

Analysis of Grammatical Forms and Semantic Functions of Hedging in Political Discourse: American Presidential Debate

Instructor Rufaidah Kamal Abdul Majeed*

Abstract:

Hedging is a linguistic avoidance of full commitment or precision. It is the use of a vague language. The main objectives of this study are to: (1) identify and classify the linguistic devices which act as hedges; (2) to examine the semantic functions of these devices.

This paper makes use of word class as well as clausal constructions to represent the forms of hedges in relation to certain grammatical categories, namely: adverbials, epistemic verbs, modal verbs, cognitive verbs, hypothetical constructions, anticipatory it-clause, and anticipatory constructions.

The text analysed is the first presidential debate between Senator Barak Obama and Senator John McCain on the campus of the University of Mississippi, during the presidential election campaign of the Republican and the Democrat parties in America.

The results show that politicians use hedges to mild their language in process to, so that not to be proved wrong later. This justification is that the claims they had already made were only an approximation to the statements.

Introduction:

In social interactions, there are constraints that influence the flow of communication. Each of us must empower himself with social conventions to represent our truthfulness or less in the communication process. Otherwise, the listener or reader could be misled and misunderstood. Furthermore, in the communication process, grammatical categories may be manipulated and reformulated to achieving pragmatic meaning as a complement to lexical functions. Therefore, if you hedge against something unpleasant or unwanted that might affect you, you do something which will protect you from it. If you *hedge* a problem or question, you avoid answering the question or committing yourself to a particular action or decision.

This description of everyday meaning of the verb *hedge* (as a linguistic term) suggests that it refers to the choice of a certain kind of communicative strategy. This is actually the case in most uses of the term *hedge* in linguistic literature: it is possible to detect at least some affinity between its everyday meaning and the linguistic expressions referred to when using the term.

The use of *hedge* as a linguistic term goes back at least to the early 1970s, when G. Lakoff (1972) published his article "*Hedges: A Study in Meaning Criteria and the Logic of Fuzzy Concepts*". Lakoff was not interested in the communicative value of the use of hedges but was concerned with the logical properties of words and phrases like *rather*, *largely*, *in a manner of speaking*, *very*, in their ability "to make things fuzzier or less fuzzy" (Lakoff, 1972: 195).

* English Language Dept. College of Education for Women- Baghdad University.

This paper analyses the types of hedge used in political discourse. Supposedly, politicians should not use hedges when they are delivering speeches because they are stating facts about their agendas. But this research proves that even political discourse, like other types of discourse, does contain hedges. The analysis of the grammatical categories as forms of hedging in addition to the semantic functions of hedging will be the main focus of this study. These grammatical categories are: adverbials, epistemic verbs, modal verbs, cognitive verbs, hypothetical constructions, anticipatory it-clause. The researcher has innovated a new category and named it "*anticipatory constructions*" to enlist those expressions that cannot be enlisted under any of the above categories. The text analysed is the first presidential debate between Senator Barak Obama and Senator John McCain on the campus of the University of Mississippi, during the presidential election campaign of the Republican and the Democrat parties in America.

Meaning of Hedges

The words *hedge* and *hedging* can be broadly defined as referring to a barrier, limit, defence, or the act or means of protection or defence (The Oxford English Dictionary)

The importance of hedges for the speaker's own face may be motivated by the fear of being proved wrong later on. Being imprecise or mitigating one's commitment to the truth-value of a proposition or a claim makes it possible to say, if proved wrong, that the claim was only tentative or an approximation. Thus, in some situations the desire to protect oneself from the potential denial of one's claims may be greater than the desire to show deference to the addressee. The surer a speaker feels about his/her own position vis-a-vis the interlocutor, the less need there is for hedging for the purpose of self-protection. The reason behind using hedges is to make sentences more acceptable to the hearer and thus increase their chances of ratification. (Markkanen, 1997:8)

The term 'hedge' was first used by Lakoff (1972:194) to mean 'words whose job is to make things more or less fuzzy'. He (ibid.:195) states that truth and falsity are a matter of degree, and hedges make natural language sentences more/less true or more/less false.

The underlying idea is that concepts encoded by natural language have vague boundaries and therefore utterances will very often be neither absolutely true, nor absolutely false, but rather true/false to a certain extent, or true in certain respects and false in other respects. (ibid.: 183)

He (ibid.) further defines hedges as follows:

"For me, some of the most interesting questions are raised by the study of words whose meaning implicitly involves fuzziness - words whose job is to make things fuzzier or less fuzzy. I will refer to such words as 'hedges'"

Lakoff proposed that "natural language concepts have vague boundaries and fuzzy edges", and sentences can often be false or true to some extent (ibid.: 183). He was not interested in the pragmatic application of hedges but was mainly concerned with the logical properties of words and phrases like *rather*, *largely*, *in a manner of speaking*, *very*, and *their ability* "to make things fuzzier or less fuzzy" (ibid.: 195).

Expressions listed under 'some hedges and related phenomena' by Lakoff (1972: 195) include not only those which weaken the speaker's commitment to a proposition but also those which intensify his/her commitment, including a wide

range of expressions cutting across parts of speech. They are about (70) different items. Since then the concept of hedge has moved far from its origins, particularly since it has been adopted by pragmatists and discourse analysts. The term is no longer used only for expressions that modify the category membership of a predicate or noun phrase. As a matter of fact, Lakoff himself had already mentioned in his 1972 article Robin Lakoff's observation that certain verbs and syntactic constructions convey hedged performatives like (*I suppose/guess/think that Harry is coming; Won't you open the door?*). The idea of hedged performatives became then one way of widening the concept of hedges. This widening of the concept of hedge has been made to contain different disciplines such as economics, scientific researches, physics, medical researches, psychology etc. This research provides several definitions of the widening scope of the concept: for example:

In his article "*Fuzzy-Set - Theoretic Interpretation of Linguistic Hedges*", Zadeh (1972) followed Lakoff in using the new designation 'hedge' and analyzed English hedges (such as simple ones like *very, much, more or less, essentially, and slightly* and more complex ones like *technically* and *practically*) from the point of view of semantics and logics. The author assumes that hedges are operators that act on the fuzzy set representing the meaning of their operands (Cited in Schroder, 1997);

Prince et al. (1982: 85) say that there are two types of hedges: those that affect the truth-conditions of propositions, which call them as: (1) *approximators* (e.g. *His feet were sort of blue*), and (2) *shields*, which do not affect the truth-conditions but reflect the degree of the speaker's commitment to the truth-value of the whole proposition (e.g. *I think his feet were blue*);

von Hahn, (1983: 99) uses the term 'Vagheit' (vagueness) when referring to the false assumption that the language in scientific texts is exact, as vagueness, according to him, is another concept close to hedging as it refers, among other things, to the use of expressions like *about, sort of*, i.e. expressions that denote the impreciseness of *quantity, quality, or identity*, which is very much like Lakoff's "fuzziness".;

Furthest away from the original concept of hedge are those approaches in which hedges are treated as realizations of an interactional-communicative strategy called *hedging*, Leech (1983:100-101) refers to negative sentence as, pragmatically speaking, "less favoured than positive one because negative sentence is less informative than its positive counterpart". So, "negative uninformativeness provides an explanation of why negative propositions are, in pragmatic terms, denials of positive propositions". But there are some exceptions for this generalization, one of these exceptions is the negative expressions of emotion or attitude: e.g. *I don't like Kenneth*. This sentence counterparts the positive sentence *I dislike Kenneth*. Negation here is a hedging or mitigating device, and may be politeness or euphemistic reticence in the expression of opinion and attitudes. (ibid.: 102);

Zuck and Zuck (1986: 172) define hedges as "the process whereby the author reduces the strength of what he is writing" in case the reported news turn out not to be true. They try to extend the scope of hedging in a way that it draws on pragmatic uses of the term in language;

Hyland (1998: 5) defines hedges as "the means by which writers can present a proposition as an opinion rather than a fact: items are only hedges in their epistemic sense, and only when they mark uncertainty";

The term hedge has later been defined by Brown & Levinson (1987: 145) as "a particle, word or phrase that modifies the degree of membership of a predicate or a noun phrase in a set; it says of that membership that it is partial or true only in certain respects, or that it is more true and complete than perhaps might be expected".

This definition is interesting in that they (ibid.: 147) divide hedges into strengtheners (those that mainly act as emphatic hedges, like '*exactly*' or '*precisely*' or '*emphatically*') and weakeners (those that soften or tentativize that they modify). This includes both detensifiers and intensifiers, which was how Lakoff also saw hedges. However, many users of the term limit it only to expressions which show that "the match between a piece of knowledge and a category is less than perfect" (Chafe, 1986: 270).

Finishing the definitions of hedging from the semantic and pragmatic point of view, the researcher moves to expose the definitions of hedging as it is realized by grammatical categories.

Firstly, the most important concept of hedges in this regard is that of *modality*. The concepts of modality and hedge have overlapped to a lesser or greater extent depending on their definitions. This connection is very clear in the case of modal verbs with epistemic meaning. The Modal auxiliary *may* is always listed as a typical example of epistemic modals. Thus, in *It may be true*, it is a hedge but also an expression of epistemic modality. The hypothetical *would* could be seen as a hedge because it makes an utterance non-categorical. (Cited in "when G. Lakoff..1972)

House/Kasper's (1981) use of the term 'hedge' only of adverbials with which the speaker avoids precise propositional specification (e.g. *kind of*, *sort of*, *somehow*, *rather*). They then distinguish several other types of what they call *modality markers*, like *understaters*, which are used to underrepresent the state of affairs denoted by the proposition (e.g. *a little bit*, *not very much*) and *downtoners* (e.g. *possibly*, *perhaps*), which are used to modulate the impact an utterance is likely to have. (Cited in Raija Markkanen and Hart Schroder)

Zuck and Zuck (1985) present a list of items typically used as hedges. They are verbal or adverbial expressions that involve different degrees of probability. The main categories consist of auxiliaries (e.g. *may*, *might*, *can*, *could*), semi-auxiliaries (*appear*, *seem*), full verbs (*suggest*), the passive voice, various adverbs and adverbials (*probably*, *almost*, *relatively*), some adjectives (*probable*), and indefinite nouns and pronouns. Similar items are also mentioned by Markkanen and Schroder (1987), according to whom modal verbs, modal adverbs and particles, the use of some pronouns and even the avoidance of others, agentless passives, other impersonal expressions, and certain vocabulary choices may be seen as central manifestation of hedging in English and German. (Cited in Varttala, Teppo: 2001)

Another definition of hedges and epistemic modality is *evidentiality*, again depending on how broadly hedge is understood. Chafe, (1986: 271) defines *evidentiality* as "any linguistic expression of attitudes toward knowledge", i.e. assessment of its reliability. Chafe himself uses the term hedge only of expressions that denote that "the match between a piece of knowledge and a category may be less than perfect" (ibid.), thus agreeing with Lakoff's original idea of hedges.

Preisler, (1986: 92) actually points out that "even when modal forms convey speaker-external meanings, these are often given interpersonal significance by the particular context in which they appear, usually as part of a tentativeness strategy".

Skelton (1988: 37) points out that "there are a very large number of ways in which one can hedge in English", including impersonal phrases, the system of modal expressions, verbs like *seem*, *look*, and, *appear*, introductory phrases like *I think*, the suffix *-ish* in connection with certain adjectives, and so on.

Markkanen & Schröder (1989; 1992), consider - at least in scientific writing - the use of certain pronouns and avoidance of others, the use of impersonal expressions, the passive and other agentless constructions, in addition to the use of

modal verbs, adverbs and particles, which are usually included in hedges as important devices for hedging. (Cited in Markkanen, Raija and Hartmut Schroder 1996-1999)

Thompson (1993: 118) says that modality may be used as a hedging strategy to express degrees of commitment in factual discourse.

Bloomer & Bloomer, (2007:103) also speak about modality and say that hedging is a linguistic avoidance of full commitment or precision. It is a vague but useful term covering a range of grammatical and lexical realizations which can be said to be a hedge only in context. Hedging includes *approximators*, like: (*roughly, approximately, sort of, more or less, about*) *modality*, like: (*may, might, could, should, possibly, probably*). Other forms of hedging are *perceptive verbs* like: (*think, believe, suppose*).

Salager-Meyer (1994: 152) provides a list of "strategic stereotypes" for hedging which goes by grammatical forms such as modal lexical verbs, approximations and introductory phrases. He states that hedging may be regarded as "the product of a mental attitude which looks for prototypical linguistic forms."

Some linguists tend to include adjectives as one of the grammatical categories used as hedges for example, Quirk, et al. (1999: 121-122) who state that adjectives have a heightening or lowering effect on the notion they modify. They classify adjectives into three semantic types: (1) *emphasizers* which have a general heightening effect (*a real hero, a certain winner*); (2) *amplifiers* which scale upwards from norm denoting the upper extreme of the scale: (*a complete victory*); (3) *limiters* which particularize the reference of the noun, (*the precise reason*).

The model adopted:

The researcher adopts the model of this paper used in the web site entitled (maybe, perhaps, I believe, you could- making claims and the use of hedges, by Chan Swee Heng and Helen Tan. <http://www.melta.org.my>). This model presents hedges in relation to grammatical categories and their functions. It explores each type of construction to meet the functional forms for making claims. It makes use of word class as well as clausal construction to categorize the forms of hedges. The model proposes that those forms could be examined as: adverbials, epistemic verbs, modal verbs, cognitive verbs, hypothetical constructions, and anticipatory *it*-clauses. But, the researcher finds out that there are certain constructions which cannot be enlisted under *Anticipatory it-clause*, since they are not (*it*-clauses), therefore, a new category has been innovated by the researcher to be added to the model and named it as (*anticipatory constructions*). Following are the categories of the model:

1. Adverbials

Examples:

The length of the metal bar was *approximately* 22 cm.

Generally, girls are more eloquent speakers compared to boys.

His views on the matter were *quite* well received.

2. Epistemic Verbs

Examples:

The graph *suggests* that there was a dip in the sale of Proton Saga cars between the months of January to March.

It *seems* that the football team manager will be replaced soon.

The new regulations *appear* to safeguard the interests of women, but they do not.

3. Modal verbs

Examples

Gases *may* be changed into liquids.

It *would* be inappropriate to discuss the matter with your colleagues.
 The experiment on cloning *could* be dangerous to humanity.
 Your teacher *may* have been able to help you with that application.

4. **Cognition Verbs**

Examples

I *believe* that we need to further explore the causes behind child abuse.
 I *surmise* that there is a need for a more intensive English language programmes.
 I *think* it is not a sound method for increasing productivity.

5. **Hypothetical Constructions**

Examples

If we agree on the report, then it can be handed up now.
Unless we attend to it now, we will not get the target results.
 The machine could *possibly* be repaired for RM500.

6. **Anticipatory it- clause**

Examples

It is likely that the experiment will stretch on for another hour.
There is a tendency to under-declare the amount of taxes to be paid.
 With English becoming more important, *it is probable* that more students will take the subject seriously. (Chan Swee Heng: Maybe..)

The following category is innovated by the researcher since there are a lot of expressions that can not be enlisted under any of the above categories:

7- **Anticipatory Constructions.** This category covers all expressions which could not be enlisted under the item number six above, (i.e. Anticipatory it-clause). This item is set by the researcher depending on her readings.

Then these grammatical categories are divided into four groups according to their semantic functions. The groups are:

1. Weakeners of the speaker's commitment,
2. Strengtheners of the speaker's commitment,
3. Broadeners/looseners/wideners of the speaker's commitment,
4. Narrowers the speaker's commitment.

Although there are no clear literal meaning exists for most of these expressions, but in one way or another they all indicate something about the speaker's commitment toward what he/she is saying.

The researcher collects the hedging expressions in their abovementioned grammatical forms from all references cited starting from Lakoff's and ending with the analysed transcript in this research and make them in a table as shown below.

It is worth mentioning here that not all expressions appeared in the debate are included in this table and not all the hedged expressions used in English language are included in this table as well since it is a matter of a style and a matter of room for individual style in the use of hedges.

The content of this table will be adopted as the model of this research to analyse the presidential debate accordingly.

As the transcript contains different topics such as financial recovery plan and foreign policy etc., the researcher will focus on the first topic, which is the financial recovery. This topic has been discussed in (66) turns and they are as follow:

1. moderator :27 turns
2. McCain : 19 turns
3. Obama : 20 Turns

The results of the analysis will be done in a table showing the frequency of each form of hedging and the function as well. The aim is to find out then which type scores higher frequency and whether these categories are strengthening, weakening, widening, or narrowing the speech.

Each category will be marked in **bold** type and by using an abbreviation for each category and as follows: (A) stands for Adverbials; (EV) stands for Epistemic verbs; (M) for modal; (CV) for cognitive verbs (hedged performatives); (HC) for Hypothetical constructions; (A/it-C) stands for Anticipatory clause; and (AC) stands for Anticipatory constructions.

Narrowers	Broadeners/looseners Wideners	Strengtheners	Weakeners	Grammatical categories
<i>practically</i>	<i>loosely speaking</i>	<i>Actually</i>	<i>Almost/ most(ly)</i>	Adverbials (AD)
<i>for all I care</i>	<i>Oftentimes</i>	<i>Really / a real</i>	<i>In name only</i>	
<i>theoretically</i>	<i>Already</i>	<i>Heavily</i>	<i>In a way</i>	
<i>for all I know</i>	<i>so-called</i>	<i>Essentially</i>	<i>Mutatis mutandis</i>	
<i>strictly speaking</i>	<i>sort of</i>	<i>in essence</i>	<i>roughly speaking</i>	
<i>in a manner of speaking</i>	<i>kind of</i>	<i>Basically</i>	<i>possibly</i>	
<i>Typically</i>	<i>Approximately</i>	<i>Definitely</i>	<i>Probably</i>	
<i>In essence</i>	<i>generally speaking</i>	<i>Sure(ly)</i>	<i>In all probability</i>	
<i>all but technically</i>	<i>Bit (of)</i>	<i>Very (much)</i>	<i>-like/ -ish</i>	
<i>Virtually</i>	<i>little bit of</i>	<i>Exactly</i>	<i>Fully</i>	
<i>(only) technically</i>	<i>Rather(than)</i>	<i>Precisely</i>	<i>sincerely</i>	
<i>Literally</i>	<i>more or less</i>	<i>Emphatically</i>	<i>Purely</i>	
<i>About</i>	<i>or so</i>	<i>(make)(for)(to be) sure</i>	<i>All right. Ok</i>	
<i>Primarily</i>	<i>Largely</i>	<i>Certainly</i>	<i>Roughly</i>	
<i>A typical</i>	<i>in a (real) sense</i>	<i>Only(just)</i>	<i>Slightly</i>	
<i>Ago</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>That's true</i>	<i>Pseudo</i>	
<i>Alone</i>	<i>So-to-speak</i>	<i>Purely</i>	<i>Some (what) (how)</i>	
<i>Particularly</i>	<i>for all practical purposes</i>	<i>Absolutely(deny, promise, believe)</i>	<i>(just) merely</i>	
<i>In (some)(one) sense</i>	<i>Lately</i>	<i>Directly</i>	<i>(well) maybe</i>	

Narrowers	Broadeners/looseners Wideners	Strengtheners	Weakeners	Grammatical categories	
<i>Little bit of</i>	<i>Widely</i>	<i>in fact</i>	<i>Just (exactly so)</i>	Adverbials(AD)	
<i>A mere</i>	<i>all in all</i>	<i>a true/ Truly</i>	<i>The possibility of</i>		
<i>Cute little</i>	<i>in short</i>	<i>Completely</i>	<i>Genuinely(true)</i>		
<i>Correctly</i>	<i>by the way</i>	<i>a regular</i>	<i>Perhaps</i>		
<i>Again</i>	<i>something or other</i>	<i>Right (here)(now)</i>	<i>just (really true)</i>		
<i>Yet</i>	<i>In a way</i>	<i>Most (intensifier)</i>	<i>Really true</i>		
<i>Timely</i>	<i>A little(while)(better)</i>	<i>To be succinct</i>	<i>Appropriately</i>		
<i>in an important sense</i>	<i>Less than</i>	<i>In a nutshell</i>	<i>Well – so</i>		
	<i>So many</i>	<i>Frankly</i>	<i>Still</i>		
	<i>Quasi</i>	<i>(More) clearly</i>	<i>Wisely</i>		
	<i>Crypto</i>		<i>Swiftly</i>		
	<i>Fundamentally</i>	<i>Now(in the time sense)(immediacy)</i>	<i>Now (not in the time sense)</i>		
<i>(...) suggest that</i>	<i>Suggest</i>		<i>Seem to</i>		Epistemic Verbs (EV)
			<i>(it) seems to(me)</i>		
			<i>Appear to</i>		
			<i>(it) appears to</i>		
<i>You might say</i>	<i>what might</i>	<i>should have</i>	<i>may (be)</i>	Modal verbs (M)	
<i>(so)I would say</i>	<i>thus it may be</i>	<i>had better</i>	<i>Might(have)(you)</i>		
	<i>one might say that</i>	<i>can (definite possibility)</i>	<i>(would)(could) have</i>		
	<i>might as well be</i>	<i>one(I) must say that</i>	<i>Could(that) (it) be</i>		
	<i>I should think</i>	<i>Ought to</i>	<i>Will</i>		

Narrowers	Broadeners/looseners Wideners	Strengtheners	Weakeners	Grammatical categories
<i>I'm thinking of</i>	<i>Surmise</i>	<i>Assure</i>	<i>Suggest</i>	<i>Cognitive verbs hedged performatives (CV)</i>
<i>Admit</i>	<i>come to think of it</i>	<i>Promise</i>	<i>Guess</i>	
<i>(As you) know</i>	<i>I say?</i>	<i>I(do)(should) think</i>	<i>Believe</i>	
<i>As you and I both know</i>	<i>Do (...) think I could</i>	<i>Agree/ disagree</i>	<i>(do)(Let's) Suppose</i>	
<i>What I meant was</i>	<i>Shall we say?</i>	<i>don't you agree</i>	<i>I think</i>	
<i>As I remember</i>	<i>(...) see</i>	<i>Warn</i>	<i>understand</i>	
	<i>(...) mean</i>		<i>Bet</i>	
<i>Only if you say</i>	<i>as (if) it were(so)</i>	<i>Unless(we) agree</i>	<i>I wonder if (whether)</i>	<i>Hypothetical constructions(HC)</i>
<i>If you like</i>	<i>If you see what I mean</i>	<i>If we all agree, then</i>	<i>if you can</i>	
<i>If you'll forgive my asking</i>			<i>if you want(to)</i>	
			<i>if I may ask you</i>	
			<i>if you want to help me</i>	
			<i>if you don't mind</i>	
			<i>if you'll allow me</i>	
			<i>if we're all ready</i>	
			<i>if you let me</i>	
			<i>If you care to know(inquire)</i>	
			<i>if you see what</i>	

Narrowers	Broadeners/looseners Wideners	Strengtheners	Weakeners	Grammatical categories
<i>There is no doubt about that</i>	<i>as it were</i>	<i>She/he/it is said</i>	<i>It is likely that</i>	<i>Anticipatory it-clause (A/it-C)</i>
	<i>so let it be</i>		<i>There is a tendency to</i>	
			<i>It is probable that</i>	
<i>But the point is/let me point out</i>	<i>You know</i>	<i>we've got to make sure</i>	<i>I can't think of a more</i>	<i>Anticipatory Constructions (AC)</i> <i>(They are so many since they are a matter of style, therefore few of them are mentioned here just as samples</i>
<i>the first thing we have to (do) (say)(mention)</i>	<i>we're also going to have to look at</i>	<i>I want to emphasize one point</i>	<i>you're wondering</i>	
<i>let's go back to the original point</i>	<i>No matter what</i>	<i>let's be clear</i>	<i>Why, in the world</i>	
<i>Here's the only problem</i>	<i>Take this out</i>		<i>As I recall</i>	
<i>I'm sorry(to say)</i>	<i>As for me</i>	<i>Oh, so it is</i>	<i>To some(a certain) extent</i>	
<i>Not one</i>	<i>Oh, (God, Christ, Lord, damn)</i>	<i>Then (not in the time sense</i>	<i>Give or take a few</i>	
<i>Since you ask</i>	<i>I'm afraid</i>	<i>Do (verb)</i>	<i>I can't tell you any more than that</i>	
<i>At all</i>	<i>Got it</i>	<i>Then, for sure</i>	<i>So to speak</i>	
<i>Is that clear</i>	<i>Not to beat around the bush</i>	<i>To put it more simply</i>	<i>Would you know</i>	
<i>Got it</i>	<i>Can be looked at</i>	<i>Now to be absolutely clear</i>	<i>I shouldn't be surprised</i>	
Narrowers	Broadeners/looseners Wideners	Strengtheners	Weakeners	Grammatical categories
<i>Come to think of it</i>	<i>Can be viewed as</i>	<i>One must say that...</i>	<i>To all intents and purposes</i>	<i>Anticipatory Constructions (AC)</i>
<i>The fact of the matter is/ The fact is that</i>	<i>so to say that</i>		<i>Do you think I could</i>	
<i>That's (why)(what)</i>	<i>let us say that</i>	<i>for the first time in a long time</i>	<i>Look/ see</i>	
<i>I'll tell you why</i>	<i>have no doubt about that</i>		<i>as a matter of fact</i>	
<i>What I'm trying to get at this</i>			<i>How about</i>	

Transcript of first presidential debate¹

Story Highlights

Sen. John McCain, Sen. Barack Obama debate in Mississippi

The debate carried live on CNN and CNN.com

Debate's foreign policy focus gives McCain advantage, Obama camp says

Status of debate was in limbo until Friday afternoon

WASHINGTON (CNN) -- Sens. John McCain and Barack Obama debated on the campus of the University of Mississippi Friday night. The moderator for the debate was Jim Lehrer of the NewsHour on PBS. What follows is the full transcript of the debate:

LEHRER: Gentlemen, at this very moment tonight, where do you stand on the financial recovery plan?

First response to you, Senator Obama. You have two minutes.

OBAMA: Well (A)(w), thank you **very much (A)(S)**, Jim, and thanks to the commission and the University of Mississippi, "Ole Miss," for hosting us tonight. **I can't think of a more (AC)(W)** important time for us to talk about the future of the country.

You know (AC)(B), we are at a defining moment in our history. Our nation is involved in two wars, and we are going through the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression.

And although we've heard a lot about Wall Street, those of you on Main Street **I think (CV)(W)** have been struggling for a while, and you recognize that this **could have (M)(W)** an impact on all sectors of the economy.

And **you're wondering (AC)(W)**, how's it going to affect me? How's it going to affect my job? How's it going to affect my house? How's it going to affect my retirement savings or my ability to send my children to college?

So (A)(W) we have to move **swiftly (A)(W)**, and we have to move **wisely (A)(W)**. And I've put forward a series of proposals that **make sure (A)(S)** that we protect taxpayers as we engage in this important rescue effort.

No. 1, **we've got to make sure (AC)(S)** that we've got oversight over this whole process; \$700 billion, **potentially (A)(B)**, is a lot of money.

No. 2, **we've got to make sure (AC)(S)** that taxpayers, when they are putting their money at risk, have the **possibility (A)(W)** of getting that money back and gains, **if (HC)(W)** the market -- and when the market returns.

No. 3, **we've got to make sure (AC)(S)** that none of that money is going to pad CEO bank accounts or to promote golden parachutes.

And, No. 4, **we've got to make sure (AC)(S)** that we're helping homeowners, because the root problem here has to do with the foreclosures that are taking place all across the country.

Now (A)(W), **we also have to recognize (AC)(S)** that this is a final verdict on eight years of failed economic policies promoted by George Bush, supported by Senator McCain, a theory that **basically (A)(S)** says that we **can (M)(S)** shred regulations and consumer protections and give more and more to the most, and **somehow (A)(W)** prosperity will trickle down.

It hasn't worked. And **I think (CV)(W)** that the fundamentals of the economy have to be measured by whether or not the middle class is getting a fair shake. **That's why (AC)(N)** I'm running for president, and **that's what (AC)(N) I hope (CV)(W)** we're going to be talking about tonight.

LEHRER: Senator McCain, two minutes.

MCCAIN: Well (A)(W), thank you, Jim. And thanks to everybody.

And **I do have (AC)(S)** a sad note tonight. Senator Kennedy is in the hospital. He's a dear and beloved friend to all of us. Our thoughts and prayers go out to the lion of the Senate.

I also want to thank the University of Mississippi for hosting us tonight.

And, Jim, I -- I've been not feeling too great about a lot of things **lately (A)(B)**. **So (A)(W)** have a lot of Americans who are facing challenges. But I'm feeling a **little better (A)(B)** tonight, and **I'll tell you why (AC)(N)**.

Because as we're here tonight in this debate, we are seeing, **for the first time in a long time (AC)(S)**, Republicans and Democrats together, sitting down, trying to work out a solution to this fiscal crisis that we're in.

¹ (W) stands for weakeners. (S) stands for strengtheners. (B) stands for broadeners. (N) stands for narrowers

And **have no doubt about (AC)(N)** the magnitude of this crisis. And we're not talking about failure of institutions on Wall Street. We're talking about failures on Main Street, and people who will lose their jobs, and their credits, and their homes, **if (HC)(W)** we don't fix the greatest fiscal crisis, **probably (A)(W)** in – **certainly (A)(S)** in our time, and I've been around **a little while (A)(B)**.

But the point is (AC)(N) -- the point is, we have **finally (A)(S)** seen Republicans and Democrats sitting down and negotiating together and coming up with a package.

This package has transparency in it. It has to have accountability and oversight. It has to have options for loans to failing businesses, **rather than (A)(B)** the government taking over those loans. We have to -- it has to have a package with a number of other essential elements to it. And, yes, I went back to Washington, and I met with my Republicans in the House of Representatives. And they weren't part of the negotiations, and I **understand (CV)(S)** that. And it was the House Republicans that decided that they **would (M)(W)** be part of the solution to this problem.

But I want to emphasize one point (AC)(S) to all Americans tonight. This isn't the beginning of the end of this crisis. This is the end of the beginning, **if (HC)(W)** we come out with a package that will keep these institutions stable.

And we've got a lot of work to do. And we've got to create jobs. And one of the areas, of course, is to eliminate our dependence on foreign oil.

LEHRER: All right (A)(W), let's go back to my question(AC)(N). How do you all stand on the recovery plan? And talk to each other about it. We've got five minutes. We **can (M)(S)** negotiate a deal **right here (A)(S)**.

But, **I mean (CV)(N)**, are you -- do you favor this plan, Senator Obama, and you, Senator McCain? Do you -- are you in favor of this plan?

OBAMA: We haven't seen the language **yet (A)(W)**. And **I do think (AC)(S)** that there's constructive work being done out there. **So (A)(W)**, for the viewers who are watching, I am optimistic about the capacity of us to come together with a plan.

The question, **I think (CV)(W)**, that we have to ask ourselves is, how did we get into this situation **in the first place (A)(N)**?

Two years **ago (A)(N)**, **I warned (CV)(S)** that, because of the subprime lending mess, because of the lax regulation, that we were **potentially (A)(B)** going to have a problem and tried to stop some of the abuses in mortgages that were taking place at the time.

Last year, I wrote to the secretary of the Treasury to **make sure (A)(S)** that he understood the magnitude of this problem and to call on him to bring all the stakeholders together to try to deal with it.

So (A)(W) -- so the question, **I think (CV)(W)**, that we've got to ask ourselves is, yes, we've got to solve this problem short term. And we are going to have to intervene; **there's no doubt about that (A/it-C)(N)**.

But we're also going to have to look at (AC)(B), how is it (A/it-C)(B) that we shredded so many regulations? We did not set up a 21st-century regulatory framework to deal with these problems. And that in part has to do with an economic philosophy that says that regulation is always bad.

LEHRER: Are you going to vote for the plan, Senator McCain?

MCCAIN: I -- **I hope so (CV)(W)**. And I...

LEHRER: As a United States senator...

MCCAIN: Sure (A)(S).

LEHRER: ... you're going to vote for the plan?

MCCAIN: Sure (A)(S). But -- but let me -- **let me point out (AC)(N), I also warned (CV)(S)** about Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac and **warned (CV)** about corporate greed and excess, and CEO pay, and **all that (A)(B)**. A lot of us saw this train wreck coming.

But there's also the issue of responsibility (A/it-C)(N). You've mentioned President Dwight David Eisenhower. President Eisenhower, on the night before the Normandy invasion, went into his room, and he wrote out two letters.

One of them was a letter congratulating the great members of the military and allies that had conducted and succeeded in the greatest invasion in history, **still to this day (A)(W)**, and forever.

And he wrote out another letter, and that was a letter of resignation from the United States Army for the failure of the landings at Normandy.

Somehow (A)(W) we've lost that accountability. I've been **heavily (A)(S)** criticized because I called for the resignation of the chairman of the Securities and Exchange Commission. We've got to start also holding people accountable, and we've got to reward people who succeed. But **somehow (A)(W)** in Washington today -- and I'm afraid on Wall Street -- greed is rewarded, excess is rewarded, and corruption -- or **certainly (A)(S)** failure to carry out our responsibility is rewarded.

As president of the United States, people are going to be held accountable in my administration. And **I promise (CV)(S)** you that that will happen.

LEHRER: Do you have something **directly (A)(S)** to say, Senator Obama, to Senator McCain about what he **just (A)(W)** said?

OBAMA: Well **(A)(W)**, I think **(CV)(W)** Senator McCain's **absolutely (A)(S)** right that we need more responsibility, but we need it not **just (A)(W)** when there's a crisis. I mean **(CV)(N)**, we've had years in which the reigning economic ideology has been what's good for Wall Street, but not what's good for Main Street.

And **there are folks out there (A/it-C)(B)** who've been struggling before this crisis took place. And **that's why it's so important (A/it-C)(S)**, as we solve this short-term problem, that we look at some of the underlying issues that have led to wages and incomes for ordinary Americans to go down, the -- a health care system that is broken, energy policies that are not working, because, **you know (AC)(B)**, 10 days ago, John said that the fundamentals of the economy are sound.

LEHRER: Say it **directly (A)(S)** to him.

OBAMA: I do not think **(CV)(W)** that they are.

LEHRER: Say it **directly (A)(S)** to him.

OBAMA: Well **(A)(W)**, the -- John, 10 days ago, you said that the fundamentals of the economy are sound. And...

MCCAIN: Are you afraid I **couldn't (M)(W)** hear him?

LEHRER: I'm **just (A)(W)** determined to get you all to talk to each other. I'm going to try.

OBAMA: The -- and I **just (A)(W) fundamentally (A)(B) disagree (CV)(W)**. And **unless (HC)(W)** we are holding ourselves accountable day in, day out, not **just (A)(W)** when there's a crisis for folks who have power and influence and **can (M)(S)** hire lobbyists, but for the nurse, the teacher, the police officer, who, **frankly (A)(S)**, at the end of each month, they've got a little financial crisis going on.

They're having to take out extra debt **just (A)(W)** to make their mortgage payments. We haven't been paying attention to them. And **if (HC)(W)** you look at our tax policies, it's a classic example.

LEHRER: **So (A)(W)**, Senator McCain, do you agree with what Senator Obama **just (A)(W)** said? And, **if (HC)(W)** you don't, tell him what you disagree with.

MCCAIN: No, I -- **look (AC)(W)**, we've got to fix the system. We've got fundamental problems in the system. And Main Street is paying a penalty for the excesses and greed in Washington, D.C., and on Wall Street.

So (A)(W) there's no doubt that (A/it-C)(N) we have a long way to go. And, **obviously (A)(B)**, stricter interpretation and consolidation of the various regulatory agencies that weren't doing their job, that has brought on this crisis.

But I have a fundamental belief in the goodness and strength of the American worker. And the American worker is the **most (A)(S)** productive, the **most (A)(S)** innovative. America is **still (A)(W)** the greatest producer, exporter and importer.

But we've got to get through these times, but I have a fundamental belief in the United States of America. And I **still (A)(W) believe (CV)(W)**, under the right leadership, our best days are ahead of us.

LEHRER: **All right (A)(W)**, let's go to the next lead question, which is **essentially (A)(S)** following up on this same subject.

And you get two minutes to begin with, Senator McCain. And using your word "fundamental," are there fundamental differences between your approach and Senator Obama's approach to what you **would (M)(W)** do as president to lead this country out of the financial crisis?

MCCAIN: Well **(A)(W)**, the first thing we have to do **(AC)(N)** is get spending under control in Washington. It's **completely (A)(S)** out of control. It's gone -- we have **now(A)(S)** presided over the largest increase in the size of government since the Great Society.

We Republicans came to power to change government, and government changed us. And the -- the worst symptom on this disease is what my friend, Tom Coburn, calls earmarking as a gateway drug, because it's a gateway. It's a gateway to out-of-control spending and corruption.

And we have former members of Congress **now (A)(S)** residing in federal prison because of the evils of this earmarking and pork-barrel spending.

You know (AC)(B), we spent \$3 million to study the DNA of bears in Montana. I don't know **if (HC)(W)** that was a criminal issue or a paternal issue, but **the fact is (AC)(N)** that it was \$3 million of our taxpayers' money. And it has got to be brought under control.

As president of the United States, **I want to assure you (AC)(S)**, I've got a pen. This one's **kind of (A)(B)** old. I've got a pen, and I'm going to veto every single spending bill that comes across my desk. I will make them famous. You will know their names.

Now (A)(W), Senator Obama, you wanted to know one of the differences. a million dollars for every day that he's been in the United States Senate.

I **suggest (CV)(W)** that people go up on the Web site of Citizens Against Government Waste, and they'll look at those projects.

That **kind of (A)(B)** thing is not the way to rein in runaway spending in Washington, D.C. That's one of the fundamental differences that Senator Obama and I have.

LEHRER: Senator Obama, two minutes.

OBAMA: Well (A)(W), Senator McCain is **absolutely (A)(S)** right that the earmarks process has been abused, which is why I suspended any requests for my home state, **whether (HC)(W)** it was for senior centers or what have you, until we cleaned it up.

And he's also right that oftentimes lobbyists and special interests are the ones that are introducing these **kinds of (A)(B)** requests, although that wasn't the case with me.

But let's be clear (AC): Earmarks account for \$18 billion in last year's budget. Senator McCain is proposing -- and this is a fundamental difference between us -- \$300 billion in tax cuts to some of the wealthiest corporations and individuals in the country, \$300 billion.

Now(A)(W), \$18 billion is important; \$300 billion is **really (A)(S)** important.

And in his tax plan, you **would (M)(W)** have CEOs of Fortune 500 companies getting an average of \$700,000 in reduced taxes, while leaving 100 million Americans out.

So (A)(W) my attitude is, we've got to grow the economy from the bottom up. What I've called for is a tax cut for 95 percent of working families, 95 percent.

And that means that the ordinary American out there who's collecting a paycheck every day, they've got a little extra money to be able to buy a computer for their kid, to fill up on this gas that is killing them.

And over time (A)(B), that, I **think (CV)(W)**, is going to be a better recipe for economic growth than the -- the policies of President Bush that John McCain wants to -- wants to follow.

LEHRER: Senator McCain?

MCCAIN: Well (A)(W), again, I don't **mean (CV)(N)** to go back and forth, but he...

LEHRER: No, that's fine.

MCCAIN: Senator Obama suspended those requests for pork-barrel projects after he was running for president of the United States. He didn't **happen to see (AC)(B)** that light during the first three years as a member of the United States Senate, \$932 million in requests.

Maybe (A)(W) to Senator Obama it's not a lot of money. **But the point is that (AC)(N) -- you see (AC)(W)**, I hear this all the time. "It's only \$18 billion." Do you know that it's tripled in the last five years? **Do you know that (AC)(N)** it's gone **completely (A)(S)** out of control to the point where it corrupts people? It corrupts people.

That's why(AC)(N) we have, as I said, people under federal indictment and charges. It's a system that's got to be cleaned up.

I have fought against it my career. I have fought against it. I was called the sheriff, by the -- one of the senior members of the Appropriations Committee. I didn't win Miss Congeniality in the United States Senate.

Now (A)(W), Senator Obama didn't mention that, along with his tax cuts, he is also proposing some \$800 billion in new spending on new programs.

Now (A)(W), that's a fundamental difference between myself and Senator Obama. I want to cut spending. I want to keep taxes low. The worst thing we **could (M)(W)** do in this economic climate is to raise people's taxes.

OBAMA: I -- I don't **know (CV)(N)** where John is getting his figures. Let's **just (A)(W)** be clear.

What I do (AC)(N) is I close corporate loopholes, stop providing tax cuts to corporations that are shipping jobs overseas so that we're giving tax breaks to companies that are investing here in the United States. I **make sure (A)(S)** that we have a health care system that allows for everyone to have basic coverage.

I **think (CV)(W)** those are pretty important priorities. And I pay for every dime of it.

But let's go back to the original point (AC)(N). John, nobody is denying that \$18 billion is important. And, **absolutely (A)(S)**, we need earmark reform. And when I'm president, I will go line by line to **make sure (A)(S)** that we are not spending money **unwisely (A)(W).**

But the fact is (AC)(N) that eliminating earmarks **alone(A)(N)** is not a recipe for how we're going to get the middle class back on track.

OBAMA: And when you look at your tax policies that are directed **primarily (A)(N)** at those who are doing **well (A)(W)**, and you are neglecting people who are **really (A)(S)** struggling **right now (A)(S)**, I **think (CV)(W)** that is a continuation of the last eight years, and we can't afford another four.

LEHRER: Respond **directly (A)(S)** to him about that, to Senator Obama **about (A)(N)** that, about the -- he's made it twice **now (A)(S)**, about your tax -- your policies about tax cuts.

MCCAIN: **Well (A)(W) – well (A)(W)**, let me give you an example of what Senator Obama finds objectionable, the business tax.

Right now (A)(S), the United States of American business pays the second-highest business taxes in the world, 35 percent. Ireland pays 11 percent.

Now(A)(W), if **(HC)(W)** you're a business person, and you **can (M)(S)** locate any place in the world, then, **obviously (A)(B)**, if **(HC)(W)** you go to the country where it's 11 percent tax versus 35 percent, you're going to be able to create jobs, increase your business, make more investment, et cetera.

I want to cut that business tax. I want to cut it so that businesses will remain in -- in the United States of America and create jobs.

But, **again(A)(W)**, I want to return. **It's a lot more than (A/it-C)(B)** \$18 billion in pork-barrel spending. I **can (M)(S)** tell you, it's rife. It's throughout.

The United States Senate will take up a continuing resolution tomorrow or the next day, **sometime next week (A)(B)**, with 2,000 -- 2,000 -- look at them, my friends. Look at them. You'll be appalled.

And Senator Obama is a recent convert, after requesting \$932 million worth of pork-barrel spending projects.

So (A)(W) the point is (AC)(N), I want people to have tax cuts. I want every family to have a \$5,000 refundable tax credit **so (A)(W)** they **can (M)(S)** go out and purchase their own health care. I want to double the dividend from \$3,500 to \$7,000 for every dependent child in America.

I **know (CV)(N)** that the worst thing we **could (M)(W) possibly (A)(W)** do is to raise taxes on anybody, and a lot of people **might (M)(W)** be interested in Senator Obama's definition of "rich."

LEHRER: Senator Obama, you have a question for Senator McCain on that?

OBAMA: **Well (A)(W)**, let me **just (A)(W)** make a couple of points.

LEHRER: **All right (A)(W).**

OBAMA: My definition -- **here's what I can (AC)(N)** tell the American people: 95 percent of you will get a tax cut. And if **(HC)(W)** you make **less than (A)(B)** \$250,000, **less than (A)(B)** a quarter-million dollars a year, then you **will (M)(W)** not see one dime's worth of tax increase.

Now (A)(W), John mentioned **the fact that(AC)(N)** business taxes on paper are high in this country, and he's **absolutely (A)(S)** right. Here's the problem: There are **so many (A)(B)** loopholes that have been written into the tax code, **oftentimes (A)(B)** with support of Senator McCain, that we **actually (A)(S)** see our businesses pay **effectively (A)(S)** one of the lowest tax rates in the world.

And what that means (AC)(N), then, is that there are people out there who are working every day, who are not getting a tax cut, and you want to give them more.

It's not like (A/it-C)(W) you want to close the loopholes. You **just (A)(W)** want to add an additional tax cut over the loopholes. And that's a problem.

Just one last point I want to make (AC)(N), since Senator McCain talked about providing a \$5,000 health credit. **Now(A)(W), what he doesn't tell you (AC)(W)** is that he intends to, **for the first time (A)(N)** in history, tax health benefits.

So (A)(W) you may (M)(W) end up getting a \$5,000 tax credit. **Here's the only problem (AC)(N)**: Your employer **now(A)(S)** has to pay taxes on the health care that you're getting from your employer. And **if (HC)(W)** you end up losing your health care from your employer, you've got to go out on the open market and try to buy it.

It is not a good deal (A/it-C)(W) for the American people. But **it's an example of this (A/it-C)(N)** notion that the market **can (M)(S)** always solve everything and that the less regulation we have, the better off we're going to be.

MCCAIN: Well (A)(W), you know (AC)(B), let me **just (A)(W)...**

LEHRER: We've got to go to another lead question.

MCCAIN: I **know (CV)(N)** we have to, but this is a classic example of walking the walk and talking the talk.

We had an energy bill before the United States Senate. It was festooned with Christmas tree ornaments. It had all kinds of breaks for the oil companies, I **mean (CV)(N)**, billions of dollars worth. I voted against it; Senator Obama voted for it.

OBAMA: John, you want to give oil companies another \$4 billion.

MCCAIN: You've got to look at our record. You've got to look at our records. That's the important thing.

Who fought against wasteful and earmark spending? Who has been the person who has tried to keep spending under control?

Who's the person who has believed that the best thing for America is -- is to have a tax system that is **fundamentally (A)(B)** fair? And I've fought to simplify it, and I have proposals to simplify it.

Let's give every American a choice: two tax brackets, generous dividends, and, two -- and let Americans choose whether they want the -- the existing tax code or they want a new tax code.

And **so (A)(W), again (A)(W)**, look at the record, **particularly (A)(S)** the energy bill. But, **again (A)(W)**, Senator Obama has shifted on a number of occasions. He has voted in the United States Senate to increase taxes on people who make as low as \$42,000 a year.

OBAMA: That's not true, John. That's not true.

MCCAIN: And that's **just (A)(W)** a fact. **Again (A)(W)**, you can look it up.

OBAMA: Look (AC)(W), it's just not true (A/it-C)(W). And **if (HC)(W)** we want to talk about oil company profits, under your tax plan, John -- **this is undeniable (AC)(W)** -- oil companies **would (M)(W)** get an additional \$4 billion in tax breaks.

Now (A)(W), look (AC)(W), we all **would (M)(W)** love to lower taxes on everybody. But here's the problem: **If (HC)(W)** we are giving them to oil companies, **then (A)(W)** that means that there are those who are not going to be getting them. And...

MCCAIN: With all due respect (AC)(B), you **already (A)(B)** gave them to the oil companies.

OBAMA: No, but, John, **the fact of the matter is (AC)(N)**, is that I was opposed to those tax breaks, tried to strip them out. We've got an emergency bill on the Senate floor **right now (A)(S)** that contains some good stuff, some stuff you want, including drilling off-shore, but you're opposed to it because it **would (M)(W)** strip away those tax breaks that have gone to oil companies.

LEHRER: All right. All right (A)(W), speaking of things (AC)(N) that both of you want, another lead question, and it has to do with the rescue -- the financial rescue thing that we started -- started asking about.

And what -- and the first answer is to you, Senator Obama. As president, as a result of whatever financial rescue plan comes about and the billion, \$700 billion, whatever it is it's going to cost, what are you going to have to give up, in terms of the priorities that you **would (M)(W)** bring as president of the United States, as a result of having to pay for the financial rescue plan?

OBAMA: Well (A)(W), there are a range of things (A/it-C)(B) that are **probably (HC)(W)** going to have to be delayed. We don't **yet (A)(W) know(CV)(N)** what our tax revenues are going to be. The economy is slowing down, **so (A)(W) it's hard to anticipate right now(A/it-C)(B)** what the budget is going to **look like (A)(B)** next year.

But there's no doubt (A/it-C)(B) that we're not going to be able to do everything that I **think (CV)(W)** needs to be done. **There are some things (A/it-C)(B)** that I **think (CV)(W)** have to be done.

We have to have energy independence, **so (A)(W)** I've put forward a plan to **make sure (A)(S)** that, in 10 years' time, we have freed ourselves from dependence on Middle Eastern oil by increasing production at home, but **most importantly (A)(S)** by starting to invest in alternative energy, solar, wind, biodiesel, **making sure (A)(S)** that we're developing the fuel-efficient cars of the future **right here (A)(S)** in the United States, in Ohio and Michigan, instead of Japan and South Korea.

We have to fix our health care system, which is putting an enormous burden on families. **Just (A)(W)** -- a report **just (A)(W)** came out that the average deductible went up 30 percent on American families.

They are getting crushed, and many of them are going bankrupt as a consequence of health care. I'm meeting folks all over the country. We have to do that **now (A)(S)**, because it will **actually (A)(S)** make our businesses and our families better off.

The third thing we have to do (AC)(N) is we've got to **make sure (A)(S)** that we're competing in education. We've got to invest in science and technology. China had a space launch and a space walk. We've got to **make sure (A)(S)** that our children are keeping pace in math and in science.

And one of the things (AC)(N) I **think (CV)(W)** we have to do is make sure that college is affordable for every young person in America.

And I also **think (CV)(W)** that we're going to have to rebuild our infrastructure, which is falling behind, our roads, our bridges, but also broadband lines that reach into rural communities.

Also, **making sure (CV)(S)** that we have a new electricity grid to get the alternative energy to population centers that are using them.

So (A) there are some -- some things(A/it-C)(B) that we've got to do **structurally (A)(B)** to **make sure (A)(S)** that we can compete in this global economy. We can't shortchange those things. We've got to eliminate programs that don't work, and **we've got to make sure (AC)(S)** that the programs that we do have are more efficient and cost less.

LEHRER: Are you -- what priorities **would (M)(W)** you adjust, as president, Senator McCain, because of the -- because of the financial bailout cost?

MCCAIN: **Look (AC)(W)**, we, **no matter what (AC)(B)**, we've got to cut spending. We have -- as I said, we've let government get **completely (A)(S)** out of control.

Senator Obama has the **most (A)(S)** liberal voting record in the United States Senate. **It's hard (A/it-C)(B)** to reach across the aisle from that far to the left.

The point -- the point is -- the point is (AC)(N), we need to examine every agency of government.

First of all (A)(B), by the way (A)(B), I'd eliminate ethanol subsidies. I oppose ethanol subsidies.

I **think (CV)(W)** that we have to return -- **particularly (A)(N)** in defense spending, which is the largest part of our appropriations -- we have to do away with cost-plus contracts. We **now (A)(S)** have defense systems that the costs are **completely (A)(S)** out of control.

We tried to build a little ship called the Littoral Combat Ship that was **supposed (CV)(W)** to cost \$140 million, ended up costing \$400 million, and we **still (A)(W)** haven't done it.

So (A)(W) we need to have fixed-cost contracts. We need **very badly (A)(S)** to understand that defense spending is **very (A)(S)** important and vital, **particularly (A)(N)** in the new challenges we face in the world, but we have to get a lot of the cost overruns under control.

I **know (CV)(N)** how to do that.

MCCAIN: I saved the taxpayers \$6.8 billion by fighting a contract that was negotiated between Boeing and DOD that was **completely (A)(S)** wrong. And we fixed it and we killed it and the people ended up in federal prison so I **know (CV)(N)** how to do this because I've been involved these issues for many, many years. But I **think (CV)(N)** that we have to examine every agency of government and find out those that are doing their job and keep them and find out those that aren't and eliminate them and we'll have to scrub every agency of government.

LEHRER: But **if (HC)(W)** I hear the two of you **correctly (A)(S)** neither one of you is suggesting any major changes in what you want to do as president as a result of the financial bailout? Is that what you're saying?

OBAMA: No. As I said before, Jim, there are going to be things that end up having to be ...

LEHRER: Like what?

OBAMA: ... deferred and delayed. **Well (A)(W), look (AC)(W),** I want to **make sure (A)(S)** that we are investing in energy in order to free ourselves from the dependence on foreign oil. That is a big project. That is a multi-year project.

LEHRER: Not willing to give that up?

OBAMA: Not willing to give up the need to do it but there **may be (M)(W)** individual components that we can't do. But John is right we have to make cuts. We **right now (A)(S)** give \$15 billion every year as subsidies to private insurers under the Medicare system. Doesn't work any better through the private insurers. They **just (A)(W)** skim off \$15 billion. That was a give away and part of the reason is because lobbyists are able to shape how Medicare works.

They did it on the Medicaid prescription drug bill and we have to change the culture. Tom -- or John mentioned me being **wildly (A)(B)** liberal. **Mostly (A)(W)** that's **just (A)(W)** me opposing George Bush's wrong headed policies since I've been in Congress but I **think (CV)(W)** it is **that it is also important (A/it-C)(B)** to recognize I work with Tom Coburn, the **most (A)(S)** conservative, one of the most conservative Republicans who John **already (A)(B)** mentioned to set up what we call a Google for government saying we'll list every dollar of federal spending to **make sure (A)(S)** that the taxpayer **can (M)(S)** take a look and see who, **in fact (A)(S),** is promoting some of these spending projects that John's been railing about.

LEHRER: **What I'm trying to get at this (AC)(N)** is this. Excuse me **if (HC)(W)** I **may (M)(W),** senator. Trying to get at that you all -- one of you is going to be the president of the United States come January. At the -- in the middle of a huge financial crisis that is **yet (A)(W)** to be resolved. **And what I'm trying to get at (AC)(N)** is how this is going to affect you not in **very (A)(S)** specific -- small ways but in major ways and the approach to take as to the presidency.

MCCAIN: **How about (AC)(W)** a spending freeze on everything but defense, veteran affairs and entitlement programs.

LEHRER: Spending freeze?

MCCAIN: I **think (CV)(W)** we **ought to(M)(S) seriously (A)(S)** consider with the exceptions the caring of veterans national defense and several other vital issues.

LEHRER: **Would (M)(W)** you go for that?

OBAMA: The problem with a spending freeze is you're using a hatchet where you need a scalpel. **There are some(A/it-C)(B)** programs that are very important that are under funded. I went to increase **early (A)(B)** childhood education and the notion that we **should (M)(S)** freeze that when there **may be (M)(W),** for example, this Medicare subsidy doesn't make sense.

Let me tell you another place (AC)(N) to look for some savings. We are **currently(N)** spending \$10 billion a month in Iraq when they have a \$79 billion surplus. It **seems (EV)(W)** to me that **if (HC)(W)** we're going to be strong at home as well as strong abroad, that we have to look at bringing that war to a close.

MCCAIN: **Look (AC)(W),** we are sending \$700 billion a year overseas to countries that don't like us **very much (A)(S)** . Some of that money ends up in the hands of terrorist organizations. We have to have wind, tide, solar, natural gas, flex fuel cars and all that but we also have to have offshore drilling and we also have to have nuclear power.

Senator Obama opposes both storing and reprocessing of spent nuclear fuel. You **can't (M)(S)** get there from here and **the fact is (AC)(N)** that we **can (M)(S)** create 700,000 jobs by building constructing 45 new nuclear power plants by the year 2030. Nuclear power is not only important as far as eliminating our dependence on foreign oil but it's also responsibility as far as climate change is concerned and the issue I have been involved in for many, many years and I'm proud of the work of the work that I've done there along with President Clinton.

Results and Discussion

The following table shows the frequency of each grammatical category and the function as well as they appeared in the above transcript:

narrowers	Broadeners/ looseners Wideners	Strengtheners	Weakeners	Grammatical categories	
8	28	64	79	Adverbials	1
0	0	0	1	Epistemic verbs	2
0	0	12	19	Modal verbs	3
11	0	5	22	Cognitive verbs	4
0	0	0	18	Hypothetical constructions	5
4	11	1	3	Anticipatory it- clause	6
30	8	12	12	Anticipatory constructions	7

This table shows that adverbials in general score the highest frequency among other grammatical categories in all types of their semantic functions. The Weakening Adverbs score the higher frequency (79) and the strengthener adverbs score (64). These frequencies are the highest among the others.

These results prove that adverbials are usually used as a device for hedging to weakening rather than strengthening. And politicians do use hedging as a vague language in proposing their election campaign as a way of tentativeness.

As for the *anticipatory construction*, we notice that they are also scoring higher frequency in functioning as narrowers other than other functions.

Other categories vary from zero to 22 which means that they are rather less active in hedging the utterance.

Conclusion

This paper makes use of word class as well as clausal constructions to represent the forms of hedges in relation to certain grammatical categories, namely: adverbials, epistemic verbs, modal verbs, cognitive verbs, hypothetical constructions, anticipatory it-clause, and anticipatory constructions. The results of the analysis show the following:

1- Politicians do use hedges so that they can add a degree of uncertainty and non-commitment to an utterance.

2- The basic function of hedging devices used here in this debate is to indicate that speakers are not committed to what they say. In other words, they avoid making explicit statements.

3- Hedging devices used here are useful to express opinions but to soften them in the process.

4- Hedging are linguistic choices that include an inherent component of fuzziness. The higher frequency of the weakeners adverb proves this fuzziness.

References

- Bloomer Meriel & Thomas Bloomer. (2007) *The Practice of Critical Discourse Analysis: An Introduction*. London: Hodder Arnold.
- Brown, P. and Levinson, S. (1987). *Politeness. Some Universals in Language Usage*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Chafe, Wallace. (1986) "Evidentiality in English conversation and academic writing", in Chafe, W. and Nichols, J. (eds.): *Evidentiality: The Linguistic Coding of Epistemology* Norwood, N.J.: Ablex, 261-272.
- Chan Swee Heng and Helen Tan. *MAYBE, PERHAPS, I BELIEVE, YOU COULD - MAKING CLAIMS AND THE USE OF HEDGES*. Universiti Putra Malaysia <http://www.melta.org.my/ET/2002/wp09.htm> retrieved on 19.11.2009.
- Hahn, Walther von.(1983) *Fachkommunikation: Entwicklung, Linguistische Konzepte, Betriebliche Beispiele*. Berlin; New York: de Gruyter.
- House, Juliane and Kasper, Gabriele.(1981) "Politeness markers in English and German", in Coulmas, F. (ed.): *Conversational Routine*. The Hague: Mouton, 157-185.
- Lakoff G.(1972). "Hedges: A Study in Meaning Criteria and the Logic of Fuzzy Concepts". The 8th Regional Meeting of the Chicago Linguistic Society: 183-228.
- Lakoff, George. (1972). 'Hedges: A Study in Meaning Criteria and the Logic of Fuzzy Concepts', in Paul Peranteau, Judith Levi and Gloria Phares (eds.), *Papers from the Eighth Regional Meeting, Chicago Linguistics Society (CLS 8)*, pp 183-228.
- Leech, Geoffrey (1983). *Principles of Pragmatics*. London: Longman.
- Preisler, Bent. (1986) *Linguistic sex Roles in Conversation: Social Variation in the Expressions of Tentativeness*. Amsterdam: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Prince, Ellen F.; Frader, Joel and Bosk, Charles. (1982) "On hedging in physician-physician discourse", in Di Pietro, R.J. (ed.): *Linguistics and the Professions*. Norwood, N.J.: Ablex, 83-97.
- Quirk, R, and S. Greenbaum, and G. Leech, and J. Svartvik (1999). *A University Grammar of English*. Essex: Longman.
- Raija, Markkanen, and Hartmut Schröder (1997). *Hedging and Discourse: Approaches to the Analysis of a Pragmatic Phenomenon in Academic Texts*. Berlin; New York: Walter de Gruyter & Co.
- Raija, Markkanen, and Hartmut Schröder. *Hedging: A Challenge for Pragmatics and Discourse Analysis*. (1996-1999) by sw2@euv-frankfurt-o.de (When G. Lakoff (1972) published his article Hedges:

Retrieved on: January 21, 2010

Raija, Markkanen, and Schröder, Hartmut. (1989) "Hedging as a translation problem in scientific texts", in Laurén, C. and Nordman, M. (eds.): *Special Languages: From Human Thinking to Thinking Machines*. London: Multilingual Matters, 171-175.

Raija, Markkanen, and Schröder, Hartmut. (1992) "Hedging and its linguistic realization in English, German and Finnish philosophical texts: A case study", in Nordman, M. (ed.): *Fachsprachliche Miniaturen*. Frankfurt/Main et al.: Peter Lang, 121-130.

o.de/Publikationen/Hedging/zimmer/zimmer.html.

Schröder, Hartmut and Dagmar Zimmer (1997) *Hedging Research in Pragmatics: A Bibliographical Research Guide to Hedging*.

<http://www.sw2.eu-v-frankfurt>

retrieved on 22.11.2009.

Skelton, J. (1988). *The Care and Maintenance of Hedges in ELT Journal*, 42/1. Oxford University Press.

Zadeh, L. A. (1972) "Fuzzy-Set - Theoretic Interpretation of Linguistic Hedges", *Journal of Cybernetics* 2:3, 4-34.

تحليل نماذج نحوية ذات وظائف دلالية مستعملة في الخطاب السياسي بوصفه اسلوباً تحوطياً: المناظرة الرئاسية الاولى في الانتخابات الامريكية

المدرس رفيدة كمال عبد المجيد

قسم اللغة الانكليزية- كلية التربية للبنات- جامعة بغداد

الخلاصة:

التحوط هو تجنب الالتزام الكامل أو عدم الدقة لغوياً وانه كذلك فن استعمال للغة غامضة في الكلام لتجنب الالتزام بما يقال. ترمي هذه الدراسة الى تحديد الادوات النحوية التي تستعمل بصفتها اسلوباً تحوطياً في النصوص السياسية وكذلك ترمي الى التعريف بالوظائف الدلالية لهذه الادوات. استعملت هذه الدراسة اقسام الكلام وكذلك اشبه الجمل لظهور اشكال الكلام المنحوط. منها الظرفية، والافعال الملطفة، والافعال المساعدة، والافعال المعرفية، و التركيبات الافتراضية، والتركيبات الاستباقية. النص الذي تم تحليله في هذه الدراسة هو اول مناظرة جرت في الانتخابات الرئاسية الامريكية بين السناتور باراك اوباما والسناتور مكيين في جامعة مسيسيبي. اظهرت النتائج ان السياسيين يستعملون اسلوب التحوط في اثناء كلامهم حتى اذا ما تمت محاجتهم فيما بعد يقولون ان كلامنا كان تقريبياً.