



مجلة كلية التربية للعلوم الانسانية

مجلة علمية فصلية محكمة تصدرها كلية
التربية للعلوم الانسانية - جامعة ذي قار

ISSN:2707-5672

المجلد (12) العدد (1) 2022

جامعة ذي قار – كلية التربية للعلوم الانسانية- مجلة كلية التربية للعلوم الانسانية
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Vol (12) No.(1) 2022

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A Comparative pragmatic Analysis of Hedging in Male's and Female's Political Discourse

دراسة تداولية تقابلية لفهوم "التحوط" في خطاب السياسيين الذكور والإناث

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Keywords : hedging, hedges , political discourse , pragmatic functions
الكلمات المفتاحية: ظاهرة التحوط ، التحوطات ، الخطاب السياسي ، الوظائف التداولية

Abstract

This study aims at investigating and analyzing the significance of ' hedging' in political discourse. Janet Holmes (1984) has discussed this concept from a pragmatic perspective. Later , Urbanova (2003) proposed a model which this study has modified to be applicable to languages in general. Hedges are metadiscoursal devices that can be used to express uncertainty and to attenuate the illocutionary force of a given speech act. Context is the major factor that determines the type of the linguistic device in use .

There have been a number of researches dealing with the concept of ' hedging ' from different angles: political , scientific , pedagogical , sociological , and religious . However , Arabic and namely Iraqi discourses have not been explored before at any of the aforementioned levels. Consequently , this research is based on an analysis of a corpus of (20) interviews conducted by the native English with the Iraqi male and female politicians in which the researcher makes several comparisons among

these four groups so as to arrive at a better understanding of the difference in the orientations of the groups discussed in this study . The results of the analysis have shown (i) there are different orientations of the four groups towards the use of ' hedging ' , (ii) avoidance is the most commonly occurring strategy of hedging that characterizes spoken political discourse , and (iii) hedging is directly and widely affected by the recipient's design .

المستخلص

تهدف هذه الدراسة الى استقصاء وتحليل مفهوم التحوط في الخطاب السياسي . ضمن منظور المفهوم التداولي ، تناولت هولز مفهوم التحوط (Hedging) في عام (1984) ، بعدها قام الكثير من العلماء ومن ابرزهم اوربانوفا عام (2003) في تعديل هذا المفهوم ليكون أكثر شمولاً للغات العالم كافة . تعتبر أدوات التحوط (hedges) ما هي الا رسائل للخطاب الشارح الذي يستخدم للتعبير عن عدم التأكد من الشيء أو للتخفيف من حدة الكلام . ويعد السياق عاملاً رئيسياً لتسمية نوع الوظيفة المستعملة في الكلام .

تناولت الكثير من البحوث والدراسات مفهوم التعزيزات في الخطابات السياسية والعلمية والتعليمية والاجتماعية والدينية في كثير من لغات العالم ، بيد أن الخطابات العربية بشكل عام والعراقية على وجه الخصوص لم تسلط عليها الاضواء ضمن هذه الأصعدة من قبل . لذا ارتكز هذا العمل على التحليل التداولي لعشرين مقابلة مع سياسيين لامعين في الوسط الأمريكي والبريطاني والعراقي من الذكور والإناث للتعرف على الاختلاف في توجهات الجامع الأربع ضمن نطاق هذه الدراسة . وقد بينت نتائج التحليل (1) وجود فوارق في توجهات السياسيين من كلا الجنسين نحو استعمال أدوات التحوط (2) التحاشي أو التجنب هو أكثر وظيفة شيوعاً لمفهوم التحوط في الخطاب السياسي و (3) مفهوم التحوط مرتبط بصورة مباشرة وواسعة بنية المتلقي .

Introduction

Hedging has always been a subject of interest to linguists .Lakoff(1974:471) was the first who used this term to describe " words whose job is to make things more less fuzzy " . Fraser(1975:189) elaborates on the concept of hedging (HG henceforth) and introduces the term ' hedged performative ' . He states that when certain performative verbs in English such as 'apologize, 'promise' , and ' request' are preceded by specific

models such as 'can' , 'must', and 'should' , they result in an attended illocutionary force of the speech act designated by the verb.

Literature Review

Brown and Levinson (1987:146) developed the speech act aspect of HG. They treat HG of the illocutionary force of a speech act in more detail than Lakoff and Fraser. They emphasize that the true value of an argument is that ordinary communicative intentions are often potential threats to the co-operative interaction . Prince *et al.*(1982:83) draw a clear distinction between two types of HG: approximators and shields . The former type expresses fuzziness or vagueness of the propositional content itself and which therefore , constitutes a semantic phenomenon .The latter expresses fuzziness in the relationship between the propositional content and the speech which in turn deals with the problem from a pragmatic point of view .

The essential function of HG is to indicate uncertainty on the speaker's part towards the truth value of a current proposition rather than conveying the writer's assurance which is expressed by attitudinal markers . Items are only hedges(Hs) in their epistemic sense and only then when they mark uncertainty .According to Clemen (1997:244), Hs may be distinguished or identified in terms of mitigation , avoidance of unnecessary risks , expectation of possible reactions from the addressee's part , recognizing vagueness as a way for modifying the responsibility of the speaker or writer for the truth or validity of a proposition .This is particularly applicable in political discourse .

Furthermore , HG can frequently be found in the genre of political interviews and political debates . It has attracted the attention of many scholars like Lakoff(1972) Brown and Levinson(1987) , Holmes (1990,1995) Clemen (1997), Hyland(1998,2005) and so many others. It gains its importance as it offers a way to fill a gap in the study of discourse and text analyses . However , the concept itself still continues to be unclear

and its uses by linguists are far from being wholly achieved. Nevertheless , the most appropriate definition of HG is presented by Lakoff (1972) which later becomes the starting point for several successive studies on the very phenomenon . It has been proved to comprise multiple facets ; therefore, this concept has been approached in different ways depending on the type and genre of the text under examination . Lakoff's first work draws the attention of many scholars to focus on the importance of some fuzzy and vague expressions . However ,his work, in this general sense , has not offered on exhaustive explanation of HG.Thus , most of the subsequent studies have aligned their orientation towards the pragmatic aspects of a language instead of the semantic ones .

Aims

First ,this study aims at achieving the following :

1) Presenting the concept of HG and its concrete relationship to the understanding of the genre of a political speech act, namely political interviews .

2)Tracking the strategies of HG that are used by politicians of different genders and nationalities . That is , arriving at a conviction to how far the four groups are similar or different in the arrangement of their arguments in political discourse .

3)Investigating the significance of HG as a typical means through which politicians mitigate or accentuate the effect of a speech act .

Hypotheses

Assuming that HG is crucially affecting the politicians' speech acts , this study hypothesizes the following :

1- Native English and Iraqi female politicians are more direct in their expressions and less vague than males in the genre of political interviews . They exploit HG expressions to prove that they are successful in holding important political positions.

2-Male politicians , English and Iraqi, are less subjective and less involved with their audience than female politicians are .

Procedures

The research adopts the following procedures to investigate the hypotheses of the research :

1. Investigating the possible difference(s) between male and female political speakers through analyzing HG.
2. Tracing not only the lexical items that function as Hs., but also the syntactic structures (e.g. passive voice) prosodic devices (e.g. emphatic intonation) and discourse devices (e.g. linking signals) as possible strategies employed to render a message as hedged .
3. Analyzing the pragmatic aspects of various linguistic means which would take into account the context in which the utterance occurs . This can be justified by the same expressions which can be interpreted as a HG marker

Scope .

The current study limits itself to analyze (20) selected political interviews based on the difference of the frequency of occurrence of HG markers. The interviews are downloaded from the official websites of various international TV channels . The data are going to be analyzed according to Urbanova's Model (2003).

Methodology

Data Analysis

This section investigates the frequency of occurrence of HG in (20) selected televised interviews held with British , Americans , and Iraqi male and female politicians . There will also be a demonstration of the findings obtained from the analysis based on the differences in the frequency of occurrence of the intended functions in terms of genders and languages .

Functions of Hedging

From a pragmatic point of view , Urbanova (2003) proposes eight functions of HG used in face to face conversations in political interviews . Those functions are going to be exemplified with extracts from the English and Arabic data as follows.

1- Negative Politeness

Negative politeness (henceforth Neg.P) reflects the need to avoid face threatening resulting from direct refusal , disagreement or criticism .Urbanova (2003:62) comments that this phenomenon is connected with the principle of modesty since it is a requirement in social communication when speakers do not like to appear authoritative or arrogant . Thus , a face to face conversation displays a tendency towards softening or minimizing the assertiveness of some speech acts . Expressions like , '**I think** ' , '**it would be better ...**' , '**I guess**' , '**I don't think** ' , ...etc.,help illustrate this function.

Example (1)

Schieffer : Some people say with our forces stretched within Iraq already, we might not be able to launch an attack on anybody .

President Bush : **Well, I..I..I would disagree with that** . I think we 've got plenty of capability , but I..it ..it..it.. the first option , of course , is to .. is to solve this problem diplomatically , and that's where we are working to do .

The above extract displays that Bush is encountered with a confusing question about a very critical issue of the war against Iraq. The interviewee does not want to admit that the interviewer is actually telling the truth about the incapability of the American forces to launch another war against another country . Therefore , the U.S former president expresses his indirect disagreement by using the hedge phrase (**I..I..I would disagree with that**) . What is worthy to emphasize here is the use of the epistemic modal verb '**would** ' . Contextually speaking, this verb may have different perspectives : it can be used to express **Neg .P**. It can also be used to ask for permission or a polite request , and it can function as an assumption(henceforth **Asp**).

مقدم البرنامج : لم يبدو في الاعلام أن الشعب السوري يريد بشار الاسد , وفي مصر خرجت تظاهرات مؤيدة , ومثلها في اليمن وليبيا ؟
ابراهيم الجعفري : الاعلام مُدول , وتعوزه نوع من الموضوعية , يوسفني أن نعيش في عصر الديمقراطيات ومفاهيم الانسانية

In this example the interviewee criticizes the press media which sometimes lacks the authenticity of broadcasting as the speaker believes .He uses the expression " وتعوزه نوع " and " يوسفني أن نعيش " to appear very modest and to attack the media indirectly . The expression ' ' has its influence on modifying the illocutionary force in this reply since it mitigates the speaker' criticism and lightens the effect of the whole utterance.

2- Positive Politeness

Brown and Levinson (1987:140) find that the strategy of positive politeness (henceforth **Pos.P**) is used when an utterance is oriented to the positive face of the addressee . In other words , it deals with a person's desire to be understood by others , and that desire is to be treated friendly . It is polite to show insight into the hearer's problems where the speaker would rather express involvement with the issues in question . This phenomenon is also viewed as a " discourse tactic which is closely connected with tact , modesty , and generosity " Urbanova , 2003 : 60) . Pos. P. can be exemplified by expression like " **a bit** " , " **a little bit** " , " **a bit further** ...etc .

Example (3)

Schieffer : Everywhere I go , I find people who don't know what it means . Seniors are going to the drug store . They don't know what their plan is . They 're all mixed up . Do you think that's because of mismanagement , or is this law just so complicated that it can't be administered ?

President Bush : I think ...in all due respect , I think everybody having problems getting their drugs is not exactly what's taking place . Millions have signed up to a new , reformed Medicare .

The expression ' **in all due respect** ' relates to the positive attitude of the speaker . This strategy is very important in decreasing the social distance and increasing the effects of a positive speech act between the interlocutors . Therefore , politicians must show a positive relationship to their viewers and be frank and unreserved through using expressions that indicate positivity . Otherwise , they may have difficulties persuading their voters . Pos. P, as a strategy , is very close to that of boosting . The difference between them relates to the speakers' intention whether to attenuate or accentuate his/her utterance . The former shows modesty , while the latter boosts up a particular message and reveals solidarity .

Example (4)

سهير القيسي : هذه المرة يبدو أن الانتخابات تجري في أجواء من الناحية الامنية ممكن أن نعتبرها ايجابية . ما هي تحضيراتكم للانتخابات ؟

جواد البولاني : الحكومة العراقية متمثلة بأجهزتها الامنية خصوصاً اجهزة وزارة الداخلية والدفاع استطاعت ان تؤمن مساحة واسعة من كل العملية الانتخابية. والشئ الآخر هو خلق هاي البيئة المناسبة من الامن ومن الحرية في أن يصل هذا المصوت الى مركز الانتخاب بكل راحة وبكل اطمئنان. لأنني اعتقد الان المواطنين أصبحوا مدركين أهمية هذه الانتخابات لمجالس المحافظات العراقية والتي هي تعطيهم مؤشرات في أكثر من مجال باعتبار أن ظروف الامن في العراق الان أصبحت ظروفًا جيدة .

The speaker in the above example is trying to ensure the voters that the preparation for the next elections will be better secured than the ones before . The phrases " هو خلق " and " أصبحت ظروف جيدة " are set to eulogize the security forces which would be able to create a safe environment for the process of polling . This decreases the degree of stress and hesitation expected from the voters during the poll .

3- Assumption

Assumption (henceforth **Asp**) is the act of making a tentative proposition to avoid a firm assertion to be detached from others' claims . This function can be expressed by modal verbs as " **could** ", " **might** ", " **would** " ...etc; verb phrases like , " **I assume** " , " **I suppose** ", " **I expect** " ...etc; or by adverbial expressions like , " **perhaps**", " **possibly** ", " **supposedly** "...etc . These epistemic models are means to make assumptions and other functions depending on context . According to Palmer (2001:50) , " the function of epistemic modals is to make judgment about the possibility that something is or is not the case".

Example (5)

Male : The difference between Korea and Iraq is purely based on oil , because Iraq's an oil –producing country and Korea isn't .

Tony Blair : No, let me just deal with the oil thing because this is one of the ...**we may be right or we may be wrong** , I mean people have their different views about why we're doing this thing ?

The British former prime minister is hesitant to give a firm answer about this proposition . This is very clear in the expression , ' **we may be right or may be wrong** '. He presents two probabilities simply because he is uncertain about the claim he states . The speaker also uses the plural personal pronoun ' **we**' which implicates others , that is, he is trying to avoid giving a subjective involvement that may lead to a personal face loss if the claim is proved to be wrong in the future .

Example (6)

عبد العظيم محمد : هناك حملات اعتقال ومداهمات أعترض عليها رئيس مجلس النواب العراقي التي قال عنها قائد أمني أنها حملات اعتقال احترازية , نعم استاذ.

عزت الشايندر : العلاقة بين اجهزة الدولة العراقية , قد تكون هناك ممارسات كما تقول من قبل أجهزة الامن ولكن ربما تكون أمام جريمة منظمة تقف وراءها أجهزة مدعومة خارجياً وداخلياً .

As with the previous example , the speaker makes an assumption about a certain hypothesis but the technique is different . He juxtaposes between a theoretical supposition of a random arrest against some suspects when he says " قد تكون هناك " and mitigation when he states " ولكن ربما تكون امام جريمة منظمة " as an excuse to what the interviewer presents .

4- Unspecified Reference

Unspecified reference (henceforth Un.Ref.) is closely related to vagueness . The speaker may use certain linguistic devices like , ' a sort of ', ' a kind of ', ' a thing ', 'something ' ...etc ; either to hide a particular reference or not to reveal a certain piece of information . Urbanova (2003:64) argues that , " it is not always necessary or possible to make explicit reference to the extra linguistic reality and specify details " .

Example (7)

Schieffer : Is that an act of war against the United States on the part of the Iranian government ?

President Bush : I'm not a lawyer . So **act of war** is **kind of** a ...I'm not exactly sure how you define that . Let me just say it's unacceptable .

In the above example , the speaker uses the hedge, ' **kind of** ' because he is hesitant about giving a proper explanation to the phrase '**act of war** ' . In so doing , he reveals his uncertainty and ignorance of the content of the message .

Example (8)

ياسر أبو هلاله : لكل من يتهم السياسيين بأنهم يقومون بإعمال ارهابية... ألا يمكن أن يتهم هذه التحركات التي تضم الالاف وعشرات الالاف بنفس التهمة ؟

اياد علاوي : من يصدق هذا الاتهام ؟ وثانياً هل يمكن ان يتهم شخص تقبل الى حد ما , لكن ان تتهم مئات الالوف من الجماهير , هذا شيء لا يصدق...وقد يكون هناك أشخاص اخرين , في أدلة على فلان وفلان وفلان انهم

The Iraqi former prime minister seems very cautious in his speech not to point directly to those who are acting against the demonstrators . He continues to use some other hedges like " وقد يكون هناك أشخاص آخرين " and " " . These markers are actually referring to his uncertainty towards people involved.

5- Detachment

Urbanova comments on detachment (henceforth **Det**) as being compiled with the wish of the speaker not to be on record to show commitment very openly in public (2003:64). Further , Chafe (1985:106) emphasizes that **Det** is evidenced in the use of passivizations and nominalizations and it is noticeable as part of the institutionalized spoken language . This function can be expressed by phases like , " **I wouldn't say** " , "self" and other reference pronouns like , ' **I don't know** ' , 'it's said ' , ...etc.

Example (9)

Mr. Russert : Let me ask you this way . Doris Kearns Goodwin , presidential historian , I talked to her and she's been on MEET THE PRESS , talked about the qualities in a president . And she said one of the most important is that you learn from mistakes . Looking back on your vote in October of 2002 , what can you learn from that mistake , the way you'll make decisions in the future ?

Sen .Clinton : I would never do again what George Bush did with that vote .He misused and abused the authority that was given to him , **I would not have given president Bush the authority if I knew he would deliberately misuse and abuse it** ... because you know , I was against a preemptive war .

The phrase " **I would not have given President Bush the authority if I knew he would deliberately misuse and abuse it** " shows that the speaker thinks she has advantage over her rival by means of attacks . She also tries to show her reservation not

to capitalize her position and to degrade her rival , the U.S former president George W. Bush ,through exposing his misuse of authority and his disadvantageous behavior .

Example (10)

عماد العبادي : زين مو اياد علاوي شيعي .

عالية نصيف: اياد علاوي من جلسنا وياه أكثر من مرة قلنا له يا دكتور أنت رجل عابر للطائفية لا تخلي الطرف

الآخر بيده القرار. عماد العبادي : يعني كانوا القادة السياسيين يتحسسون من مذهبه ؟

عالية نصيف: والله انا ما اعرف شنو يصير بيناتهم أنا علي بالقرارات التي تطلع والتي كانت تخدم طيف على حساب طيف آخر .

عماد العبادي : زين ليش رادوا يهمشون اياد علاوي ؟

عالية نصيف: ما اعرف الاجندات الي بره شد يصير أكو اجندة افتهمناها متأخرة.

The utterance " and "والله ما اعرف شنو يصير بيناتهم أنا علي بالقرارات التي تطلع " The speaker is trying to express her uninvolvedness with the behavior of her former party leader through using these hedges. Thus, she does not want to make outright assertions and show her commitment in public to detach herself from certain incoming consequences .

6- Conversational Gambit

Conversational gambit (henceforth **Con.G**) can be expressed by the verb phrase , " **I mean** " when used as a transition element in a given conversation . However , evasion cannot be determined by a one-word expression , in that the whole utterance would perform the integration of measuring up such a tendency . Bhatia (2006:190) demonstrates that the **Con.G** is an important strategy which politicians adopt to make statements without giving information .

Example(11)

Michael Gordon : If you saw that the Iraqi government , under the dress of American withdrawals , was not making progress or if sectarian violence was beginning to increase in Iraq , would you call a halt to proceed anyway ?

Senator Barrack Obama : It is important to understand that there are no good options in Iraq I would not be surprised to see some spikes in violence as we begin the withdrawal . I think **there is a way of managing this that keeps this violence contained** .Now, the Iraqis are going to have to respond **to a change** in the security

situation inside Iraq , **one way or another** , and those in the region are going to have to respond as well.

The speaker in the extract above is giving little factual information . Thus , he could not name the exact way to contain violence in Iraq, '**there is a way of managing this that keeps this violence contained**' .This **Con.G** is also apparent in the expressions , '**a change**' and '**one way or another**'. The two utterances could not exhibit a specific reference to the way of making change that the Iraqi government is going to uphold .

Example (12)

قناة الشرقية : هل تعرفتي على السيدة وصال سليم أم لا سيدة حنان ؟
حنان الفتلاوي : والله اني رأيت الصورة وهي صورة جميلة ولكن الصوت لم أسمعه , مداخلة النائبة طالما كانت تتحدث لم أستطع التمييز أي شيء من صوتها لكن صورتها مليحة واعجبيني

In the above example , the speaker continues to forward her excuses to the interviewer and to the audience . The utterance " والله اني رأيت الصورة وهي صورة جميلة ولكن " suggests that she hides the fact that she is fully acquainted with her colleagues in the parliament .Again she is evasive and elusive in her reply to save her face before her potential voters .

7- Afterthoughts

In situations where the speaker needs to justify his/her claims , there is a tendency to add further information and explanation so as to be more persuasive and convenient in front of the audience. Urbanova (2003:65) views afterthoughts (henceforth **Afs**) as a remark which amplifies the meaning expressed previously to specify the circumstance of a speech event . This function can be illustrated by utterances like , '**in other words**' , '**let me add**' , '**I would say**' , '**I meant**' , '**further**' , ...etc .

Example (13)

Jon Sople : We 're not yet two years in , why did you decide to go so soon ?

Tony Blair : well I've set out all that last year . **I mean** it's not worth going back over . **I mean**, I think the most important thing is to make sure that for the time that remains as it were , **you** know , **we've** got a strong and energetic agenda that **we're** pushing forward and as **you** rightly have just implied internationally , the agenda is there .

The speaker in this example seems hesitant about what he says . He provides further explanations to render the first statement clearly . He uses the expression ' **I mean** ' twice to capitalize on his explanation . The switch between personal pronouns marks the speaker's lack of certainty in his speech . That is why he needs to appear confident in front of the audience . He first starts with the pronoun 'I' then moves to ' **we**' then to the pronoun 'you' to involve the hearer for the purpose of gaining a common agreement .

Example (14)

عبد العظيم محمد : هناك دراسات أيضا قدمت مؤخراً أن انتشار الفساد ونسبة البطالة المنتشرة في العراق بشكل كبير والى مستويات خطيرة هي أحد أهم عوامل العنف وبقاء العنف في الشارع العراقي , ما رأيك بهذا الكلام ؟
وليد الزبيدي : هناك على سبيل المثال من يرفض العملية السياسية لأنها تناسلت مما يعتبره شراً أمريكياً وهذه العملية السياسية محاصصة مقيته مدمرة خلال ثماني سنوات جاءت بكل هذا الخراب للشعب العراقي , فعندما يكون رد فعل بهذا الشكل... هو من منطلق رد فعل للمحافظة على وحدة العراق على شعبه على ثروته على مستقبل هذا البلد , أنا أقصد الذين يتصدون لقوات الاحتلال .

The interviewee in this example , attempts to validate his speech by giving further explanations to what he proposes resulting in over-generalization which may lead to a face loss . Consequently , the interviewee is cautious in his statement and for this reason , he uses the phrases " على سبيل المثال من يرفض العملية السياسية لأنها تناسلت مما يعتبره شراً أمريكياً " and " أنا أقصد " to limit his intention and to avoid the criticism of the recipients .

8- Downtoner

Attenuating the forthcoming message , in the general setting of political discourses , is one of the tactics politicians tend to employ . This happens by means of utilizing HG devices . In this regard , the face threatening acts are minimized and the heavy risk of opposition is reduced in order to save faces in front of the audience . Urbanova (2003:66) views downtoner (henceforth **Dot**) as " a procedure which results in the weakening of the illocutionary force in situation which would otherwise lead to a loss of face ". Expressions like , " **I would say** " , " **actually** " , " **in fact** " ,...etc. or

expressions that reveal the speaker's hesitation due to the lack of commitment , the lack of accurate information , or unwillingness to reveal certain information are best made use of to illustrate this function ; however , the context again is a decisive factor in realizing the actual function of these makers .

Example (15)

Schieffer : I want to ask sort of a philosophical question , and I just wonder , when we see some of these horror stories about torture and things that have happened in some of these prisons like Abu Graib , do you worry that may be we are losing the moral high ground in some way ?

President Bush : There is **no question. That's why it was important for us to investigate , to expose , and to hold people to account so people see there was a consequence for the behavior , and that's why it's important for us to constantly remind people that are ..we have got a wonderful heart and we are a compassionate nation . Our HIV/AIDS initiative on Africa is saving lives , our malaria ..our antimalaria initiative on Africa is savings lives .We feed more of the hungry in the world . I mean , we are doing marvelous things ,...**

The aggressive actions that happened in Abu-Graib have their negative impacts on the American troops in general and the American government in particular as identified by the U.S former vice-president , ' **no question . That's why it was important for to investigate , to expose , and to hold people to account so people see there was a consequence for the behavior**' . He then gradually moves to convince the international community that the real Americans are kind-hearted and have made a number of achievements to help people around the world " **...it's important for us to constantly remind people that are ..we have got a wonderful heart and we are a compassionate nation . Our HIV/AIDS initiative on Africa is saving lives . We feed more of the hungry in the world . I mean , we are doing marvelous things** ' . The speaker follows the strategy of intensification to attenuate the coming parts of his speech . This tendency is regarded as one of the main powerful acts that politicians follow to acquire the requirements of acceptability and forgiveness .

Example (16)

محمد الحمد : لعد ليش متحالفين ؟ اذا انتو بكلشي مختلفين . انطيني شي واحد انتو متفقين عليه .
مريم الرئيس : لا استاذي لا استاذي الاطراف الاخرى هي الاطراف ...
محمد الحمد : يعني احنا شعلينا بالاطراف الاخرى ؟ احنا انتخبناكم وانتو تحالفوا يعني دخلتوا بقائمتين بعدين توحدتوا .
مريم الرئيس : استاذ أنت أخي أنت في داخل عائلتك أولادك كلهم متفقين ؟ وكلكم عدكم رؤية وحدة ؟ أكيد مختلفين يا أخي . فكيف بالكتلة ؟

This example contains hedges through which the speaker can attenuate the message involved . In the beginning, the interviewee looks hesitant in giving the right answer to the question presented to her by "لا استاذي لا استاذي الاطراف الاخرى هي الاطراف". She then uses the strategy of rhetorical questions to bridge the gaps in her reply "أستاذ أنت أخي أنت في داخل عائلتك أولادك كلهم متفقين ؟ وكلكم عدكم رؤية وحدة ؟ أكيد مختلفين يا أخي . فكيف بالكتلة ؟". A rhetorical question, as a sub-metadiscourse marker , is context sensitive in the sense that it can serve both HG. and BG. depending on whether the speaker's intention is to hedge or to boost .

Analysis of Hedging in the Interviews of English Male Politicians

The following table shows the distribution of HG. functions in the political interviews of the native English male politicians .

Table (1) : Hedging in the Interviews of English Male Politicians.

| Hedging Markers | Frequency of Occurrence | Percentage |
|-----------------|-------------------------|------------|
| Neg.P | 79 | 7.0 |
| Pos.P | 88 | 7.8 |
| Asp | 364 | 32.5 |
| Un.Ref | 231 | 20.6 |
| Det | 55 | 5.0 |
| Con.G | 66 | 5.8 |
| Afs | 97 | 8.7 |

| | | |
|-------|------|------|
| Dot | 140 | 12.6 |
| Total | 1120 | 100% |

Table (1) reveals that the **Asp** function scores the highest frequency of occurrence among HG. in the political interviews of the native EMPs. The markers of this function appear (364) times . The politicians are mostly inclined to adopt the use of possibility and likelihood markers to disguise themselves from being firm with their assertions . Such adoption signals that the American and Englishmen of politics are hesitant from , non-committed to , and willing to withhold information in front of their audience. This tendency shows that these politicians prefer to appear uncertain rather than to lose face .

The second frequent function is the **Un .Ref.** It appears (231) times in the corpus of the American and British male politicians . Though the linguistic tools are different , this function is closely related to vagueness . Explicit references to particular personalities or events may not be possible or necessary ; therefore , politicians use these linguistic means to mask their purposes and avoid referring directly to the subject .

Dot is the third frequent function, appearing (140) times . Politicians endeavor to weaken the heavy burdened illocutionary speech acts through adopting this function. The data entail that these politicians are specifically keen on mitigating the negative effect of words . Consequently , they enroll different goals . Firstly , they show a fair success in downtoning the sensitive issues , especially those that are related to the war against Iraq . Secondly , they demonstrate a high involvement with their audience which after all results in strengthening their political stance and displaying their authenticity with regard to the subject matter proposed by the interviewers .

The fourth frequent function is **Afs.** It occurs (97) times in the selected interviews. This strategy is frequently adopted by those who do not want to appear evasive in the propositions . That is why they mend their speeches with extra explanations and justifications which consequently lead to make their speech acts more acceptable and more reliable .

Pos.p and **Neg.p** are the fifth and sixth frequent functions . The former scores (88) in number , while the latter occurs (79) times . These two functions are close in their results . The major function of **Pos.p** is to decrease the social distance between the interlocutors . The American and British male politicians focus on attenuating the sensitivity of the message through choosing these strategies . Consequently, it is less needed than the other functions . Equally important , **Neg.p** is a means whereby politicians mitigate the criticism against them in that they may politely reject others' claims . Thus, this function is connected with the indirectness of speakers' expressions . Politicians do not reject propositions directly ; instead , they use hedge markers to save their faces in front of their potential voters .

Con.G is the seventh frequent HG function in the interviews occurring (66) times . This function offers politicians the opportunity to be illusive and makes their awareness fuzzier than expected . The reasons behind this are either related to their lack of information or their will to avoid unpleasant truths , but behind all these motivations a political reason is also lurking . Due to these reasons , the politicians in question avoid opting for this device to show more involvement and understanding with their audience .

Lastly, is the **Det** . It records (55) instances . This rare recurrence is due to the fact that those politicians show involvement with rather than **Det** from their audience . Thus ,they can provide their audience with a good example of cooperation which is the basis of establishing a finer relationship with the listeners . The poor occurrence of the **Det** . also indicates that the American and British male politicians widely state their willingness to uphold responsibilities and commitments to their people .

Analysis of Hedging in the Interviews of English Female

Politicians This section is devoted to discussing the results of the English females' interviews as shown in Table (2).

Table (2) : Hedging in the Interviews of English Female Politicians

| Hedging Markers | Frequency of Occurrence | Percentage |
|-----------------|-------------------------|------------|
| Neg.P | 51 | 7.5 |
| Pos.P | 85 | 12.3 |
| Asp | 193 | 28.2 |
| Un.Ref | 187 | 27.2 |
| Det | 15 | 2.1 |
| Con.G | 53 | 7.8 |
| Afs | 29 | 4.3 |
| Dot | 73 | 10.6 |
| Total | 686 | 100% |

The above table shows that the highest score goes to **Asp**. function .Politicians are disposed to use this function to wrap themselves from being potentially assertive in their statements . The high frequency of this function proves that these speakers are hesitant and unwilling to reveal certain pieces of information . Nevertheless , what is worthy to note is that , sometimes , it is very difficult to determine if politicians do not really know the information or if they deliberately withhold it . On the contrary , they need to carry on such a strategy since some pieces of information are confidential and cannot be disclosed to the public .

The second frequent function is the Un. **Ref** which occurs (187) times. It stresses the fact that these women are typically inclined to be assertive in their replies . Equally important , female politicians use more potential and likelihood devices which express the degree of less certain quality . This is due to the fact that women find it more difficult to assert themselves in the field of politics .Thus , they shield themselves with these sub-metadiscourse markers ,i.e;(**Asp** .and **Un.Ref**) so as not to lose their faces .

The third frequent occurrence is the **Pos.p** which includes (85) instances . In their replies to the questions asked by the interviews and the audience , the EFPs are inclined

to show a good use of **Pos.p** since it emphasizes what people share and so it diminishes the distance between the interlocutors .

Dot is the fourth frequent function , occurring (73) times . Relatively speaking , those women politely mitigate the negative effects and criticisms against them or their parties . The reason is that they try, by all means to be closer to their audience, mitigating a forthcoming message . In return , the more the politician is successful in downtoning the essence of criticism, the better his/her stance in the political arena will be .

Table (2) above displays that **Con.G** is the fifth frequently occurring function appearing (53) times . Evasion is one of tactics that politicians often follow . However , **Con.G** can be seen as a weak point against the speaker . Since this function is less tackled by the women under estimation , it can be perceived that they are direct and straight in the political interviews they give.

The function of **Neg.p** occupies the sixth place, in recording (51) instances . The **Neg.p** strategy is used when an utterance is oriented to the addressee's negative face which in return seeks to compensate potential loss of face . The corpus analyzed shows that the EFPs have a keen interest in using the expressions of **Pos.p** as elicited by the aforementioned results . Therefore , this parameter informs the recipients that these politicians are very selective in their speech , informative , and applicably avoid face threatening speech acts . Beyond these motivations , they constantly seek to be convenient and persuasive in politics .

On the same level of significance ,the function of the **Afs.** comes in the seventh position . It occurs (29) times only . This low frequency of this function is due to the nature of the EFPs' language . In other words , they are informative speeches in interaction .

The lowest frequently function is **Det.** with (10) instances only. This minor function is very advantageous to female politicians . It proves that they are very much involved

with and close to their audience . Hence , the greater the politician is involved with the interlocutors , the wider acceptability he / she gets .

Analysis of Hedging in the Interviews of Iraqi Male Politicians

This section is dedicated to dealing with the Hs. functions of the native IMPs. The following table demonstrates the distribution of these functions :

Table (3) : Hedging in the Interviews of Native Iraqi Male Politicians.

| Hedging Markers | Frequency of Occurrence | Percentage |
|-----------------|-------------------------|------------|
| Neg.P | 48 | 10.7 |
| Pos.P | 23 | 5.1 |
| Asp | 57 | 12.7 |
| Un.Ref | 71 | 15.7 |
| Det | 20 | 4.4 |
| Con.G | 77 | 17.2 |
| Afs | 47 | 10.4 |
| Dot | 107 | 23.8 |
| Total | 450 | 100% |

Due to the current critical events in Iraq, the IMPs attempt to attenuate the heavy burdens the Iraqis are shouldered with . This is demonstrated by the high frequency of occurrence compared to **Dot** . among the rest . It occurs (107) times . Attenuating the illocutionary force of certain negative facts or attitudes has to do significantly with involvement . Table (3) shows **Det** as the lowest function as it involves only (20) instances . **Det.** is regarded as the direct antipode of involvement in which the interactional process comes to the stem while through **Det**, it is substantially subdued. Accordingly , the IMPs are rarely detached from their audience and are highly involved with them in the selected political interviews .

The second hedge function is the **Con. G**. The IMPs employ (77) instances in the male corpus . This function is a means for politicians to preserve their faces in front of their potential voters . Through these linguistic tools, politicians may avoid referring to a point that seems to be confusing . Being aware of their responsibility and status, their answers are sometimes evasive and vague . Paradoxically , as the results in table (3) show, IMPs are privileged by adopting this function . In reference to the Iraqi male corpus , it has been found that these politicians incline to follow this strategy as a kind of mitigation . Since the Iraqi situation is very critical , they tactically enlist such hedge devices to attenuate the negative facts to avoid being illusive in their replies .

The third function is the **Un. Ref.** occurring (71) times . The IMPs are not perceived to show realities explicitly . The ultimate goals behind this, are to counterbalance the surrounding circumstances , not to incite the sectarian strife ,and motivate the Iraqis to support their political stances .

Table(3) illustrates that the fourth position is occupied by the **Asp** occurring (57) times . The ultimate need to adopt such a strategy is to avoid firm assertions in front of the audience . The plethoric number of such a strategy is seen as a weakness on the side of the speaker . However , this type of Hs. is not so frequent in the genre of the Iraqi men of politics. This is because politicians concentrate more on attenuating the content of their message than on the hearer involved .

The fifth function presented in the same table is the **Neg.p** which occurs (48) times . Similar to the frequent occurrence of this function is the **Afs**. It occupies the sixth rank with (47) instances . The general settings of the interviews have an interviewer , interviewee (s) , and sometimes an audience . Through interviews , the modulators focus on eliciting the information from the interviewees . Almost all the interviewers ask politicians challenging questions and highlight the criticisms against them to meet their needs . The politicians' answers are decisive in determining their future political stances and they are expected to address such questions politely . Moreover , they need to show tact and modesty in their replies to the opposed criticisms . In the corpus of interviews , sometimes , the IMPs react against such criticisms without instant modifications

.Therefore, they use some linguistic markers so as to give more explanations or justifications to adjust what they say in order not to lose face . Due to this juxtaposition, it appears that the **Neg.p** and **Afs.** functions are close in their results to the Iraqi political men's interviews.

The sixth recorded function in table (3) is the **Pos.p** which records (23) instances . This sub-metadiscourse function is used to approximate the attitudes of interlocutors in an interaction . The IMPs show the least tendency to approach such a function , i.e., the social distance between these politicians and their audience is decreased, a matter that positively contributes to the maintenance of the speaker-hearer relationship.

Analysis of Hedging in the Interviews of the Iraqi Female Politicians

This section is devoted to dealing with the functional distribution of HG in the interviews of the Iraqi Female Politicians .Table (4) displays the frequency of occurrence of these functions :

Table (4) : Hedging in the Interviews of Iraqi Female Politicians.

| Hedging Markers | Frequency of Occurrence | Percentage |
|-----------------|-------------------------|------------|
| Neg.P | 43 | 9.8 |
| Pos.P | 21 | 4.7 |
| Asp | 81 | 18.4 |
| Un.Ref | 110 | 24.9 |
| Det | 10 | 2.2 |
| Con.G | 60 | 13.6 |
| Afs | 40 | 9.1 |
| Dot | 76 | 17.3 |
| Total | 441 | 100% |

The occurrence of the function of **Un.Ref.** is the highest. It occurs (110) times in the political interviews of the IFPs . The reason why these politicians approach this function is due to their intention to strengthen their positions in the political arena which

is the most dominating one . Further , the attributing markers of certainty have their own complications if not proved true. Thus , these politicians avoid using fixed references and their answers are mostly mixed with uncertainty so as to protect their faces .

The second most frequently occurring function is the **Asp** which occurs (81) times . It is interrelated with the above marker from a pragmatic point of view . In their replies to the interviewers' questions , the IFPs. have frequently used expressions of modality , namely , the epistemic . This subcategory of modality is determined by the context , in that, it may hedge or boost an illocutionary force of a speech act . Under the rubric of HG, these politicians express uncertainty , doubt , and lack of commitment to the proposition . Through this approach , the IFPs. take into their consideration listeners and so offer them a hope for the future .

Dot. occupies the third position in the functional distribution of the HG. in the interviews of the IFPs which records (76) instances as shown in table (4) . The major role of mitigation is to weaken the illocutionary force of a given speech act . The IFPs are highly motivated to tackle this function in political interviews. They reflect modesty and intimacy and serve to attenuate the content of the given utterances. All these particles show that these Politicians are highly engaged with the hearers . This involvement helps support their position in politics. The sphere of politics is regarded as an area typical of men where women have a difficulty in asserting themselves . Besides , the Iraqi voters (males and females) consider them unqualified to be in this position and they do not believe in their abilities . That is why the IFPs strongly endeavor to persuade the voters to show that they are the right persons for the positions they hold or aspire to hold .

Numerous examples of **Con. G** are extracted from the Iraqi female political interviews illustrating this function . It is the fourth HG. function as presented in table (4) with (60) examples . Evasiveness in politics may be seen as a weak point on the part of the speaker; however , the data vindicate why these women utilize such a strategy . In different occasions , women's replies are not direct to the point and many parts of the questions asked by the interviewers are overlooked . This is due to two assumptions :

first , their lack of appropriate information and second , they possibly try to avoid giving answers that may spoil the sensitive situation . As to the first assumption , the IFPs have less access than men to the necessary information about the critical situation in Iraq. The second assumption has to do with mitigation . Women in this genre possibly attempt to contain the confusing particles that may lead to an unexpected reaction on the side of the political parties they represent or their rival parties .

Table (4) exhibits that the fifth frequently occurring function is the **Neg.p**, involving (43) instances . It is widely accepted that politeness (either positive or negative) is a culture specific phenomenon . That is to say , the expressions that are perceived as positive or negative in English may not be conceived as polite in another language . Participants in a conversational exchange usually express the **Neg.p** to people whom they want to keep at distance . This means that this function stresses the social distance . Therefore , the IFPs show a less tendency to use this function since their interest is mainly focused on decreasing the social distances between them and the audience .

The function of the **Afs** is the sixth frequently occurring one as made clear in the above table . It occurs (40) times. The less frequent occurrence in the interviews of the IFPs indicates that their speeches are purposeful and perceivable to their audience . Therefore, they rarely need to amplify their replies .

The seventh function of HG is the **Pos.p** with (21) instances . This function is used to orient the positive face of the addressee . It aims directly to establish and strengthen the relationships between the interlocutors . This tendency is close to involvement . The IFPs exploit this tendency through highlighting the function of mitigation . Accordingly, it is evident that these women resort to use this function very rarely . Another evidence of the close relation between these Politicians and their audience is the scarce occurrence of **Det**, comprising only (10) instances . The paradoxical relation between mitigation which is (resembled by involvement) and **Det** . suggests that these Female Politicians are felicitous in their relations with their people and very much involved with the audience's problems (similar to the low percentage of **Det** .).

Analysis of Hedging in the Interviews of the English and Iraqi Male Politicians

This section is devoted to dealing with the distributional analysis of HG functions as used by the English and Iraqi male politicians . Table (5) illustrates the percentages and the frequent occurrences of these metadiscourse markers found in the (10) interviews with the speakers .

Table (5) : Hedging in the Interviews of English and Iraqi Male Politicians

| Hedging Markers | Frequency of Occurrence | Percentage |
|-----------------|-------------------------|------------|
| Neg.P | 127 | 8.1 |
| Pos.P | 111 | 7.0 |
| Asp | 421 | 26.8 |
| Un.Ref | 302 | 19.3 |
| Det | 75 | 4.7 |
| Con.G | 143 | 9.1 |
| Afs | 144 | 9.2 |
| Dot | 247 | 15.8 |
| Total | 1570 | 100% |

The above table shows that **Asp.** function occupies the first position as it occurs (421) times in the intended corpus . Two distinctive sub-metadiscourse markers can feature in the function of the **Asp.**, which are **modality** and **hesitation**, reflecting potentiality and likelihood .

Via this technique , these politicians shroud their own ideologies which they convey in veiled expressions of caution so as to depict themselves as reserved but honest politicians . As to hesitation , these politicians are repeatedly encountered by a pile of

confusing and challenging questions presented by the interviews and /or the audience . These kinds of questions would misbalance the force of their speech acts either due to their lack of reasonable and convincing replies or their unwillingness to divulge certain information to the public . Thus , they deliberately adopt certain particles to emphasize issues that might not be met in the future .

The former selected interviews contain also expressions that refer to potentiality but with a slight difference . **Deontic modality** can also be observed in the interviews of the English and Iraqi male politicians . They make use of such deontic expressions when they seem to be bewildered in front of their audience. The aim is to devolve particular responsibilities on others in order to wave their political commitments and not to show hesitation towards issues of necessity that may sound odd in the political arena . Consequently , these politicians impose obligations upon others to spare them the loss of their faces and to get rid of such kind of allegiances .

The analyzed televised political interviews reveal that the **Un.Ref.** is the second most frequently used function by the American, British and EMPs. As shown in the table above , there are (302) instances of this technique . This HG function is another way to mitigate the force of a speech act that may otherwise damage the politicians ' political careers or the positions they hold . That is why they mostly provide very notable and bulky examples of uncertainty in terms of their indefinite and indirect references to people who may be thought in charge of certain responsibilities towards their people .

The two functions above are radically different from the function of **Det.** The former ones enable the speaker to reduce their responsibilities diplomatically without making a straight indication that the speakers are trying to detach themselves from their audience , while the latter refers directly to speakers who verbally detach themselves from their people .Thus, this function occupies the lowest position among other HG functions (see table 5) . The table also shows that the **Det.** markers occur only (75) times. These politicians do not prefer to disengage themselves very openly from the public since this would lead to degrade their propositions in front of the audience .

Another aim that these politicians have in mind is how they are typically capable of mitigating the force of speech acts which are mostly parameterized in political crises . The Iraqi issue is confusing on both the Iraqi side as well as the American and British side . As to the Iraqis , they persist to decrease or even clear up the heavy burdens imposed on the Iraqis due for the violence in Iraq . As for the American and British politicians , they stereotypically endeavors to mitigate the Iraqi issue to persuade their audience and justify the actions of the (2003) war against Iraq so as not to lose their faces in front of their people and the whole international community .

Table (5) shows that the results of the **Afs.** and **Con.G.** are very close .However, the former exceeds the latter in few instances . The function of **Afs.** records (144) examples , whereas the function of **Con.G.** records (143) instances . The low frequency of occurrence of these two functions is due to the high occurrence of the **Asp.** And **Un.Ref.** The EMPs and IMPs adopt the latter function since they may redirect their speech act towards a better understanding . This makes it clear that these politicians rarely need to explain and justify their propositions . The investigation of the speech markers demonstrates that they also tend to be evasive and indirect on various but not over numbered occasions . When doing so , they fall back to decrease the state of being illusive in order to reinforce their speech acts with justifications and explanations .

The **Neg.p** and **Pos.p** occupy the sixth and seventh ranks successively . The former includes (127) examples and the latter occurs only (111) times .Politicians pay less attention to the utterances of **Neg.P.** This entails that they do not care much to mitigate the face threatening act resulted from direct criticism or refusal . As regards the latter strategy , the results reveal that the male politicians are close enough to their people . This is why they occasionally tend to activate this strategy in interviews .

Analysis of Hedging in the Interviews of the English and Iraqi Female Politicians

This section demonstrates the functional distribution by HG. in the political interviews of the English and Iraqi female politicians . Table (6) reveals the results of the ten interviews analyzed .

Table (6) : Hedging in the Interviews of English and Iraqi Female Politicians

| Hedging Markers | Frequency of Occurrence | Percentage |
|------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------|
| Neg.P | 94 | 8.3 |
| Pos.P | 106 | 9.4 |
| Asp | 274 | 24.4 |
| Un.Ref | 297 | 26.4 |
| Det | 25 | 2.2 |
| Con.G | 113 | 10.0 |
| Afs | 69 | 6.1 |
| Dot | 149 | 13.2 |
| Total | 1127 | 100% |

The table above shows that the highest HG. function in the interviews of the female politicians is the **Un.Ref.** It occurs (297) times which indicates that these women are inclined to use unclear references to detach themselves from being held in charge of issues which may ruin their political positions . Due to the critical political positions they hold, female politicians restrict themselves and avoid direct references to names and events so as not to trigger possible serious conflicts among parties or people in their countries .

Closely related is the result of the **Asp.** as the second ranked HG. function : It is another important strategy used to mitigate critical political scenes . It involves (274) instances in which women evince a strong influence on the use modality to express potentiality and mitigate the forthcoming messages . In politics , female politicians so far need to duplicate their stances and prove that they are able to have superior political acceptability . These sub-metadiscourse markers of **Asp.** function make it possible for

females to generate utterances of probability that preserve their challenge from being ramped . These politicians are not fit enough to experience politics even in modern communities . Thus , they strongly try to manifest all the stuffs (e.g; expressions of uncertainty) so as to be on the safe side and far from being involved with issues that may not be proved true in future .

The function of **Dot.** is the third category and it occurs (149) times . It is another important strategy that female politicians overtly resort to in the political interviews . They catalogue a high ranked conviction that attenuates the illocutionary force of a speech act as important as the other strategies are . However , this HG. category appears a less frequent in comparison with the previous functions . The reason why female politicians switch to capitalize on the functions of **Un. Ref** and the **Asp.** is because they realize the need to prove themselves as successful in their careers as their counterparts . Nevertheless , this does not mean that they would not downtone the serious nature of political events .

The fourth frequent function is the **Con. G**, recording (113) examples . It enables the speakers to escape certain confusing situations when there is a shortage in their information or they are unwilling to say certain things in politics publicly . Female politicians tend to accomplish this technique so as not to lose face before their audience . Further , being not supplied with the needed information is conceived of as a point of weakness in the political arena . Thus female politicians utter , on various occasions , vague utterances instead of confirming unrealized potentialities that may affect their political stances .

The fifth HG. function is the **Pos. p**. which appears (106) times . Its linguistic expressions help the speakers to be close to their audience .These expressions are very likely essential in mitigating the speech acts that heavily burden the recipients. However, female politicians pay less attention to **Pos.p** . because they alternatively focus on mitigation .

The **Neg. p** . is another technique to which these politicians pay less attention. It occurs (94) times and is used to attenuate the criticisms against the interviews .The results in table (6) show that there is clear evidence that female politicians do not care about mitigating such criticisms . Instead , they place much more emphasis on issues related to their political stances and to the techniques that would better serve the purpose of involving them with the audience . This consequently reinforces their political career.

The function of **Afs** . occupies the seventh position . The number of the markers is (69). This low occurrence is due to the language that female politicians use in their face to face conversations . That's , they largely punctuate their utterances and avoid vague utterances . Thus , they rarely need to reevaluate or reinforce their acts of speech with additional justifications and clarification .

The least function is the **Det.** as it only contains (25) instances . These politicians ,both English and Iraqi , avoid being uninvolved and detached from their audience . This is due to the fact that the closer a politician is to his/her people , the more chances s/he has in occupying superior political position.

Analysis of Hedging in the Interviews of the English and Iraqi Male and Female Politicians

This section seeks to analyze the results of the interviews of both male and female English and Iraqi politicians . Table (7) shows the frequencies of occurrence of HG. functions.

Table (7) : Hedging in the Interviews of English and Iraqi Male and Female Politicians

| Hedging Markers | Frequency of Occurrence | Percentage |
|------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------|
| Neg.P | 221 | 8.2 |

| | | |
|---------------|------|------|
| Pos.P | 217 | 8.0 |
| Asp | 695 | 25.8 |
| Un.Ref | 599 | 22.3 |
| Det | 100 | 3.7 |
| Con.G | 256 | 9.5 |
| Afs | 213 | 7.8 |
| Dot | 396 | 14.7 |
| Total | 2697 | 100% |

As shown in the above table , the function of **Asp.** records the highest occurrence as it appears (695) times . This result means that politicians , in general , prefer to make use of this function since it enables the speaker to safely balance his/her attitude and save the face if otherwise an utterance does happen to be fulfilled in the future .

The second frequently occurring function is the **Un. Ref** . It appears (599)times . This technique is another good helper for politicians to dedicate enough space for themselves and hedge the illocutionary force of their speech acts . The most gregarious tool which features in this function is the use of depersonalization, which enables the speaker to refer to a person or an event allusively. Thus , politicians can reveal certain political particles that the audience is eager to know about covertly .

Dot is the third position occupied by the HG. Function. It occurs(369) times . Politicians , in general , seek to decrease the tension that might create crises . They try to contain such crises to achieve several goals : (1) they need to preserve their political stances ; (2) they are in charge of controlling and wrapping off all surrounding political needs ; and (3) they try strongly not to lose their faces in front of their audience . All these justifications elevate the rank of the **Dot** . However, according to the results in table (7) , politicians resort to the **Asp.** and the **Un. Ref** . strategies to attenuate the force of the speech act more than the **Dot.** strategy since the latter may affect less the essence of the very illocutionary force .

The fourth HG. function is the **Con. G.** which records (256) examples . **Con .G.** enables the speaker in face to face conversations, namely political interviews , to twist their replies when they are encountered with embarrassing questions . When the tools of this marker are over-numbered , this means that the interviewees are not successful in approaching the objective and attenuating a given speech act . Moreover , they would lose face and may not obtain the acceptability of this function which does not resemble a highly record rank among other functions. This indicates that politicians realize the need to be direct and straightforward in their replies instead of being evasive .

The fifth HG. function is the **Neg. p.** which comprises (221) instances . This suggests that politicians pay less attention to the tactics of downtoning criticisms against them during their interviews . Further , these politicians offer less space to such kind of criticisms and they believe that it is better for them to neglect rather than address these criticisms . So, all the attacks against them affect them slightly .

The **Pos. p** occupies the sixth position, recording (217) examples . This low frequency of occurrence is advantageous in the sense that the **Pos.p** acts to bring politic close to their audience . The result of this strategy is very poor , a matter that suggests that the interlocutors are close enough and their relationships are firmly buckled up. Consequently , politicians rarely fall back to employ the **Pos.p** in their discourse .

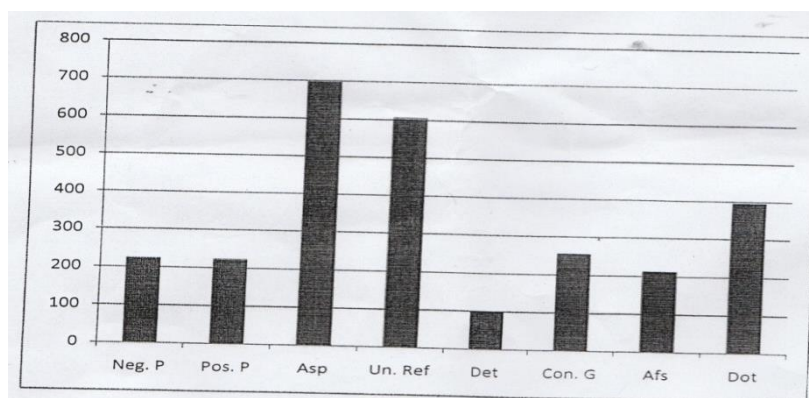
The seventh HG. function is the **Afs.** It occurs (213) times . This result is close to the one of the **Pos.p**, that is , the result is also advantageous because the involved speech acts are not going to be significantly mended or reoriented . This means that these politicians perform fertile perlocutions which need no further explanations and justifications .

Discussion of Hedging Results

The following table and figure show the HG. results arrived at from the selected interviews.

Table (8) : Hedging Functions

| Interviews | NP | Pos.p | Asp | Un.Ref | Det | Con.G | Afs | Dot |
|------------|-------|-------|--------|--------|-------|-------|-------|--------|
| 1 | 9 | 19 | 61 | 30 | 8 | 12 | 22 | 22 |
| 2 | 23 | 8 | 107 | 79 | 19 | 25 | 9 | 29 |
| 3 | 15 | 19 | 72 | 30 | 7 | 8 | 13 | 27 |
| 4 | 23 | 26 | 69 | 66 | 13 | 16 | 33 | 32 |
| 5 | 9 | 16 | 55 | 26 | 8 | 5 | 20 | 30 |
| 6 | 6 | 24 | 47 | 53 | 3 | 16 | 8 | 16 |
| 7 | 10 | 30 | 39 | 42 | 2 | 7 | 2 | 11 |
| 8 | 13 | 14 | 23 | 29 | 5 | 6 | 2 | 18 |
| 9 | 8 | 2 | 28 | 22 | 2 | 13 | 2 | 15 |
| 10 | 14 | 15 | 56 | 41 | 3 | 11 | 15 | 13 |
| 11 | 8 | 4 | 9 | 15 | 4 | 11 | 13 | 12 |
| 12 | 13 | 8 | 17 | 23 | 6 | 20 | 11 | 34 |
| 13 | 13 | 6 | 16 | 18 | 5 | 13 | 8 | 19 |
| 14 | 12 | 3 | 11 | 8 | 3 | 13 | 8 | 25 |
| 15 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 7 | 2 | 20 | 7 | 17 |
| 16 | 13 | 4 | 11 | 18 | 2 | 10 | 3 | 15 |
| 17 | 7 | 5 | 21 | 21 | 2 | 12 | 5 | 19 |
| 18 | 14 | 4 | 13 | 23 | 0 | 14 | 17 | 12 |
| 19 | 6 | 3 | 21 | 34 | 3 | 14 | 10 | 20 |
| 20 | 3 | 5 | 15 | 14 | 3 | 10 | 5 | 10 |
| Total | 221 | 217 | 695 | 599 | 100 | 256 | 213 | 396 |
| Percentage | 8.2 % | 8.0 % | 25.8 % | 22.3 % | 3.7 % | 9.5 % | 7.8 % | 14.7 % |



Multiple Comparison of Hedging Functions

This section provides discussions of the HG. functions utilized by the four groups of politicians :the **Emps**, the **EFPs**, the **IMPs**, and the **IFMs**.

Table (9) displays the frequency of occurrence of the function of the **Neg.p** as employed by the four groups .

Table (9) : Distribution of Negative Politeness

| Function | EMPs | | | EFPs | | | IMPs | | | IFPs | | |
|---------------|-------|----------|------|-------|----------|------|-------|----------|-------|-------|----------|------|
| | Freq. | Total Hs | % | Freq. | Total Hs | % | Freq. | Total Hs | % | Freq. | Total Hs | % |
| Neg. P | 79 | 1120 | 7.0% | 51 | 686 | 7.5% | 48 | 450 | 10.7% | 43 | 441 | 9.8% |

Neg. P is one of the strategies that is followed by politicians to show their disagreement indirectly and to react diplomatically so as not to sound too authoritative in their replies . The EMPs use this strategy the least in that appears (79) times with the percentage (7.0%). The EMFs employ this strategy (51) times only, i.e. (7.5 %) . The IMPs top the list in this category as they employ (48) instances i.e.,(10.7%). They used (43) instances with the percentage (9.8 %) . This suggests that the English politicians are more realistic and less superficial in their replies , while the Iraqis often employ artificiality and evasion in their reactions and answers . This finding is also supported by the results of the function of the **Con.G**.

The **Pos.P** is required when speakers claim intimacy with their interlocutors . Such kind of attenuation is utilized to express low Det and high involvement with the recipients' problems . The following table demonstrates the frequency of occurrence of this function as used by the politicians.

Table (10) : Distribution of Positive Politeness

| Function | EMPs | | | | EFPs | | | | IMPs | | | | IFPs | | | |
|----------|-------|----|-------|------|-------|----|-------|-------|-------|----|-------|------|-------|----|-------|------|
| | Freq. | Hs | Total | % | Freq. | Hs | Total | % | Freq. | Hs | Total | % | Freq. | Hs | Total | % |
| Pos.P | 88 | | 1120 | 7.8% | 85 | | 686 | 12.3% | 23 | | 450 | 5.1% | 21 | | 441 | 4.7% |

The EMPs employ this strategy (88) times with the percentage (7.8%) . The EFPs use the Pos.P (85) times, i.e. (12.3 %) . The markers of this function are used (23) times , i.e.(5.1%) by the IMPs and (21) times with the percentage (4.7%) by the IFPs . Evidently , the IMPs and the IFPs are slightly motivated to show insight and curiosity towards the audience . Further , they structure their speech acts to focus on strategies that may attenuate the present Iraqi political crises since this country is passing through exceptional circumstances where the politicians are the most important actors. These results are supported by the high frequency of occurrence employed by the Iraqi politicians in the function of the **Dot** . On the other hand , the high frequency of occurrence by both the EMPs and the EFPs suggests that they are very concerned to be involved with and close to their interlocutors in creating a genuine impression of mutuality and reciprocity.

The **Asp** is the highest strategy whose function is connected with potentiality and likelihood . The characteristics of the very function enable speakers not to affirm certain attitudes and to save their faces if what they propose would not be fulfilled in future .This leaves a room for politicians to negotiate various potentialities and their opinions are open to alternative interpretations by the recipients . Table (11) illustrates the distribution of this function in the data of the study :

Table (11) : Distribution of Assumption

| Function | EMPs | | | EFPs | | | IMPs | | | IFPs | | |
|----------|-------|----------|-------|-------|----------|-------|-------|----------|-------|-------|----------|-------|
| | Freq. | Total Hs | % | Freq. | Total Hs | % | Freq. | Total Hs | % | Freq. | Total Hs | % |
| Asp | 364 | 1120 | 32.5% | 193 | 686 | 28.2% | 57 | 450 | 12.7% | 81 | 441 | 18.4% |

The table above illustrates that the EMPs use (364) examples with the percentage (32.5%) and thus , they are the highest in employing this function . The second group is the EFPs . They use this strategy (193) times or (28.2 %) of the data. The IMPs are the least in utilizing this HG strategy . It has only been used (57) times or (12.7 %) . The IFPs frequently use the **Asp** markers (81) times , i.e.(18.4%) . Thus , they employ this strategy more than the IMPs and less than the English politicians do. This high frequency of occurrence suggests that the EMPs and the EFPs are highly inclined to assume rather than predict public attitudes publicly in that they do not want to take full responsibility through avoiding firm assertions . As to the IFPs , they tackle this function lesser than the English politicians do since they try to be more assertive and straightforward in their interviews . The IMPs, on the other hand , emphasize the strategies that downtone the serious political events rather than shield themselves or build rapports with the audience .

The **Un.Ref** is another important HG strategy that politicians employ to mitigate the illocutionary force of a given speech act . Through the indirect reference to a particular persona or event , they can achieve different goals : firstly , they covertly spell certain

tips that people are eager to know; secondly , politicians would detach themselves from being involved with others' suggestions in that they use a less involved attitude towards propositions that might not be predicted easily. Table (12) below demonstrates the frequency of occurrence of this function :

Table (12) : Distribution of Unspecified Reference

| Function | EMPs | | | EFPs | | | IMPs | | | IFPs | | |
|----------|-------|----------|-------|-------|----------|-------|-------|----------|-------|-------|----------|-------|
| | Freq. | Total Hs | % | Freq. | Total Hs | % | Freq. | Total Hs | % | Freq. | Total Hs | % |
| Un.Ref | 231 | 1120 | 20.6% | 187 | 686 | 27.2% | 71 | 450 | 15.7% | 110 | 441 | 24.9% |

The table above shows that the EMPs use this strategy (231) times which forms (20.6%) , while the EFPs employ it (187) times with the percentage (27.2%) . As to the IMPs, they tackle (71) instances of the Un. Ref in the interviews which constitutes (15.7%) . The remaining group is the IFPs . They use (110) instances , i.e.(24.9%) of this function .The percentages of the HG markers used by each group suggest that the EFPs record the highest score . This signals that they highly stress this strategy because they face a more difficult position in asserting themselves as successful politicians in the field of politics . The IFPs record the second highest score as they find it necessary to use this function for the same reason , but less than the EFPs. As to the EMPs and the IMPs, they are less concerned with this strategy for two reasons :firstly , they do not need to prove themselves as qualified politicians as women do; secondly , their intention is detaching rather than involving themselves with other's claims which may otherwise influence negatively the validity of their political decisions . Relatively , the EMPs and the IMPs manifest different HG strategies that have more concrete influences on their voters than the function of the **Un. Ref** .

The **Det** is the least frequently used function. It is used only (100) times in the corpus . This is demonstrated in the table below:

Table (13) : Distribution of Detachment

| Function | EMPs | | | EFPs | | | IMPs | | | IFPs | | |
|------------|-------|----------|------|-------|----------|------|-------|----------|------|-------|----------|------|
| | Freq. | Total Hs | % | Freq. | Total Hs | % | Freq. | Total Hs | % | Freq. | Total Hs | % |
| Det | 55 | 1120 | 5.0% | 15 | 686 | 2.1% | 20 | 450 | 4.4% | 10 | 441 | 2.2% |

The EMPs use the Det markers (55) times , i.e.(5.0%) ; the EFPs produce (15) instances which records (2.1%) ; the IMPs use (20) examples , i.e.(4.4%) , and finally , the IFPs employ this function only (10) times with the percentage (2.2%) . The results of the EMPs and the IMPs indicate that female politicians try to be closer to and more involved with their potential voters so as to support their political stances. However , this function is not so frequent in political interviews , a matter that can be attributed to the intention of politicians who often express involvement with rather than detachment from their audience . Further , the low frequency of occurrence of this function can be interpreted in that politicians , in general , cannot be completely detached from the public since their objective is to gain voters and not to lose them . Therefore , it would be difficult , if not impossible , to influence their potential voters if they detach from them .

The **Con .G.** is associated with the tendency to avoid commitment to the speakers' suggestions that make their answers indirect and not straightforward . Politicians employ this function so as to withhold certain pieces of information and/or protect themselves from criticisms. Table (14) below explores the various distributions of the function .

Table (14) : Distribution of Conversational Gambit

| Function | EMPs | | | EFPs | | | IMPs | | | IFPs | | |
|-----------|-------|----------|------|-------|----------|------|-------|----------|-------|-------|----------|-------|
| | Freq. | Total Hs | % | Freq. | Total Hs | % | Freq. | Total Hs | % | Freq. | Total Hs | % |
| Con. G | 66 | 1120 | 5.8% | 53 | 686 | 7.8% | 77 | 450 | 17.2% | 60 | 441 | 13.6% |

The EMPs use (66) markers of the **Con.G** with the percentage (5.8%) , while the EFPs employ (53) instances (7.8%). The IMPs utilize this function (77) times or (17.2%) .The IFPs use (60) markers which constitute (13.6%) . Successively, the IMPs and the IFPs are highly evasive and less straightforward in the political interviews they give as compared to the English politicians . This high frequency of occurrence is due to their intention to withhold necessary information and to protect their political positions . Alternatively, the EFPs and the IFPs, with a slight substantial difference in the frequency of occurrence, they use this strategy less than the Iraqi male politicians since the former needs to prove that they control their language and express themselves to the point . This is relatively related to their intention in defending their positions in front of their audience and further to assert themselves in the area of politics . The results suggest that the IMPs and the IFPs implement this strategy more than the English politicians do . This result supports the assumption that the Iraqi politicians are artificial and evasive in their replies to the questions presented by the interviews or raised by the audience .

The **Afs** function is often used when the speakers need to modify and justify their statements , especially when they feel not comfortable enough in their speech acts . Table (15) shows the frequency of occurrence of this function as employed by the four groups of politicians :

Table (15) : Distribution of Afterthoughts

| Function | EMPs | | | EFPs | | | IMPs | | | IFPs | | |
|----------|-------|----------|---|-------|----------|---|-------|----------|---|-------|----------|---|
| | Freq. | Total Hs | % | Freq. | Total Hs | % | Freq. | Total Hs | % | Freq. | Total Hs | % |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------------|-----------|-------------|-------------|-----------|------------|-------------|-----------|------------|--------------|-----------|------------|-------------|
| Afs | 97 | 1120 | 8.7% | 29 | 686 | 4.3% | 47 | 450 | 10.4% | 40 | 441 | 9.1% |
|------------|-----------|-------------|-------------|-----------|------------|-------------|-----------|------------|--------------|-----------|------------|-------------|

The results in table (15) suggest that the EMPs and the EFPs pay less attention to modify their statements and utterances in the interviews. The former uses the **Afs** markers (97) times with the percentage (8.7%) , whereas the latter uses (29) instances , i.e.(4.3%). The low occurrences of this HG function are symmetric with the results obtained from the function of the **Con. G** . In other words , the English politicians are more straightforward and less evasive in their replies than the Iraqis are . The IMPs use (47) markers of the **Afs** or (10.4%). The Iraqi politicians are highly inclined to employ evasive markers in their speech acts . As a result, they need to mend their speech rather than the English politicians do . Hence , they duplicate the use of the **Afs** function to make their replies more convenient and persuasive . The IFPs are more straightforward than the Iraqi males since they use the **Afs** strategy in the interviews analyzed. These results emphasize again that female politicians need to prove themselves as successful and qualified enough in the political arena more than males do .

The **Dot** is a fundamental HG strategy used to attenuate the forthcoming parts of the utterance in which the illocutionary force of the proposition is weakened .Thus , it is important for politicians to highlight the use of this function , especially in political crises . Table (16) displays the results of the **Dot** function held with the politicians involved in this study :

Table (16) : Distribution of Downtoner

| Function | EMPs | | | EFPs | | | IMPs | | | IFPs | | |
|-------------------|-------|----------|-------|-------|----------|-------|-------|----------|-------|-------|----------|-------|
| | Freq. | Total Hs | % | Freq. | Total Hs | % | Freq. | Total Hs | % | Freq. | Total Hs | % |
| Down toner | 140 | 1120 | 12.6% | 73 | 686 | 10.6% | 107 | 450 | 23.8% | 76 | 441 | 17.3% |

The table above demonstrates that the EMPs employ this strategy (140) times which forms (12.6%), while the EFPs utilize it (73) times with the percentage (10.6%) . The

IMPs employ 107 instances , i.e. (23.8%) in their interviews , while the IFPs use (76) examples which constitute (17.3%) . These percentages suggest that the EMPs pay less attention to be highly engaged with mitigation markers . The EFPs are the least to care about involving themselves with mitigation because they promote strategies that stress their political positions rather than attenuating the illocutionary force of the speech acts through downtones . On the contrary , the IMPs highlight this function due to the critical political situation in Iraq in that they may possibly cast off the burdens on the Iraqi people's shoulders through employing the **Dot** markers in their speech acts . The IFPs also adopt this technique , but the frequency of occurrence is less than it is with the Iraqi males . The reason is that their intention to prove themselves successfully in the political area rather than mitigating the political crises in Iraq is via employing attenuation markers as the IMPs do .

Conclusion

. The analysis of the data has arrived at the following conclusions:

1. The total number of Hs used by male politicians is (1570) while female exploit (1127) Hs markers .
- 2.The total number of **Con .G** markers used by male politicians is (143) , while females employ (113) instances. This result validates the hypothesis that female politicians are more direct in their expressions and less vague than males in the political interviews .
- 3.Male politicians record (421) examples of the **Asp** function , while females implement only (274) instances in their data . This function is typically related to the degree of involvement with the audience and to the subjectivity of the speaker. This , in turn , fulfills the hypothesis which states that males are less subjective and less involved with their audience than females do .
- 4.The IMPs are very much inclined to attenuate the forthcoming messages which influence the force of any given act of speech .The manifestation of this strategy makes it possible for the Iraqi politicians to cast off the burdens on the shoulders of their people . This is why it occupies the first position in their data .

5. The **Det** strategy is not so frequently used in the sense that all politicians avoid it . This is due to the fact that the politicians' intention is to show involvement with rather than **Det** from their voters . Further , politicians focus not only on the transmission of information and facts , but also they want to establish a good rapport with their interlocutors .
6. The EMPs are highly motivated to show modesty and tact with their recipients than the rest . This corresponds to the result of the function of **Pos .P**.
7. Politicians show a very poor interest in responding to the criticisms against them as seen in the low frequency of occurrence of the **Neg. P** strategy .

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Interviewees' Biography

- 1- **Alia Nsaif** (2007-2014) is parliamentary member (2007-2014), (State of Law Coalition), and a Member of the Affairs and Parliamentary Development.
- 2- **Anthony Charles Blair** (1997-2007) is a British Labour Party politician who served as the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom.
- 3- **Ayad Allawi** (2004-2005) is an Iraqi politician, and was the interim Prime Minister of Iraq prior to Iraq's 2005 legislative elections.
- 4- **Barack Hussein Obama**(2009-2014) is the 44th and current President of the United States.
- 5- **Ezzat Al- Shabander** (2007-2014) is parliamentary member (State of Law Coalition).
- 6- **George Walker Bush** (2001-2009)is an American politician and businessman who served as the 43rd President of the United, States of America.
- 7- **Hanan Al-Fatlawi** (2007-2014) is a parliamentary member, (State of Law Coalition), and a Member of the Affairs and Parliamentary Development.
- 8- **Hillary Diane Clinton** (2009-2013)is a former United States Secretary of State, U.S. Senator, and First Lady of the United States. She was the 67th Secretary of State, serving under President Barack Obama.
- 10-**Ibrahim Al-Eshaiker Al-Jafari**(2005-2006) is an Iraqi politician who was Prime Minister of Iraq in the Iraqi Transitional Government from 2005

to 2006, following the January 2005 election. He was previously one of the two Vice Presidents of Iraq under the Iraqi Interim Government.

11. **Jawad Al-Bulani** (2006-2010) served as the Interior Minister of Iraq within the Council of Ministers under Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki.
- 12- **Maha Al-Duri** (2007-2014) is a parliamentary member (Al-sadder Movement) and a Member of the Parliamentary Commission on Human Rights in the second round of elections.
- 13- **Maryam Al-Rayes** (2007-2014) is a parliamentary member and the adviser of Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki.
- 14- **Waleed Al-Zubaidy** (2004-2014) is an Iraqi political analysis, writer, and a parliamentary candidate.