

THE FACT OF HEDGES IN OPRAH WINFREY TALK SHOW

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ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this study is to identify and describe the types of hedges (in others study termed as taxonomy of hedges) as well as the pragmatic functions that the hedges/hedging expressions creating the implied meaning in Oprah Winfrey Talk Show. By following Evans' (2006) theory on the types of hedges/hedging expressions, this study found that Oprah Winfrey Talk Show contains 9 (nine) types of hedges/hedging expressions which are equally used by Oprah Winfrey toward her interlocutors.

In terms of pragmatic functions of hedges/hedging expressions, it is found that most the hedges/hedging expressions are used for mitigating a criticism or request and softening a stance or opinion. This identification is following Simpsons' (2010) finding on her study about hedges in scientific discourse. In addition, the result of this study suggests that the use of hedges/hedging expressions (in the talk show) carries speaker and sentences implicature.

The findings of this research also indicate that hedges/hedging expressions can be used to signal the sensitivity to other's feeling. This means that the use of hedges/hedging expressions may help to feel what others' feeling about, through the context of the conversation. As the result, even it is like common conversation but there are many politeness utterances considerably. Therefore, it is suggested that the study about the use of hedges/hedging expressions could be extended, strengthened and improved in the practical contexts to cover the attempts to help students develop their ability of speaking and competence in rearrange the topic into smooth and good communication. In a broader perspective, the use of hedges/hedging expressions could be developed, either through practical teaching in the classroom or through language researches.

Key Words: *hedges, pragmatic function of hedges, implicature.*

Introduction

Language can be viewed from many aspects, such as forms, functions (meaning) and most importantly as the medium of communication, which may appear either in the form of verbal or non-verbal communication. In the case of verbal communication, language cannot or need not be completely precise all the time because communicants are in up and down. For instance, when communicating with certain interlocutors in order to make sense of what is being talked about, a speaker often implies something to avoid providing direct information, particularly by way of using certain language expression; and one of the usual language items that is often used in this context is called 'hedges'.

In expressing ideas, people may use hedges/hedging expressions but they often do not realize that their statements contain hedging expressions, just because people do not only prefer to get the point of communication but also consider the value of maintaining good communication with the interlocutor. By means of hedges, speaker

avoid saying something definite, the result then, they keep their option open, like the one exemplified with the use of the hedging expression *I think* in the following example.

(1) “***I think*** *I don't like Prof. Stanford*”.

The expression “*I think*” in example (1) suggests that the speaker avoids expressing the core of the sentence as what the expert might do. By doing so, the speaker in this case needs to use such a hedging expression to make his/her utterance sound less authoritative. Theoretically, the use of such a linguistic particle seems to modify the degree of membership of a predicate or a noun phrase (e.g., *think*) in a set. In other words, it is partial or true only in certain respects, or that it is more true and complete to be categorized as hedges (Brown and Levinson, 1987).

This also happens when the same speakers use the modal adverbs such as *perhaps*, *possibly* and *maybe*, in which they unconsciously use the expressions of hedges. For example,

(2) ‘...***perhaps*** we should wait outside in the hall, darling.’

The word ‘*perhaps*’ here indicates that the speaker is in uncertainty or tentativeness situation. He/she shows uncertainty about his/her statement. ‘*perhaps*’ might be used as an open statement by speaker to the hearer to attract the respond to form such cooperative communication, because he/she is still uncertain about action has to take.

Here, it is clear that the use of such the use of the items of hedges shows us that hedges can also be employed to express the ‘*implied*’ meaning of an expression which is often termed as ‘*implicature*’. Consider the following dialogue.

(3) Alan : Are you going to Paul's party?

Alice : I have to work.

If this was a typical exchange, Alice meant that she is not going to Paul's party. But the sentence she uttered does not mean that she is not going to Paul's party. Hence Alice did not *say* that she is not going, she *implied* it. Both technical terms of *implicate* and *implicature* expressed for the case of what from the speaker said, there is a distinct from what the speaker thereby meant (implied, or suggested). Thus Alice implicated that she is not going; that she is not going was her *implicature*. The difference between saying and implicating affects whether meaning something one does not believe is a lie. If Alice knew she did not have to work, then she was lying in dialogue (3). If she knew she was going to Paul's party, she might be guilty of misleading Alan, but not of lying.

As above examples clear described, it is not possible to understand speakers fully without knowing what they have conversationally implicated as well as what they have said.

Oprah Winfrey has been very effective in every speaking activity within the shows she been making. She is able to use language in such a way that leads her interlocutors to give detail answers. By using various language expressions and gestures, including hedges, Oprah can attract her guests to share more detail information of the topic being discussed, even questions those are considered (by particular culture-values) inappropriate or classified into very personal questions will become common question when it is stated by Oprah Winfrey during the Talk Show.

In line with the importance of considering authentic verbal communication process, this article deals with the analysis of the types of hedges and their functions and *implicatures* being used in the Oprah Winfrey Talk Shows by presenting three following issues,

1. What types of hedges are found in Oprah Winfrey Talk Show?
2. What pragmatic functions of hedges does Oprah Winfrey Talk Show have?

3. What are the *implicatures* of the use of hedges in Oprah Winfrey Talk Show?

The first objective of this study is to identify and describe the types of hedges/hedging expressions used in Oprah Winfrey Talk Show. The identification and description of the types of hedges/hedging expressions here are based on those which are popularized by Francois Salager-Meyer (1994) which then improved by Evans (2006) which does not significantly have differences. In this perspective, hedges are divided into. *Modal Auxiliary verbs, Modal lexical verbs, probability adjectives, nouns, adverb, approximators of degree, quantity, frequency and time, introductory phrases, "if" clauses, and compound hedges*

The second objective deals with the identification and descriptions of the functions of hedges in the Oprah Winfrey Talk Show. The functions of hedges in this talk show are focused on the pragmatic functions of hedges identified by Simpsons (2010). Covering 8 (eight) pragmatic functions of hedges. This study will reveal such functions as express fuzziness, inexactitude (the following word is not the exact or best word), expresses uncertainty (lack of/decreased commitment to a proposition), Softening a stance or opinion (further qualifies/modifies the statement), mitigating a criticism or request, preceding sophisticated vocabulary or jargon words, preceding metaphors, and filled pauses.

By focusing on the identification speaker implicature and sentence implicature, this study aims at not only identifying but also explaining the two implicatures in term/in relation hedges/hedging expressions which tend to be used as one of politeness strategies. In other words, the use of hedges in their appropriate circumstances will help smoothing the conversation between Oprah and her guests. This, in turn, will create audience awareness towards the wholeness of the talk show.

This study **theoretically** significance that can give the readers some explanations on the use of hedges and look its function, hopefully readers will get well informed about hedges insights, especially, how the hedges words are used in daily communication among people. It also hope can contribute to the development of linguistics knowledge. **Practically** significance to the TEFL context, it would bring many advantageous effect to the improvement of student's English mastery orally-effective. As an English teacher, this study could be a good way of introducing students with numerous facts of variations of using English in a spoken model. In related to that, students (in this sense) can explore what is the proper utterance, show meaning are constructed which are influenced by different situation for different purposes.

The nature of hedges

It is undeniable that pragmatics is the branch of linguistics which studies how utterances communicate meaning in context. This suggests that pragmatic deals with the study of the use of language expressions. In a more practical sense, Mey (2004) noted that pragmatics concerns with the way people use their language in communication. In other words, pragmatics studies the use of language in communication, by which people convey their messages to the person or people with whom the addressers are communicating (Coates, 1996).

The use of the term "hedge or hedging" dates back to Lakoff's (1972) paper entitled "Hedges: *A study in meaning criteria and the logic of fuzzy concepts*". Since then, Lakoff (1972) popularized the concept of hedges in relation to the practical use of certain linguistic items which are essentially hedging expressions. In this context, Lakoff was interested in the properties of hedging words or expression such as *rather* or *sort of*

which tend to make things fuzzy or less fuzzy (vague or less vague). For Lakoff, hedging involves the attenuation of the membership of particular expressions, such as:

- a) John is **sort of** smart.
- b) That is **technically** a bookcase.

or the reinforcement of the class membership, such as:

- a) John is **very, very** smart.
- b) I **really** love you.
- c) What I tell you is the **absolute** truth.

In his further elaboration of the concept of hedges, Lakoff began with a semantic discussion of *sort of*, pointing out that this predicate modifier and the like reveals different distinctions of category membership. For example,

- a) A robin is **sort of** a bird. [false, no questions it's a bird]
- b) A chicken is **sort of** a bird. [true, or very close to true]
- c) A penguin is **sort of** a bird. [true, or close to true]
- d) A bat is **sort of** a bird. [false, or very close to false]
- e) A cow is **sort of** a bird. [false]

the use of *sort of* in the above sentences suggests that degree of truth must be “*rejected*” for a real bird, “*possibly*” accepted for a non-prototypical bird like a chicken or penguin, but “*rejected*” again when the animal of which *bird* was being predicated was simply not a bird or not much of a *bird*.

Lakoff discussed other hedges such as *par excellence*, *typically*, *strictly speaking*, *loosely speaking*, and *in essence*, showing that these hedges interact with the term they modify, but in different ways.

Fraser (1975) then extended the discussion about hedges to cover the term *Hedge Performative*, where certain *performative* verbs such as *apologize*, *promise*, and *request* when preceded by *specific modals* such as *can*, *must*, and *should*, as in

- a) I **should** apologize for running over your cat.
- b) I **can** promise that I will never again smoke grass.
- c) I **must** request that you sit down.

result in an attenuated illocutionary force of the speech act designated by the verb. In these examples, the modals were considered as hedges. Example (a) is still an apology, just one less strong than if *should* were not present.

It was Brown and Levinson (1987) who developed fully the speech act aspect of hedging. Whereas Lakoff considered only *propositional hedging*, and Fraser touched only on *performative verb hedging*. Brown and Levinson (1987) treated the hedging of the illocutionary force of a speech act in great detail in their efforts to account for politeness phenomena. This second type of hedging called referred to as *Speech Act Hedging* (Fraser, 2010).

Types of hedges

Prince *et al.* (1982) made a clear distinction between two categories of hedging; one category that involves the propositional content and affects the truth condition of the proposition conveyed (*propositional hedging*), and a second type that involves the relationship between the propositional content and the speaker and serves as an index of the commitment of the speaker to the truth of the propositional content conveyed (*speech act hedging*).

In a further discussion, hedging expressions then sub-categorised into their types covering *Approximators* and *Shields*. *Approximators* operate on the propositional content proper and contribute to the interpretation by indicating some markedness, that

is, non-prototype, with respect to class membership of a particular item. There are two subclasses: *Adaptors* (acknowledged to be what Lakoff called hedges), relate to class membership; for example, *somewhat, sort of, almost describable as, some, a little bit*.

a) He also has a *somewhat* low interior larynx.

b) She noticed that he was *a little bit* blue.

And *Rounders*, convey a range, where the term is typical, for example, *about, approximately, something around*, etc.

a) His weight was *approximately* 3.2 kilograms.

b) The baby's blood pressure was *something* between forty and fifty.

Both sub-classes occur when the speaker is attempting to correlate an actual situation with some prototypical, goal-relevant situation, where the hedging indicates that actual situation is close to but not exactly the expression modified.

Shields change the relationship between propositional content and the speaker by implicating a level of uncertainty with respect to speaker's commitment. Here, again, there are two subclasses. First, *Plausibility Shields* are expressions that relate doubt, such as *I think, I take it, probably, as far as I can tell, right now, I have to believe, I don't see that*, etc., illustrated by the following.

a) *I think* we can just slow him down to a little over maintenance.

b) *As far as I can tell*, you don't have anything to lose by taking that path.

Prince *et al.* point out that whereas the un-hedged versions imply that the speaker has knowledge via observations and/or logical reasoning, statements marked by a *plausibility shield* imply that the speaker is making the assertion based on plausible reasons.

The second subclass, *Attribution Shields* are expressions such as *according to her estimates, presumably, at least to X's knowledge*, etc., which attribute the responsibility of the message to someone other than the speaker, often via plausible reasoning.

a) He was not very ill, *according to her estimates*.

b) There was no reason to worry, *as far as anyone knew*.

The authors also point out that one usually does not impose belief on another when the speaker believes that the proposition at issue is false. For example, in , *According to Dr. Jenkins, we should take out the shunt before we move him*.

It is clear that the speaker in (*According to Dr. Jenkins, we should take out the shunt before we move him*) is typically committed to the truth of the statement.

Finally, Fraser (1980) wrote about *Mitigation*, the attenuation of unwelcome effects on the hearer and proposed a classification of mitigating mechanisms (mostly hedging devices) based on her view of the three components of the utterance on which mitigation can operate: *the proposition, the illocution, and the utterance source*. She called these *Bushes, Hedges, and Shields*, respectively. *Hedges*, which are *lexical expressions* whose scope is the illocutionary force of the speech act and attenuates the strength of the force by reducing the speaker's commitment.

Since the 1980s, there has also been an emphasis on the properties of individual hedges. In addition, there has been considerable interest in exploring the use of hedging within different genres of language use, for example, the article, Talk Show discourse such in depth of mathematics talk, politician talk, negotiation talk, and the speech of language learners.

Apart from various types of hedging expressions presented above, this article uses the related theory from Evans (2006) which is cited from web page (<http://clpd.bbk.ac.uk/students/hedging>). This article uses this theory instead of other

theories because it has more types than others. This article uses this theory in order to identify the hedges from the utterances produced by Oprah Winfrey towards her guests such as “The 6-year-old chained in a closet”, “Return to Williamson” “JK. Rowling”, and “Michael Jackson” in the talk show.

Types of Evans’ hedges are *Modal Auxiliary verbs, Modal lexical verbs doubting and evaluating rather than merely describing, probability adjectives, nouns, adverb, approximators of degree, quantity, frequency and time, introductory phrases, “if” clauses, and compound hedges*. Each of these hedges has its own definitions, it is used by this article to identify the data of this research. An indepth knowledge about types of hedges is going to be explained below.

Functions of Hedges

In addition to types of hedging, functions of hedging constitute another main focus of this study. The functions of hedging are briefly explained in the following sections.

The first function of hedges introduced by Coates (1996) is *the expression of doubt and less (more) confidence*. (Coates, 1996: 154-156) People use hedges to express doubt. The people as a speaker lack of commitment to what they are saying. They lack of confidence in truth of the proposition expressed in the utterance. I think, maybe, may, might, you know and probably are important hedges to express doubt and uncertainty. For example, Helen says ‘*what it means about next week is we may not have enough for two groups, cause I had two apologies in advance,*’ the auxiliary *may* here signals Helen’s lack of commitment to the proposition expressed in the utterance.

The second function of hedges would be *sensitive to others’ feeling*. The speaker takes account of the feelings of the addressee. They communicate proposition, attitude to propositions and also attitude to addressee which is called interpersonal function. *Sort of, kind of, really, could, possibly, perhaps* and *might* are the examples of hedges *to show sensitivity* (Coates, 1996: 156-158). The speaker doesn’t want to offend the addressee. Hedges protect the speaker from the full force of controversial claim. It protects the speaker as well as the addressee. Hedges fulfill the need to have personal space to be respected and the need to be acknowledged and liked.

Hedges help the speaker to avoid imposing on people. It is used to ask someone a favor. Hedges facilitate the expression of controversial views by not taking too strong a line or too critical. It means the speaker retreat from critical position if necessary. For example, ‘*she looks very sort of um – kind of matronly realy*’. The speaker doesn’t want to offend the addressee. The speaker protects the addressee from the full force of the controversial claim by using hedges.

The third important function of hedges is *searching for the right word* (Coates, 1996 : 158-159). Hedges are also useful to give signal that speaker is searching for a word (precise word). It means that the speaker having trouble in finding the right words to say what they mean. *Sort of, kind of, you know, well* and *really* are the common examples of hedges to show that the speaker is searching for the right word. Hedges signal the word may not be the perfect choice and pause is commonly occurred. For example, ‘*he (orang outang) had you know – he had five adequate manip – whatever you call hands things*’ the speaker seriously engage the experience in struggle for accurate-self-expression. In other words, the speaker is trying to find the right word to explain about *orang outang* (Coates, 1996).

The last function of hedges which proposed there, is *to avoid the appearance of playing the expert* (Coates, 1996: 152-162). Hedges are used to minimize social distance (expert and non-expert). It avoids the role of expert in conversation. Hedges dilute, the

force of what the speaker is saying. It makes the speaker appear less fluent. The speaker avoid opening up distance between participants, *think, well, whatever, thing, sort of, and you know* are examples of hedges to signal that the speaker is avoiding playing expert. The speaker avoids sounding like an expert. Hedges make the proposition sound less authoritative. It provide preservation of equal status and maintenance of social closeness. For example, ‘*I think I’m always opposed to that group*’ the speaker avoid to say as if an expert, the speaker need to emerge a sentence to make his/her utterance sound less authoritative. Speaker avoids to be an expert.

Meanwhile, there was Francois Salager-Meyers (1997) proposed 5 functions related to the hedges/hedging expressions usage, namely; as a softener, negotiate sensitive topic, strengthen statement, weaken statement, and smoothen disagreement. Apart of hedges/hedging expressions’ functions, Simpsons (2010) notes that hedging has 8 (eight) important functions, which she specifically called pragmatic functions of hedging. These are to *express fuzziness, inexactitude (the following word is not the exact or best word), expresses uncertainty (lack of/decreased commitment to a proposition), Softening a stance or opinion (further qualifies/modifies the statement), mitigating a criticism or request, preceding sophisticated vocabulary or jargon words, preceding metaphors, and filled pauses.*

For example, one of the functions of hedges introduced by Simpson is that hedges is employed to express fuzziness. This is in line with Lakoff (1972) who suggested that any attempt to limit truth conditions for natural language sentences to *true, false, and “nonsense”* would distort the natural language concepts by portraying them as having sharp rather than vaguely-defined boundaries. Suggesting that this is an area that deserves study, he clarified that ‘some of the most interesting questions are raised by the study of words whose meaning implicitly involves fuzziness – words whose job it is to make things fuzzier or less fuzzy’ (Lakoff, 1972: 195).

Implicature

Implicature denotes the act of meaning, implying, or suggesting one thing by saying something else. So the case in which what a *speaker* means differs from what the *sentence* used by the speaker means can be viewed as an ‘*implicature*’ symptoms. The above example (3),

Alan : Are you going to Paul's party?

Alice : I have to work.

implicated that Alice is not going; that she is not going was her *implicature*. The difference between saying and implicating affects whether meaning something one does not believe is a lie. If Alice knew she did not have to work, then she was lying in dialogue. If she knew she was going to Paul's party, she might be guilty of misleading Alan, but not of lying. This sample of implicature is said to be *conversational*.

Implicature is not part of the conventional meaning of the sentence uttered, but depends on features of the conversational context. A key feature was the question Alan asked. Had he asked “What are you going to do today?”, Alice could have implicated something completely different—“I am going to work”—by saying the same thing. One other contrasted side of a *conversational* implicature is a *conventional* implicature, by which the meant one that is part of the meaning of the sentence used.

(4) (a) He is an Englishman; he is, *therefore*, brave.

(b) His being an Englishman implies that he is brave.

Here, that speakers who use (4a) implicate (4b). They *imply*, but do not *say*, that his being an Englishman implies that he is brave. Hence the use of (4a) while disbelieving

(4b) would be misleading, but not a lie. Alice's sentence in (3) can be used with its conventional meaning without implicating what she did. But (4a) cannot be used with its conventional meaning without implicating (4b). The meaning of 'therefore' carries this *implicature*. As above examples clearly described, it is not possible to understand speakers fully without knowing what they have conversationally implicated as well as what they have said.

It has been mentioned above that when speaker does not want to offend the addressee through using hedges, so that hedges can be also employed to express the 'implied' meaning of an expression. Thus, of course hedges can be functioned as a 'politeness item'. Hedging and politeness are discussed as essential aspects of pragmatics of English usage. Efforts from Lakoff (2006), Levinson (2003), as well as Brown and Levinson (1978, 1986) on the concepts of pragmatics, politeness and hedging are reviewed for theoretical background. In speech act theory, hedging involves the qualification and toning-down of utterances or statements, so common in speech and writing. This is carried out through the use of clauses, adverbials, etc. to reduce the degree of risk of what one says. Age, gender, status, and other variables play a role here. A child, for instance, addressing his/her parents is expected, culturally, to speak in a low tone, at a slow pace, and look serious. A child is not expected to shout at his parents, for instance when making a request. It may be generally offensive, although, to shout in any language. In many contexts, a shout, especially an angry one, and to elder, is almost always interpretable as impolite unless it functions, for instance, as a warning to the addressee to save his life. A gentle, soft voice is often considered a marker of politeness in most pragmatic contexts.

Analyzing hedging expressions related to the implicature needs the this article to also look at the hedges as language expressions as well as the function on good communication. In my observation suggests that the good communication of Oprah Winfrey Talk Show doesn't only depend on the setting, topics being conversed, the numerous guests or toning during the show but one cannot ignore is the significant of the implied meaning. Oprah is global issue in communication strategy through her talk show program. Besides having 26 years of experience (until today) interviewing people of all walks of life and level in society, Oprah Winfrey Talk Show contains various linguistic phenomenon and language items to be functioned and as such it gives much richer data and more varied in contexts.

Oprah Winfrey has been very effective in every speaking activity within the shows she been making. She is able to use language in such a way that leads her interlocutors to give detail answers. By using various language expressions and gestures, including hedges, Oprah can attract her guests to share more detail information of the topic being discussed, even questions those are considered (by particular culture-values) inappropriate or classified into very personal questions will become common question when it is stated by Oprah Winfrey during the Talk Show. This fact, linguistically, is interesting to provide examples of hedges and knowing the implied meaning of the hedges that can be implemented in today's daily conversation. Besides practicing utterances effectively, as exemplified model of conversing, the use of hedges will build a wider horizon and deep understanding on how to use hedges/hedging expressions to maintain a good communication.

Finding and Discussion

The hedges/hedging expressions in Oprah Winfrey Talk Show are being analyzed in this article taken from 4 major episodes of Oprah Winfrey Talk Show

which then parsed into 2071 sentences. Of these figures of sentences, 1119 linguistic items are identified as hedges/hedging expressions which are distributed into nine major types of Hedges/hedging expressions following Evans' (2006) identification of the types of hedges/hedging expressions.

In order to discriminate the hedges/hedging expressions and group them into each of the members and major types of hedges/hedging expressions, each of the linguistic items that might be identified as hedges/hedging expressions is traced in every sentence in the Oprah Talk Show by coloring it with the list or corpus of hedges/hedging expressions provided beforehand. In this case, the identified hedges/hedging expressions can facilitate the items to the same with the ones on the list or they may be taken as hedges/hedging expressions on the previous list. Then, these hedges/hedging expressions are tabulated according to the membership of the hedges/hedging expressions in the groups of the nine types of hedges/hedging expressions by giving a certain codes, without followed the frequency and percentage scales of the usage because these can state another description and analysis. The goal of organizing and tabulating the hedges/hedging expressions in such a way is to see how a certain hedges/hedging expression stores an implied meaning.

Type of hedges/hedging expressions in Oprah Winfrey Talk Show

There are totally 1119 hedges/hedging expressions of the whole types of hedges/hedging expressions which are found in *The Oprah Winfrey Talk Show* from the source of the data taken. The use of the type of hedges/hedging expressions which are found in *The Oprah Winfrey Talk Show* seems to be dominated by *Approximators* of time, (124). While *Approximators* of Quantity (*about*), and Modal Auxiliary (*would*) are share the same in number (118).

It is also identified that hedges/hedging expressions which are found in *The Oprah Winfrey Talk Show* cover 9 (nine) of which Evans (2006) typed as hedges, it is interesting to note here that the use of hedges/hedging expressions '*would*' as a word or in a phrase (compound hedges) indicates a signal for the speaker and the interlocutors to 'choose' various possible interpretation of the '*thing*' being modified by this expression. The hedge '*would*' as a member of modal auxiliary in a set is also hedged as a politeness marker, as preceding the sophisticated vocabulary as well as jargon words. In addition, the use of the hedging expression '*all*' is also quite dominant in the Oprah Winfrey Talk Show which to indicate various functions to express what they are really concerned with in the utterances being used. Meanwhile, let's look upon these examples of hedge '*would*' here, *Would you ever want to ask your father why ? ...* (D1.OP1S6) *Why would you think you would be welcomed here if you had AIDS ?* (D2.OP1S542) *Would it also be fair to say that your life – everything in your life, because I know you went through a period of depression and I had read that the Demeanors came from that depression* (D3.OP1S1408) *I would hope so. I would love that.* (D4.MJ1S2008)

The '*would*', as hedges/hedging expressions, in this case, are used predominantly to express the speaker and toward interlocutors to 'choose' various possible interpretation of the '*thing*' being modified by this expression (D4.MJ1S2008). The hedge '*would*' as a politeness marker, as preceding the sophisticated afterward statement to block 'state of being offended' toward interlocutors shown as in (D1.OP1S6), (D2.OP1S542), and in (D3.OP1S1408)

The description of the dominant use of the modal auxiliary '*would*' as a word and in a phrase suggests that the delivery of the utterances in this Talk Show is emphasized on the use of the hedges/hedging expressions to express the speaker's

politeness that enables participants to communicate based on the assumption that the interlocutor is co-operative (Leech, 1983). Thus, the function of the politeness principles is to maintain the social equilibrium and the friendly relations. While the irony politeness allows the speaker to be impolite, though appearing to be polite by permitting the hearer to arrive at the offensive point of the speaker's remark indirectly, by signaling way of implicature.

Pragmatic Functions of hedges/hedging expressions in Oprah Winfrey Talk Show

The second discussion in this chapter deals with the pragmatic functions which are identified in this study. The meaning of functions of the hedges/hedging expressions here are the linguistic items having both the meaning that specify the whole message, and the procedural meaning signaling that this message will function as an additional information and comment on some aspects of the basic message. a. *Do you think all AIDS patients should be quarantined?* (D2.J2S655) b. *I think they absolutely should be quarantined.* (D2.J2S655) c. *I think he should have stayed in the community where he could have gotten much more support at the time but again, kind of catching up on the mob mentality I said probably more than I normally would have said and it was because of the doctor's comment to me that I was afraid. You know, it wasn't about the gay.... It wasn't about the disease; it was about the doctor telling me that "Sir, you're afraid".* (D2.J2S705) d. *I think that's pretty cruel actually.* (D4.OP2S1638)

in (a) the hedge 'think' is functioned as softening a stance or request. It clearly brings the proposition of the sentence in an interrogative statement more specific toward the interlocutor idea or opinion. In other word the expression using such a 'think' conveyed the message lack of/decreased commitment to a proposition, look for the same senses in (b), (c) as well as in sentence (d) "I think that's pretty cruel actually".

The implied meaning of the use of hedging expressions in Oprah Winfrey Talk Show

In this section, I first highlighting two streams of implicatures which are used to reveal the hedges/hedging expressions in Oprah Winfrey Talk Show which (still) keep the implied meaning during the communication. As have been noted in the previous chapter that Implicatures can be part of sentence meaning or dependent on conversational context, and it can be conventional (in different senses) or unconventional. In this case, implicature can be seen from either the point of view of *speaker implicature and intention* or *sentence implicature and convention*. For a speaker to implicate something is for the speaker to mean something by saying something else. It seems clear that what a speaker means is determined by the speaker's *intentions*. When Steve utters "Kathryn is a Russian teacher," whether Steve means that Kathryn is a teacher of Russian nationality or a teacher of the Russian language, and whether he is speaking literally or ironically, depends entirely on what Steve intends to convey. What "convey" means precisely is a matter of considerable debate that we can ignore here.

Given that speaker meaning is a matter of speaker intention, it follows that speaker implicatures can be recognized or predicted by any of the ways we use to infer intentions from hedges/hedging expressions, and can be explained by the usual factors we invoke to account for intentions. Suppose that while walking with us in the driving snow, Swede says

(23) "It is a good day!"

We may wonder whether he was speaking literally, and meaning just what he said; or speaking ironically, and meaning the opposite of what he said; or perhaps engaging in

understatement, and meaning that it is a wonderful day. We need to know what thought Swede intended to convey.

One thing we can do is ask him. If Swede tells us that he was using irony, that would be good evidence that he intended to convey the belief, and thus implicated, that the weather is terrible. His intonation might be another indication. The fact that Swede is often ironic in similar situations would be supporting evidence. On the other hand, if we know that Swede loves snow, and freely conveys his feelings, that evidence would make it more likely that he intended to convey the belief, and thus implicated, that the weather is wonderful. Thus, if Swede's companion has just suggested that they go in because the weather is awful, the hypothesis that Swede intended to convey the opposite belief because he wanted to stay out may provide the best explanation of his saying "*It's a good day.*" In that case, we would infer that he meant what he literally said.

a. The implicature of personal evaluations

Hedges such as *I think*; *it seems to me / for me*; *I guess*, and even more exotic hedges such as *just as we all are*; *I consider*, in the following examples;

- a. *I think* you can choose to step out of that history and not be defined by your past. (D1.OP2S125)
- b. When leading man Rock Hudson revealed he had AIDS, suddenly *it seemed* no one was safe. (D2.OP2S520)
- c. *I guess* it's a sense of anguish. (D4.OPXS1617)
- d. *Just as we all are*. (D2.TXdS557)
- e. *I don't consider* him my father. (D1.CXS122)

are not synonymous of *I think*, what they have in common is that the hedge is somehow related to a speaker's personal evaluation. The notion of using these linguistic items here is giving broader stance that makes these expressions govern less threatening.

By looking those examples above, it is easy to see 'hedging' as an indirectness strategy in language use. In this case (and many circumstances can be seen), Oprah as a speaker underplays her own attributes, ideas, possessions, and achievements, putting down her own positive face in order to enhance hearers, particularly in conversational interchange among strangers or mere friends. Speaker's humbling strategy open is to avoid mentioning herself. Yet, the most prevalent means of self-humbling in English is to say something self-deprecatory (underestimate); e.g. when the hostess invites you to the dinner table and says '*It's not much I'm afraid*', you recognize that she is being humble, and does not intend the observation to be taken literally.

b. The implicature of approximation

The meaning of approximation is used to imply that an utterance or a specific word should not be understood in its literal meaning in the sense that it is only an approximation of some sort. In the data,

- a. He used the dog chain like I was some *kind of* dog. (D1.C3S207)
- b. I *kind of* put it in a chest, *you know*, when I want to access it I can, *I mean* I'm very good at holding it, not thinking about it unless, *you know*, I want to, I've very well taken care of myself in that aspect. (D1.C6aS229)
- c. Did he ever find the *kind of* peace and compassion that he was looking for? (D2.OP6aS571)
- d. I *sometimes think* it's very analogous to having *a lot of* money that people think – 'cause that's *kind of* like a super (D3.JK6cS1224)

- e. They are afraid that AIDS is going to seep through the ground through the casket and I think that everybody *sort of* chuckled. (D2.OP6aS585)
- f. If that show was taped today, *it would be somewhat different*, it would be less passionate. (D2.J1S752)
- g. But as you're hearing Jerry say now, that *he was somewhat* caught up in the mob mentality. (D2.OP6aS727)

Of these expressions were used by speaker to soften critical comments. It was clear that these words were not only used to make a specific semantic relationship fuzzier but that they were also regularly put to use as a means to make the relationship between the speaker and the content of the utterance fuzzier. As was pointed out in the theoretical part above, they can be seen as aiming at softening the critical comment and thus making it more acceptable to the addressee.

c. The implicature of limitation

The use of hedges/hedging expressions that express a limitation of some sort in this category somehow imply the scope limit of the utterance and thus soften the content of a critical comment. Such hedges/hedging expressions as *a little; a bit; just; quite; fairly; slightly; in one respect* belong to this category. The implicature of these hedges is best illustrated with examples from the data:

- a. I mean, I was adopted and, I mean, *I kind of got a little bit of* a childhood afterwards, (D1.C6aS115)
- b. Yes, Joseph was somewhat, *he was a little* hot headed. (D1.S6aS354)
- c. I went through counseling *for a little while* afterwards. (D1.CXS140)
- d. He blamed it on me, I mean, I was six and *I was a little boy*. (D1.CXS265)
- e. I mean, I was adopted and, I mean, I kind of got *a little bit of* a childhood afterwards but I mean that chunk of my life. (D1.C6aS115)
- f. There was this sense that when we first started to learn about his disease all the facts were not available and people were *just* afraid. (D2.OP6bS740)
- g. No, no, no. I'm *just* saying that if you.....(D2.J2S772)
- h. ...and where he sleeps and where he lives is *quite simply* a beautiful home (D4.OPXS1553)
- i. Eventually. But I can't say I walked straight out of that marriage and that experience saying, you know, I feel enlightened in any way – I felt quite shell-shocked. (D3.JKXS1353)

d. The implicature of hesitation

In this part of discussion this study concluded kind of hedges that explicitly mark hesitation. It is important to bear in mind that hesitation can be expressed in numerous ways. However, certain hedges have a clear hesitative meaning and therefore it justified to place them in their own category. For instance the following expressions were listed in this category: *perhaps; maybe; probably*, to list some of the most common ones. Examples from the data include the following:

- a. I think that in most places, people were willing to listen to physicians and public health officials in a much more participatory way than *perhaps* here and a few other places. (D2.DRXS726)
- b. I thought there were going to be a few llamas walking around the living room and *maybe* some-uh-chimps jumping around. (D4.OP6XS1550)
- c. You wanted to, you felt so good, you *probably* wanted to say (imitating Michael) Hee-hee ! (D4.OP5S1963)

e. The implicature of being polite

Due to the wide range of implied meaning expressed by hedging, there are different linguistic concepts which may come close to hedging, having the same function and use. One of these linguistic concepts which is closely related to hedging is modality. The following two examples taken from data of Oprah Winfrey Talk Show Transcription are provided to show how one modal auxiliary (e.g., *maybe*) can be used in different meanings in various context. Let's consider these following examples:

- a. If you or anyone you know is being abused, *maybe* you will take strength from the strength you've seen from Tiffany and the strength you've seen from Clayton today. (D1.OP8S412)
- b. Oddly, if you'd asked me before I wrote it 'what did I believe' I *maybe* couldn't have told you (D3.JK8S1322)
- c. I'm gonna have a good time and have self a little popcorn *maybe*, and *maybe* when it's all over you'll teach me how to do the moonwalk, when everybody not looking! (D4.OP1S2068)

In example (a) and (b), the auxiliary *may* is used in its root or non-epistemic meaning which is not linked to hedging. In both these auxiliary *may* is associated with root possibility which usually implies willingness or intention (Coates:1983). However the auxiliary *may* in example (c) is used in its epistemic possibility meaning because it shows tentativeness and the speaker's lack of confidence in the truth of proposition.

The utterances consist of the hedges/hedging expressions of modality of '*maybe*', in above examples, signaling that hedges/hedging expressions are associated with the epistemic modality since both epistemic modality and hedging express the degree of speakers' confidence in the proposition expressed. Oprah (in example a) has emphasized the link between hedging and epistemic modality by stating that the speaker's judgments about statements and their possible effects on interlocutors is the essence of hedging.

Another modality of '*must*' in the following also indicates that hedges/hedging expressions imply another meaning of politeness;

- d. At that age, that's all you know, I *must* have done something. (D1.OP6dS367)
- e. People say to me "well, you *must* just think how on earth am I going to top that?" And I think "*No. I really, truly don't think that*" It was amazing. It was also insane, at times. (D3.JK1S1531)

The above examples exemplify epistemic and root necessity, respectively. In (d), Oprah Winfrey is showing her confidence in the truth of what she is saying based on a logical process of deduction from facts known to her. The example (e) above can be interpreted as "it is necessary for . . ." which shows necessity and obligation.

Another implied meaning of being polite through hedging has been treated as a sign of politeness in spoken context, describe from the following examples;

- f. Uh-huh. *I wonder* what it feels like, I will never know since I cannot sing one things, but, what it feels like to be one stage with a sea people, a sea of people. (D4.MJxS1984)

According to the example, Michael uses hedging to employ the reducing of the risk of confrontation in social interactions. In this model, hedges are one type of linguistic device through which negative politeness strategies can be realized. It performs the function of minimizing the particular imposition that the face threatening act (FTA) unavoidably affects". (Brown and Levinson (1987: 129)

The italicized verb in sentence (f) is used to hedge the illocutionary force of the statement. This shows that the speaker does not want to impose an undesirable request to

the listener, recognized as negative politeness strategy. Normally hedges are a characteristic of negative politeness, but they can also be used in positive politeness strategies as well. Based on Brown and Levinson (1987: 101) that positive politeness is redress directed to the addressee's positive face, his perennial desire that his wants (or the actions/ acquisitions/ values resulting from them) should be thought of as desirable. Unlike negative politeness, in positive politeness the scope of redress is stretched to the appreciation of addressee's desires and wants as shown in sentence (g):

g. I think that everybody *sort of* chuckled. (D2.OP2S585)

h. You know – I cry, but I'm not someone who can *sort of* keep crying going. (D3JK6aS1086)

This hedge '*sort of*' above may be criticized based on the lack of distinction between negative and positive politeness. But the convention that hedges/hedging expressions which are used in the interaction between speaker and hearer in communication can be interpreted as the politeness markers. Then, by the use of hedges/hedging expression of '*sort of*' the speaker intended the addressee to feel comfort and engage the hearer involved in the conversation.

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