategy in this paper was a descriptive qualitative method. The results have shown that the researchers found that children can use hedging devices for many reasons as the environment surrounds them which consists

of both their families they live with and their close friends.

Al-Kahfi et al (2023) tackle "HEDGING DEVICES IN INTERPRETING RESEARCH DATA: A STUDY IN STUDENTS' UNDERGRADUATE THESIS" in a paper. The paper hopes to describe the use of hedges which exist in finding and the discussion part of students' undergraduate thesis. The findings of the analyzed data have shown that the most frequent used type and function of hedges tools were Approximated of Degree, Frequency, Time and Quantity and Attribute Hedge.

 Aini et al. (2023) writes "Hedge Markers: A Study of Politeness and Gender in Media Interaction" in a paper. The paper focuses on how politeness and gender are related to postponement of election discourse in the Rosi Talk Show. The results of the paper have shown the following: First, males consulted hedging tools with assertion acts for revealing their points of view but female is used to consult direction acts of questioning. Second, males usually used to consult hedging tools for quality rules but female usually consulted hedging devices with tail questions.

 Lateef & Hussein (2023) present "A Pragmatic Analysis of Hedging Devices of Iraqi Authors' English Literary Research Articles" in a paper. They reached that the cause of unsuccessful conversation between the writer and the readers is ill-formed academic writing after applying Hyland's (1998) model of hedges devices. Hedges devices are frequently used in the discussion part more than in the introduction and conclusion parts in literary papers. Then, the paper contains more application instances of hedges tools for second language learning.

The current study will add to the previous studies a new area which is hedges devices in political speech delivered by the American president Joe Biden-The president of America. The study depends on spoken language. The paper sheds light on how Biden deals with hedges devices in an exclusive interview done by ' George Stephanopoulos' presented in ABC News -19 August 2021.

2-5 The theory/Model Adopted in Data Analysis

The model to be adopted is an eclectic model by different linguists for hedges devices. Hence, the models which are used in the present study are based on grammatical categories as well as functions:

2.5.1 Grammatical Devices:

2.5.1.1 Crompton's model (1997, p.66): 2.5.1.2 Fraser (2010, p.204) states that hedges devices include:

1. Adverbs of frequency: *frequently, usually, often, occasionally, weekly, rarely*, *probably, possibly...*

-I *probably* come early.

2. Quantifiers: *some, a few, a bit, a good deal, many...*

-*A few of* us are here.

3. Epistemic modality verbs: *can, may, might, could, be able to, must, should, need to, will, would*

-*You *might* laugh.

4. Epistemic lexical verbs: *to seem, to appear, to believe, to assume, to suggest, to estimate, to tend, to think, to argue, to indicate, to propose, to speculate...*

- She *tends to* be serious.

5. Adjectives: possible, probable, potential, apparent…

- There is *a probable* solution.

6. Conversational & Informal*: anyway, in a way, kind of, more or less, like, maybe, sort of…*

- *Anyway,* I have idea.

7. Introductory phrases: *it is our view that, we feel that...*

-*We feel that,* it is correct.

8. *Interjections as: oh, oo, uh, ah, well…..etc.*

Well, I can say that.

9. *Verbs as: think, believe, look, suggest, indicate, assume, and tend to….etc.*

- *I think* you are right.

2.5.1.2 Fraser (2010, p.204) states that hedges devices include:

1. Negation

-*Didn't* Ann come? [I think Ann come]

-*I don't think* he is right. [He is wrong]

2. Reversal tag

-She's leaving, *isn't she*?

3. Parenthetic construction

-The visitors are here, *I guess*.

4. If clause

-*If* you study, you will pass the exam.

5. Agentless Passive

-Many of the soldiers are injured.

6. *Progressive form*

-She *is hoping* you will succeed.

8. Tentative Inference

-The mountains *should be* visible from here.

9. Hedged numerical data (e.g., around, about, three or four, about 30 percent) …etc

- *About 30 percent* failed in the exam

10. Non-lexical hedges: one cannot exclude a possibility…

- *One cannot exclude a possibility* of being right.

2.5.1.3 (Salager-Mayer, 2000, pp.127-143) presents different kinds of hedges devices as:

1. Tentative inferences: are pragmatic markers which are similar to subjective markers contributing a great degree of politeness by conveying hesitation, uncertainty or vagueness, however; the way the researchers explore them differs from that of subjective markers.

- The Mountains *should be* visible from here.

2. Meta linguistic comment such as (strictly speaking, so to say, exactly, almost, just about, if you will).

-*Strictly speaking*, Sacco and Vanzetti were murders.

The previous classifications depending on the grammatical category are not validated in context, in other words, these classifications depend only on words in isolation. This definitely hurt the intention of persuasion leading to depend on another study which reveals the classification of functional hedging devices in context. It helps in analyzing the communicative function of hedging devices in specific context. Among the studies on hedging devices ''function'' is Prince et al.'s (1982) model. It is particularly the most widely distinguished and highly consulted model in this paper.

2.5.2 Price et al's (1982) Model

Hedging can serve different functions that can change according to the propositional situation itself from one hand and the relation between the propositional meaning and the speakers from the other hand. Many functions have been presented for the different hedging tools. Price et al. (1982, p.4) give the functions of hedges devices in the following instances:

1. a) Her shirt is white.

   b) Her shirt is *a sort of* white.

   c) I *think* her shirt is white.

Sentence (1.a) is a real sentence that does not contain hedging devices. Sentence (1.b) contains a different meaning by using "sort of" as a hedging device that has effect on the meaning of the sentence (rather than the addresser's impact). Prince et al. called this kind of hedging device as "Approximator". In sentence (1.c), similar meaning of sentence (1.a) is transmitted. The hedge "I think" has no effect on the meaning but only shows that the addresser is littler committed than the other sentence. Prince et al. called such kind of hedges as "Shields".

"Approximator" is a hedges device that shows the propositional

content and enable to the interpretation by showing some relation to the interpretation by offering some markedness. i.e. in the unsigned case, such words show prototypicaliness. The use of hedging devices works as classification as compared with these (prototypical) terms. "Approximators" like: "about, around, approximately, sort of, kind of and basically" effect on keeping commitment to a proposition. These devices have done this by including vagueness into the substantive proposition. As for, Prince et al. state that "approximators" can be subdivided into two kinds as "Adaptors" and "Rounder". They reveal semantic functions. Also, both of these kinds take place when the speakers want to relate to the real situation with some prototypical, goal-relevant situation. Hedging devices show that actual situation which is somehow similar to the sentences mentioned. i.e., such expression shows the prototypical situation, but the mentioned hedges close to but not identical with the prototypical situation. "Adaptor hedges" are related to a class membership. These hedges modify a term to make it suits to a non-prototypical context, for instance: "somewhat, sort of, almost as describable as, some, a little bit… etc". As the instances:

2. They have a *somewhat* low seats
3. She is *a little* late.

"Rounders" show typical range. i.e., these devices show an expression which is not completely concise, for instance: "about, approximately, something around… etc". "Rounders" are shown in the following instances:

4. Ann will be there *in about* five minutes.
5. Her tall is *approximately* 2 meters.
6. The man's blood pressure is something *between* thirty-five and forty.

"Shield hedges", the other kind of hedging in Prince et al.'s (1982) terms, present pragmatic functions. Such kinds of hedging alter the relation between propositional content and the addresser by showing a degree of uncommonness with consideration to the addresser's knowledge. These devices have impact on "the pragmatics by inducing implicatures conveying markedness with respect to the speaker commitment" (Prince et al, 1982, p. 86). The role of "shield-hedges" is to protect the speakers from being indulged in a fake proposition (Channell, 1994). These devices are subdivided into two sub kinds: "Plausibility Shields" & "Attribution Shields". "Plausibility Shields" are expressions that are related to doubts. They show different ranges of uncertainty on part of the speaker, like: "I think, I take it, probably, as far as I can tell, right now, I have to

believe, I don't see that, etc". These devices show a substantive proposition and allude to something not fully committed to. Examples:

7. *Maybe* you have to take a rest.
8. *I think* we can go out.
9. *As far as I can* tell, the answer is wrong.

Prince et al declare that in spite the fact that the unhedged versions include the speakers who have knowledge by observation and/or logical end, sentences shown by "a plausibility shield", it shows that the speakers show the assertion related to plausible reasons.

As for "Attribution shields", from the other side, are devices that reveal degree of uncertainty in relation to the proposition of the context like: "estimates, presumably, at least to X's knowledge, so and so says that...etc." that describe how to be committed to the meaning presented to a person other than the addresser. For instance:

10. Ann *says* you cannot divide 15 by 2 without decimal.
11. She was not so serious, *according to* his point of view.
12. There is no reason, *as far as you know*.

The main reason for consulting this model is that it shows different functions as semantics and pragmatics. Then, it deals with wide spectrum of different meanings.

The researcher tries to abbreviate Prince et al.'s (1982) model in the following diagram:

Diagram (1)
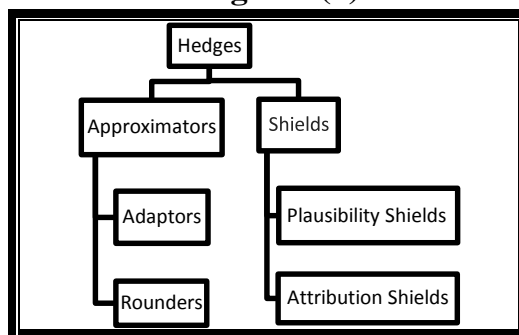
Types of Hedges According to Prince et al.'s (1982) Model

3. The Analytical Part

This represents the third main section of the paper. It falls in the following sections.

3.1 Methodology of the Study

In this paper, the researcher presents theoretical survey about hedges devices and related topics. The data source is a full transcript of ABC News' George Stephanopoulos' interview with President Joe Biden, Stephanopoulos spoke

to Biden in an exclusive interview Wednesday by: ABC News -19 August 2021. The main limitation of the present study is to focus on Joe Biden's speech throughout the analysis. The model is an eclectic model based on Crompton (1997), Salager-Meyer's (2000) and Fraser (2010) for grammatical categories revealing hedging from one hand and Prince et al's. (1982) model dealing with the function transmitted by hedges devices. Each grammatical category will be marked by using an abbreviation as the following: (Adv) refers to Adverbials; (N) refers to negation ; (M) for modal; (MLC) for meta linguistic comment; (PF) for progressive form;(Inter) stands for interjections; (TI) stands for tentative interference; (PV) stands for passive voice; (Q) stands for quantifiers; (v) stands for verbs; (IP) stands for introductory phrases; (If) stands for if clauses; (EMV) stands for epistemic modality verb; (Freq)stands for frequency; (C&I)stands for conversational and informal; (Pc)stands for parenthetic construction and (RT)stands for reversal tag.

As for Prince et al.'s (1982) model the abbreviation will be:(Approx) stands for Approximators; (Adapt) stands for Adaptors; (Round) stands for Rounders; (Sh) stands for Shields; (P.Sh) stands for Plausibility Shields; (A.Sh) stands for Attribution Shields.

The results of the analysis will be shown in tables and diagrams to denote the frequency of each form of hedging devices. One of them will be done according Crompton' (1997), Fraser (2010) and Salager-Mayer (2000). Whereas the second one is done according to Prince et al.'s (1982) model. The analysis is conducted to show how there devices are exploited in the speech of Joe Biden. Finally, justifications of the occurrence of the devices are introduced. The paper ends with the conclusions reached throughout the study.

3.2 Data Analysis

The analysis will be done according to grammatical categories first, the following table shows these categories.

Table (1)

The Frequency of Each Grammatical Category

Devices	Frequency	Percentage
N	98	%25.52
MLC	18	%4.6
PF	49	%12.7
Ti	6	%1.5
Adv	53	%13.8
PV	21	%5.4
Q	31	%8
Inter	13	%3.3

V	*13*	%3.3
M	*62*	%16.1
TP	*0*	%0
If	*20*	%5.2
EMV	*0*	%0
Freq	*0*	%0.
C&I	*1*	%0.26
PC	*0*	%0
RT	*0*	%0
Total	*384*	%100

Table (1) shows how each grammatical category is presented by Joe Biden throughout the interview. He deals in different ways with these categories to show different degrees of uncertainty and non-commitment in his speech. They effectively help Biden and the hearers to save face and to keep communication smooth. The following diagram shows the curve of these categories according to the previous conducted analysis.

Diagram (2)
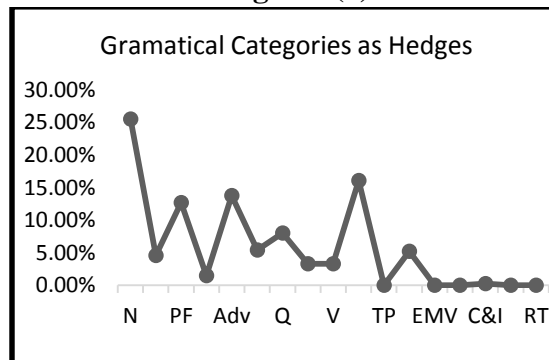
The Frequency of Each Grammatical Category

3.2.1 Data Analysis according to grammatical categories

Hedging has linguistic devices that contain an inherent component of fuzziness. The empirical work of this study reveals that some grammatical devices are used more than the others. The occurrence of other grammatical categories will be revealed. The interview depends more on N %25.25, since it is one way of telling facts and help Biden in order not to commit himself in speech. Then, it is noted that M %16.1 have the second rank, for these verbs have meaning and aid the main verb and give extra information about the verb. The third rank is for Adv %13.8 which are used to intensify the verbs in order to show Biden's inexactness. Pf %12.7 have the fourth rank since they reflect movement. The fifth rank goes for Q %8. They give explanation about what happens throughout Joe Biden's era and his present plans towards America. PV%5.4 has the sixth rank because it intensifies the

meaning of the interview intentions. Biden is interested in the event rather than the subject. If %5.2 have the seventh rank because they show the results of the future plans based on the current events. If clauses show Biden's expression of hypothetical situation or conditional situation that offers a possibility of claim. MLC %4.6 has the eighth rank because Biden is interested in the event. V %3.3 has the ninth rank since it has the aid and help in presenting meaning. This shows that Biden has some doubts in his claim because he cannot make the claim as sure as possible in line with his interpretation, thus, he uses the modal lexical verb "think" to make it imprecisely. It expresses few minutes of thinking before committing himself. Inter %3.3, have the same rank also because they reflect the ideas come in their minds based on mutual understanding of both sides. TI %1.5 has the tenth rank. It has slight way of convening ideas. C&I %0.26 reflects probability. It has the eleventh rank. It has slight way of convincing ideas. It is the poorest device in the interview. It has only one occurrence. The other devices have zero occurrence because the interview, then, the process of persuading and communication does not depend on them i.e. the devices do not have role in conveying meaning "certainty" in the interview.

3.2.2 Data Analysis According to Prince et al.'s (1982) model

Data analysis of the functions of hedges devices according to Prince et al.'s (1982) model are shown in the following table:

Table (2)

The Analysis of the Functions of Hedges Devices

Approx		Sh	
Adapt	Round	P.Sh	A. Sh
well, a little, really, almost, mostly, surely, some, sort of, perhaps, somewhat, anyway, sometimes, actually, so, very, so much, Some, that somehow	About Around Approxi mately Unlikely It sounds like	- predictable- …I am not sure- ……we think- -it is probably- -I mean- -just wish- -possibility- -I don't know- -do you think- -What I thought- -may be- -I don't think… -I don't mean…	You told me You ought to You can say That would be you know it seems we should it could've as you know So far as you say
Sum of Devices=167			
90	9	42	26
Percentage100%			
53.89%	5.389%	%٢٥.١٤٩	15.568%

Table (2) shows the frequency and percentage of functional categories presented by Joe Biden throughout the interview. He deals in different ways with these categories to show different degrees of uncertainty in his speech. The following diagram shows the curve of these categories according to the previous conducted analysis.

Diagram (3)

Hedges Devices Functions

53.89% — Adapt
5.39% — Round
25.15% — P.Sh
15.57% — A. Sh
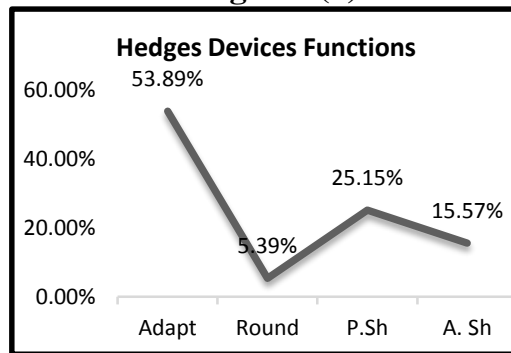
The Analysis of the Functions of Hedges Devices.

According to the analysis Approx namely Adapt 53.89% *are* used more than the other devices because hedges relate to class membership. They modify the utterance to fit a non-prototypical situation. Adapt are the hedging devices that show the degree of truth of the original content. Degree here means the estimation. They are not explicitly mentioned by providing exact numbers but they show some sort of truth. Sh namely P.Sh %٢٥.١٤9 are the second device to be used by Biden because these devices show various ranges of uncertainty in Biden's speech when a speaker feels uncertain about something, a proposition in text is called a P.Sh. they can be understood as a speaker's speculation about a proposition. Biden here tries to speculate the answer to the directed question. P.Sh can be easily recognized by seeing the pronouns "I" and "we" to show the addresser's ability and commitness for the utterance whereas A. Sh 15.568% are the third device to be used because they describe the responsibility of the speech to someone other than Biden. A. Sh make an indirect quotation by using third person singular or a plural pronoun. Biden hopes that by using this device, he will not be responsible for the utterance. The last device to be used by Biden is Round 5.389*%,* because they indicate that the speech is not exactly precise. Round are usually used by speakers to express the size of a range without taking into consideration the proximity of the thing to the fact. Biden, by using Round, tries to fill the gap of speech and he tries not to commit himself in his speech.

4. Conclusions

It is noted that hedges devices have a great importance in many fields in our life especially by the politician one of them is the president of

America Joe Biden. He uses hedges devices in relation to certain grammatical categories and functions in flexible way in order to persuade the hearers of his point of view. The results of the analysis have shown the following items:

1. It can be concluded that certain topics require Biden to hedge more than others, so that hedges devices are not used equally by Biden in his turns. It is worth noticing that he uses negatives and adaptor devices more than the other devices because these devices can make communication euphemistic, moderate, polite and flexible, which effectively helps to keep and adjust the relationship between Joe Biden and the interviewer from one side and the hearers from the other side leading both the listeners and speakers to keep the communication smooth.

2. Joe Biden consults hedges devices in their wide range of functions mentioned so that these devices will help him to show uncertainty and to avoid indulging in his speech as follows:
    a. Hedging devices are used to illustrate Biden's point of view but in soft way searching for acceptance from the hearers about his point of view.
    b. Gaining the approval of the hearers when he talks about his future plans and visions reaching to mutual understanding.
    c. Hedges devices are means which enable Biden to introduce the ratification of his speech and to make his sentences vaguer.
    d. Hedges devices are shown as a method by which Biden and the listeners (one of them is the interviewer) reach to the same level of understanding and sharing the same point of view reaching to the same level of acceptability and using the language as a tool to cool down the temper between them.

3. It can also be concluded four reasons of using hedges devices as:
    a. By hedging, Biden low his tone in his speech to assure acceptance and to prevent personal accountability about his speech. This will lead to understanding.
    b. Biden wants the listener to know that he does not present the final word. Revealing uncertainty does not essentially show vagueness. i.e. a person can take hedging tools as methods of showing impreciseness in announcing results. Hedges devices can introduce the real feeling of Biden's comprehending and can be consulted to communicate a precise understanding of the matter referred to.
    c. Hedges devices can be comprehended as showing tact by which Biden tries to show a modest opinion more than boosting himself. Hedges strategies are termed as inner method that aids

the speaker's state, and bridges addresser/addressee relation and assures a mutual understanding between Joe Biden and listeners especially in America.

d. Keeping away from face to face negative remarks namely alluding to what comes next and intentions behind the discussed topic.

Notes:

1 Hedges devices appear both in spoken and written discourse. This paper will be limited only to spoken discourse.

2 The number of turns is equal for both the American president-Joe Biden- and the interviewer since it is exclusive interview. However, the length of the turns for Joe Biden is longer than the interviewer.

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