

Hedging Strategies and Politeness in the Political Interview

Saif Habeeb Hassan

Faculty of Arts, Al-Nilain University

Abstract

This paper aims at investigating the use of hedging strategies with relation to politeness theory in a political interview specifically the interview with an American Politian Barak Obama. A descriptive analytical method is adopted by the researcher. The data is the transcript of this specific interview of the politician. The data is analyzed according Martin-Martin (2008) model of strategies of using hedges. The results show there a certain tendency to use these strategies by the politicians.

Keywords: Hedging, hedges, politeness, political interview

1. Introduction

Hedging has been taken as strategy that makes the proposition indeterminate. They are used to mitigate or reduce the strength of the proposition. The linguistic term of "hedges" goes back at least to the early 1970s. there are different functions of hedges, the two main functions of using hedges is to show some kind of uncertainty and to show politeness.

2. Aims and Scope of the Study

This paper aims at investigating the use of hedges in the political interviews and the scope of this paper is limited to a full political interview of an American politician (Barak Obama).

Literature Review

3. Definition of Hedges:

To define hedges and hedging, this term is commonly used to refer to a phenomenon of interactional. Broadly speaking, the words hedges, and hedging can be defined as referring to a barrier, limit, defense, or the act or means of protection defense (Oxford English Dictionary)

From a linguistic point of view, the words "hedge" and " hedging" are considered as a part of the linguistic vocabulary for more than three decades, there is no accurate and specific description of these concepts in literature.Lakeoff (1972:195) defines hedges as "words whose jobs is to make things more or less fuzzy". Hyland (1998:1) states that straightforward definitions of the notions are rare, and the existing characterizations reveal that these terms are used in different ways by authors. From a linguistic point of view again, hedging has been viewed by different researchers according to their views whether they are pragmatic or semantic ones. The produced hedges by the addresser must be interpreted by the addressee. Thus, "intuition" plays a key role production and interpretation of a hedge (Salager-Meyer & Sales, 1991:36).

4. Types of Hedges:

There are different types of hedges, to hedge a statement, one can use different strategies. Salager-Meyer (1997) presents a list of strategic stereotype for hedging which are placed under different grammatical forms such as:

- a- Modal auxiliary verbs. These verbs are used for hedging like may, might, can, could, would, should....etc. e.g.,

(2) *Such a measure might be more sensitive to changes in heath after specialist treatment.*

- b- Modal lexical verbs: in this group Meyer thinks that those verbs are used to perform acts such as doubting and evaluating rather than expressing of varying degree of illocutionary force, such as: to seem, to appear, to believe, to assume, to suggest, to estimate, to think, to argue, to indicate, to propose....etc. e.g.,

(3) *In spite of its limitations, our study appears to have a number of important strength.*

c- Adjectival, adverbial, and nominal modal phrases: such as probable, possible, assumption, estimate, suggestion, perhaps, practically, likely, presumably, virtually, apparently...etc. e.g.,

(4) *This is probably due to the fact that Greenland Eskimos consume diets with a high content of fish.*

d- Approximators: approximators are considered as hedges. They include approximators of degree, quality, quantity, frequency and time. E.g.,

(5) *Fever is present in about a third of cases and sometimes there is neutropenia.*

e- Introductory phrases such as : we feel that, it is our view that, I believe, to our knowledge, ...etc. e.g.,

(6) *We believe that the chronic fatigue syndrome reflects a complex interaction of several factors.*

f- If clauses: these clauses can be regarded as a type of hedges, such as if true, if anything ...etc. e.g.,

(7) *If true, then, our analysis contradict the idea that smoking is harmful to the body.*

g- Compound hedges : this is the last group of hedges which includes :

1- a modal auxiliary combine with a lexical verb with a hedging content, e.g.,

(8) *it would appear.*

2- A lexical verb followed by a hedging adverb or adjective e.g.,

(9) *it seems reasonable.*

(Salager-Meyer, 1997: 109-10).

5. Hedges and Politeness:

Politeness phenomenon cuts cross the concept of hedges. The concept of politeness, management of interpersonal relationship, means the use of the language in order to promote, maintain, or threaten harmonious relations (Spencer-Oatey, 2008:3).

Politeness theory is suggested in the 1970s by Brown and Levinson, it is one of the most influential theory. This theory is centered on the concept of "face" or a person's "public image" (Brown and Levinson, 1987:32). The participants in social interactions, i.e. the addresser and the addressees, have face and share the same basic face wants and needs. Therefore it is normally in the interest of both to cooperate in order to maintain each other's face and promote harmonious relations (Brown and Levinson, 1987:61-62) .

Using hedges helps the participants to promote and maintain face in addition to minimizing the threat posed by speech act which has the potential to make either the addresser or the addressee uncomfortable.

Using speech act in making a claim has the potential to make the addresser uncomfortable especially if the claims are challenged, consequently the addressee can be made uncomfortable if he feels forced into accepting certain claims without being able to exercise a degree of discretion.

Using hedges could save "face" if an addresser hedges the proposition s/he makes it as provisional or not completely certain, thus allowing the addressee time to acknowledge and agree to it as s/he wishes (Varttala, 2001:72).

It is clear that hedges play a key role in the negative politeness strategy, which is in turn, this study deals with pragmatic function of using hedges.

Hedging is an aspect of politeness, it can be successfully extended to textual and nonlinguistic contexts offer substantial information to English language users. Lakeoff (1975:53) shows a wider explanation of politeness; saying that to be polite is saying the socially correct things. Lakeoff specifies certain behaviours to be considered as politeness markers, adding that some forms are linguistic and some others are purely non-linguistic ones. She says that there are three rules of politeness: formality: through keeping a loaf; deference: by giving options (hesitations, hedges, euphemisms, and lack of assertiveness); and camaraderie: by showing sympathy.

In writings, hedges could be used to modify the information presented so that the author expresses negative politeness toward the addressers by leaving them room for their interpretations. On the other hand, hedges could be thought to protect the negative face of the author against the criticism of the audience in matters where full agreement or certainty might not yet exist, for instance when one feels it necessary to "protect one's reputation as a scientist, to avoid absolute statements which may put the researchers in an embarrassing situation(Salager-Meyer, 1994:150-1)

6. Hedges as Negative Politeness Strategy:

As it is mentioned before, most aspects of hedging and politeness are based on the work of Brown and Levinson (1978/1987) in their work, hedges can be used to avoid presuming or assuming that anything involved in the FTA is desired or believed by the addressee (1987:144).

Hedges are used to refer that the addresser does not have intention to impose upon the desires and beliefs of the addressee. Hedging is considered as one of ten strategies linked to negative face protection, although they do point out that hedges may have other functions as well, these functions are going to be illustrated in the following sections.

Hubler (1983: 156-9) picks up the idea of hedging as indication of negative politeness and contends that the primary use of hedging is in negative face, hedging devices being detensifying elements which addressers can employ to maximize the emotional acceptability of the propositional content presented to the addressee for ratification.

On one side, addresser may use hedging utterances so as to leave role for the audience's opinions, in this way recognizing what is wanted of self-determination. The means of avoiding apodictic statements are hedges, that may be interpreted as ex-cathedra formulations overlooking the audience wish to judge for themselves. (ibid:159)

On the other side, hedges can be interpreted as simultaneously serving the addresser's negative face need. As it is mentioned above, hedging is described as a means of self-protection. The responsibility toward the presented information can be limited by the addressee and so obviously attempting to avoid potential impositions on their own views on the form of addressee criticism. The use of hedges allow the addressee to bow out more gracefully and maintain face regardless of critical comments, because the original utterance were toned down " by using hedges" so as not to exclude the possibility being proven wrong. In this case, hedging may be considered as a strategy that protects the addresser's negative face on occasions when the addresser indicates that s/he thinks s/he had a good reason to do an act which the addressee has just criticized. (Brown & Levinson, 1987:67)

The relation between politeness can be summarized by the following:

First: by using hedges, it may be considered as an indication that the addresser does not impose his/her views on the addressees. The addressees may have their own areas of interest within pragmatics. This would constitute negative politeness toward the addressees.

Second: granted that the addressees may have their own ideas about the importance of politeness theories, hedges can be seen as a way out for the addresser, should the addressees object to his / her views. The conceptual categorization of using hedges in the example (65) and making the proposition as a subjective assertion in the (66) , the addresser allows for other opinions and simultaneously protects his/her negative face against critical comments from the addressees. (Varttala, 2001:19)

On the other side, using hedges can be thought to increase the precision of the utterances, to make things less fuzzy. The hedges may be considered as signals either that the conceptual category involved i.e. the most interesting area of pragmatics is not an adequate portrayal of politeness theories, or that does not fulfill the criteria of "true", but is more accurately worded when hedged.

Using hedges is to be more precise, the addresser may also be perceived to acknowledge the addressee's negative face by not imposing categorical utterances on an audience that may be presumed to understand that the information presented may in some ways be subject to debate. At the same time, the addresser can protect his/her own face against criticism that might follow utterances lacking the refinement brought by the hedges.

The summary, increasing or decreasing fuzziness in terms of hedging could be interpreted as aiming at the interpersonal goal of negative politeness. Whether the underlying semantic basis is that of rendering things fuzzier or that of making them less fuzzy, is difficult to decipher, because the same linguistic item can be interpreted to achieve both goals. Furthermore, it is not easy to say whether hedges aim at the protection of the addresser, addressee, or perhaps both of them. The rationale behind the use of hedges is always a matter of individual language user and his/her conception of the communication situation. Hence, negative politeness may be employed on different grounds in different contexts.

In sum, due to its negative politeness potential, hedging can be regarded as part of " a system of interpersonal relations designed to facilitate interaction by minimizing the potential for conflict and confrontation inherent in all human interchange"(Varttala, 2001:20)

7. Political Discourse:

There are certain features that characterized political texts. First of all, in the politicians communications, there are two types of communication; the first one is the internal political communication i.e. the communication of politicians among themselves, the second type is the " external communication" in this type the politicians speak the audience throughout their speech, writings in the mass media in which our study is concerned. The interviews are of the external communication". Zheng (2000:1) mentions the most general features of the political discourse in the present time of globalization, language is considered as a weapon and an effective tool to achieve and gain political support by the politicians.

Politicians use rhetoric to create specific convictions in the audience. Political discourse can be considered as a "mixed product" of the personal development of a political career and what it reflects to elicit its social setting. There are many factors that have great impacts on the personal development such as " the individual educational experiences, parental influence, social circles, political party, economic status ...etc." all these factors can be reflected in the political speech delivered by politicians. Generally, the aim of politicians is to persuade their addressees (audience) that they are themselves and their ideas are originated from one source i.e. they are of the people. This technique, in politics, is called "targeting strategy" for instance, in US in spite of the fact that the American presidents are men of wealth, they always introduce themselves as "ordinary citizens".

8. The Adopted Model of Analysis

The following model is adopted in analyzing the strategies of using Hedging. Martin-Martin (2008:138-9) use the linguistic devices at lexico-grammatical and syntactic level for the explicit function of hedges. The following basic strategies of the hedges are:

- 1- Strategy of indetermination: by giving a proposition a colouring of lesser semantic, qualitative and quantitative explicitness as well as of uncertainty, vagueness, and fuzziness.

This strategy may comprise:

- A- Epistemic modality, which can be realized by means of :

- Modal auxiliary verbs expressing possibility, such as may, might, can
 - Semi-auxiliaries such as : to seem, to appear.
 - Epistemic lexical verbs such as: to struggle, to speculate, to assume
 - Verbs of cognition such as to believe / to think
 - Modal adverbs (perhaps, possibly, probably)
 - Modal nouns: possibility, assumption, suggestion)
 - Modal adjectives: possible, probable, likely)
- B- Approximators of quantity, frequency, degree and time. Such as generally, approximately, most, relatively, frequently, various ...etc. which indicate an unwillingness to make precise and complete commitment to the proposition expressed.
- C- "if clauses" : this strategy is used to refer to the strategy of hedging as Salager-Meyer (2007:109-10) suggests. Here, it is used to show uncertainty or doubt concerning a condition. E.g., if true / if nothing .
- D- "Interrogative constructions" are also be used in hedging. Hyland (1998:143) says that question are treated as one form of non-lexical hedging, they are used to refer to the limitation of knowledge. For example: do you agree with me?
- E- Attributive shields: these are expressions which are used to attribute the responsibility of the proposition to someone other than the addresser . there are two types of attributives
- Personal attributives : for example: according to him
 - Impersonal attributives: for example: according to the reports.
- 2- Strategy of subjectivisation: this strategy include:-
- A- The use of personal pronouns (I/we) followed by verbs of cognition (think / believe) or performative verbs (suppose / suggest) that can be interpreted as addressers' signaling that what they say is simply their personal / subjective opinion. In this way, the addressers show respect for the addressees' alternative opinion and invite the addressee to become involved in the communicative situation. In this subcategory Martin-Martin has also included those linguistic devices which express the addresser's personal doubt and direct involvement such as (to our knowledge/ in our view, in my experienceetc.)
- B- Quality- emphasizing adjectival and adverbial expressions, such as: extremely interesting, particularly important. These emphatic expressions that is Hyland (1998) names "boosters) and which are equivalent to what Salager-Meyer (1991;1994;1998) terms as " emotionally-charged intensifier" which are used to convince the addressees of the importance/ truth of the propositions expressed by revealing the addresser's emotional state. At the same time, these expressions can be considered as positive politeness strategy (Myer,1989) as they show solidarity with the discourse community by exhibiting responses that assume share knowledge and desires.

- C- Introductory phrase: introductory phrases are also used in hedging strategies. They are considered as a device to engage the addressee with conversation such as : " you know" .
- 3- Strategy of depersonalization: this strategy refers to those cases in which the addressers diminish their presence in the texts by using various impersonal agentless and passive construction in order to relieve themselves of responsibility for the truth of the propositions expressed. This strategy is syntactically realized by means of :
- A- Agentless passive and impersonal constructions such as: an attempt was made to see / it seems / appears that
- B- Impersonal active constructions: in which personal subject is placed by the same non-human entity such as: findings/ results/ data. Consider these examples:
The findings suggest/reveal ...

9. The Analysis of the Interview of Obama: The following table is of the use of hedging strategies and their distribution and the frequency of occurrences in one of Obama's interview:

Page No.	Line No.	Hedging Form	Function	Type	Linguistic Realization	Frequency
15	35	A lot	Indetermination	Approximator	Deter.	2
17	41					
19	13	About	Indetermination	Epistemic modality	Adverb	1
17	6	Absolutely	Subjectivisation	Emphatic	Adverb	1
15	12	Actually	Indetermination	Approximator	Adverb	6
16	4					
16	10-11					
18	45					
19	3					
19	39	As long as	Indetermination	Approximator	Adverb	1
15	13	At least	Indetermination	Approximator	Adverb	1
15	36	Can	Indetermination	Epistemic modality	Modal aux.	2
19	41					
18	40	Considered	Indetermination	Epistemic modality	Verb	1
15	40	Could	Indetermination	Epistemic modality	Modal aux.	5
18	1					
18	15-20					
19	16					
15	12	Explicitly	Indetermination	Approximator	Adverb	1
19	33	I believe	Subjectivisation	Personal pro.+ cognitive v.	Clause	1
17	25	I think	Subjectivisation	Personal pro.+ cognitive v.	Clause	4
18	34					
19	37-38					
19	40	If they are	Indetermination	If- clause	Conditio	4

15	40	If they didn't			onal clause	
18	20	If we sat down				
17	21	If you want				
18	44	Is it ?	Indetermination	Interrogative	Yes/no question	3
18	16	Is that a democrat...				
19	12	Is that a nanny state?				
16	7-7-7	It has been tried	Depersonalization	Passive voice	Clause	3
15	29	Just	Indetermination	Approximator	Adv.	2
19	36					
15	31	Kinds of	Indetermination	Epistemic modality	Noun	1
18	6	Like	Indetermination	Approximator	Adj.	1
16	5	Limited	Indetermination	Approximator	Adj.	1
19	38	Many	Indetermination	Approximator	Deter.	1
19	2	Massively	Indetermination	Approximator	Adverb	1
18	23	Minimum	Indetermination	Approximator	Noun	1
16	11	Much	Indetermination	Approximator	Adverb	1
19	11	My point is that	Subjectivisation	Personal thought	Phrase	1
17	36-38	Probably	Indetermination	Epistemic modality	Adverb	3
18	20					
18	17	Should	Indetermination	Epistemic modality	Modal aux.	1
19	36	So	Subjectivisation	Emphatic	Adverb	1
15	41-46	Some	Indetermination	Approximator	Deter.	4
16	21-21					
17	41					
19	6					
16	4	That's been done ...	Depersonalization	Passive voice	Clause	1
17	18	They are defined	Depersonalization	Passive voice	Clause	1
16	48	Think	Indetermination	Epistemic modality	Verb	3
17	46					
18	39					
16	5	Very	Subjectivisation	Emphatic	Adverb	1
18	39	What used to be considered sensible	Depersonalization	Passive voice	Clause	1
18	44	What freebies are we talking about?	Indetermination	Interrogative	Inter. Clause	1
17	48	What does the country..	Indetermination	Interrogative	Inter. Clause	2
18	2-5	Why aren't we				
17	25	Would	Indetermination	Epistemic modality	Modal aux.	3
19	18-18					
16	17	You know	Subjectivisation	Introductory phrase	Clause	7
16	37					
17	22-40-42-42					
18	50					
Total No.						85

Table No. (1) the use of hedging devices

The overall is a frequency and percentages of each hedging strategy. The following table presents a complete list of strategies of hedging identified by full interview with American president Barak Obama . The table shows that Obama has a tendency toward using hedging strategies on different levels

Hedging Strategies	Frequency	Percentage
Indetermination	53	62.235 %
Subjectivisation	16	18.823 %
Depersonalization	6	7.058 %
Total No.	85	100 %

Table No. (2) Frequency of occurrence of using Hedging strategies

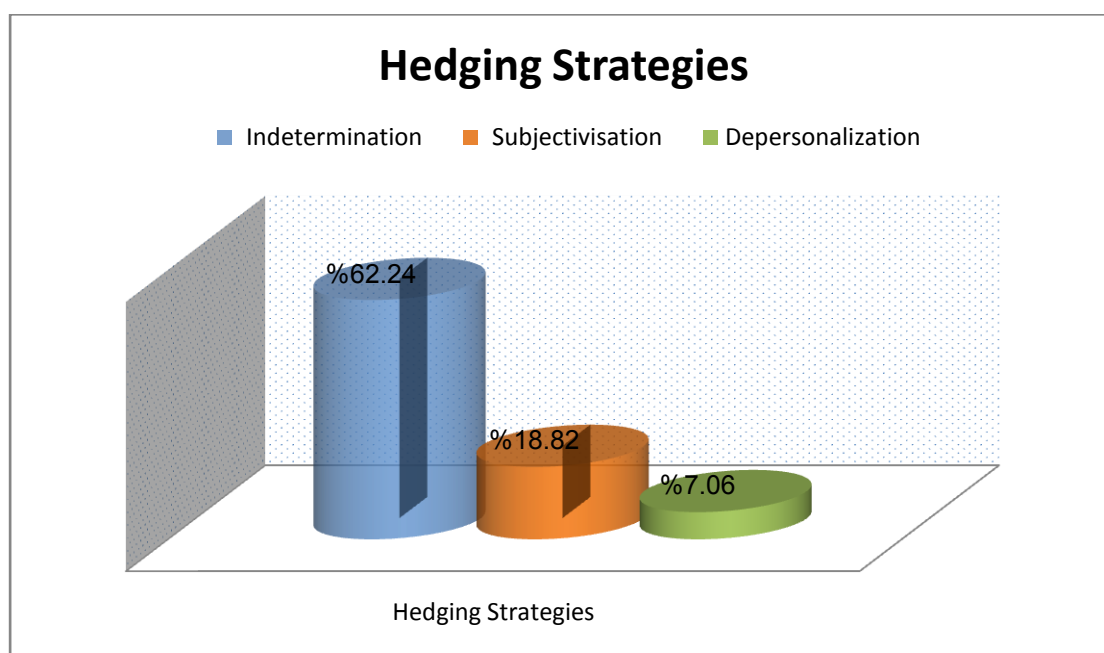


Figure No. (1) the percentage of the use of hedging strategies

10. Discussion

In analyzing, the frequency of occurrence of hedging strategies shows that Obama uses the strategy of indetermination greatly with a frequency of occurrence 53 times amounting to 62.235 %. The strategy of subjectivisation is used with a frequency of occurrence 16 amounting to 18.823%. while the depersonalization has been recorded a frequency of occurrence 6 instances amounting to 7.058%. The addresser in the interview uses indetermination strategy it is the most frequently used strategy, this strategy includes different types such as epistemic modality (by using modal auxiliaries and modal verbs etc.), approximators, interrogative clauses ..etc. the purpose of using this strategy is to avoid being assertive, this strategy makes addresser's words sound more polite and showing politeness to the addressee in the conversation. e.g., "we're dealing with some of the social issues". By using the indetermination strategy "Approximator some" The addresser here wishes to render

fuzziness about the quantity. The aim of using this strategy is to diminish quantities. This use allows to the addressee to participate in the conversation on the basis of fuzziness of quantity. Another example " what would you do would create a base middle class" the use of strategy of indetermination by using the modal auxiliary "would" refers to uncertainty and doubt. The strength of the claim is reduced by this usage. The same thing could be said about all types of indetermination strategy of using hedges it has explained in table no.(1) above. Concerning the use of subjectivisation. This strategy is the second high frequency with occurrences amounting to 18.823 % . The addresser use this strategy to talk about things with reference to themselves or their beliefs, thoughts, achievements. In this strategy, the personal first pronoun is generally used. In fact, addressers prefer to use this strategy very much. As "I think , I believe" . here, the addresser introduces his personal opinion, therefore it provides just personal interpretation of available information. Thus, the addresser wants the addressee to involve in the communication, and s/he shows some kind of respect to the addressees' opinion. The proposition is softened to be more polite by using hedging strategy and the proposition would be accepted because the proposition may contradict the addressee interest. The last strategy is the strategy of depersonalization. The frequency occurrence of this strategy is the lowest among other strategies occurrences amounting to 7.058 % percent. Using this strategy allows the addresser to describe the proposition without direct personal attribution. E.g., " that has been done on school" here the addresser neglects the personal attribution to the proposition and allows the addressee to participate in the conversation about the proposition because the inclusion of the personal pronouns leads to decrease the authorial presence in the proposition.

11. Conclusion

The findings of this paper that the politician uses hedging strategies in the political interview which has a firm connection with politeness and the addresser avoids commitment to the proposition. The results suggest that politician (Obama) uses different hedging strategies to perform different pragmatic function to mitigate his claim, and expresses lack of commitment to his proposition. Using these strategies express politeness, avoiding direct criticism, attempting to be accepted and allowing the addressee involvement. The frequency of occurrences of using hedging strategies are different, the high frequency occurrence is in using of indetermination strategy, whereas the lowest frequency occurrences in using of depersonalization strategy.

References

- Brown, P. and Stephen C. Levinson (1978). *Questions and Politeness: Strategies in Social Interaction*. Cambridge : Cambridge University Press .pp.56-589.
- Brown, P., and Stephen C. Levinson (1987). *Politeness: Some Universals in Language Usage*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hubler, Axel (1983). *Understatements and Hedges in English*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Hyland, K. (1998). *Hedging in Scientific Research Articles*. Amsterdam: John

- Benjamin Publishing Company.
- Lakeoff, G. (1972). Hedges: A Study in Meaning Criteria and the Logic of Fuzzy Concepts. Chicago Linguistics Society Papers 8 : 183-228. Print.
- Lakoff, R. (1975). *Language and Woman's Place*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Martin-Martin, P. (2008). *The Mitigation of Scientific Claims in Research Paper: A Comparative Study*. IJES, vol.8 (2) pp.133-152.
- Myers, Gery (1989). "The Pragmatics of Politeness in Scientific Articles". *Applied Linguistics*, Vol.10, No.1, pp.1-35.
- Salager-Meyer, F. (1994) "*Hedging and Textual Communicative Function in Medical English Written Discourse*". English For Specific Purposes 13.2:149-171
- Salager-Meyer, F. (1997). "*I Think That Perhaps You Should: A Study of Hedges in Written Scientific Discourse*". TESOL, 2 (2), pp.1-15.
- Salager-Meyer, F. and Sales, J. C. (1991). "A Genre-Based and Text-Type Analysis of Hedging in Written Medical English Discourse". *Interface*, Vol.6, No.1, pp.33-54.
- Spencer-Oatey, H (2008) *Culturally Speaking: Culture Communication and Politeness Theory*. 2nd edition. London : Continuum.
- Varttala, T (2001) *Hedging in Scientifically Oriented Discourse: Exploring Variation According to Discipline and Intended Audience*. English philology: University of Tampere.
- Zheng, T (2000). *Characteristics of Australian Political Language Rhetoric: Tactics of gaining public support and shirking responsibility*. School of Asian Languages and Studies. University of Tasmania.

Appendix: Full interview between President Obama and Bill O'Reilly

- (1)BILL O'REILLY - One of my, uh, points on the Factor is that poverty is driven by the dissolution of the American family, that is the prime mover, okay. On your watch, media income has dropped seventeen percent among working families in this country. That's not a good record, it's not all your fault, part of it was this terrible recession, we all know that. Everybody knows that. 15
- PRESIDENT OBAMA - Okay.
- O'REILLY - All right. But 72 percent of babies in African-American community are born out of wedlock.
- PRESIDENT OBAMA - Yeah.
- O'REILLY - Why isn't there a campaign by you and the first lady to address that problem very explicitly?
- PRESIDENT OBAMA - Actually, Bill, we address it explicitly all the time. I-I'll send you at least 10 speeches I've made since I've been president talking about the importance of men taking responsibility for their children. Talking about the importance of, uh, young people, uh, delaying gratification. Talking about the importance of, uh, when it comes to child rearing, paying child support, spending time with your kids, reading with them. So, whether it's getting publicity or not is a whole different question.
- O'REILLY - But —

PRESIDENT OBAMA - This is something that we focus on all the time.

O'REILLY - Would you say it's been a hallmark of your administration to make that issue, because I don't believe it has. I know you've given the speeches, and I know you know — understand the problem, because you're a community organizer from Chicago.

PRESIDENT OBAMA - Yes.

O'REILLY - All right? But I don't see the pressure from the Federal government to go in and say, this is wrong, this is — this is killing, um, futures of babies and children.

PRESIDENT OBAMA - Well first of all, I've just got to say, Bill, we talk about it all the time, we'll continue to talk about it, we're convening, for example, philanthropists and business people, city by city, who are interested in addressing these kinds of problems at the local level. There is an economic component to it as well, though.

O'REILLY - Sure.

PRESIDENT OBAMA - Because — because what's interesting, when you look at what's going on right now, you're starting to see in a lot of white working class homes, similar problems — when men can't find good work, when the economy is shutting ladders of opportunity off from people, whether they're black, white, Hispanic, it doesn't matter. Then that puts pressure as well on the home. So you've got an interaction between the economy that isn't generating enough good jobs for folks who traditionally could get blue-collar jobs even if they didn't have a higher education, and some legitimate social concerns, uh. That compound the problem and so we want to hit both. We want to make sure that we're putting folks back to work and making sure that they're well-paid —

O'REILLY [OVERLAP] - But this is —

PRESIDENT OBAMA [OVERLAP] - We also want to make sure that we're dealing with some of the social issues that you're addressing.

O'REILLY - The secret to getting a job — good job is education. And in these chaotic families, the children aren't well-educated because it isn't — it isn't, um, encouraged at home as much as it is in other precincts. Now, school vouchers is a way to level the playing field. Why do you oppose school vouchers when it would give poor people a chance to go to better schools? 16

PRESIDENT OBAMA - Actually — every study that's been done on school vouchers, Bill, says that it has very limited impact if any —

O'REILLY - Try it.

PRESIDENT OBAMA - On — it has been tried, it's been tried in Milwaukee, it's been tried right here in DC —

O'REILLY [OVERLAP] - And it worked here.

PRESIDENT OBAMA - No, actually it didn't. When you end up taking a look at it, it didn't actually make that much of a difference. So what we have been supportive of is, uh, something called charters. Which, within the public school system gives the opportunity for creative experiments by teachers, by principals to start schools that have a different approach. And —

O'REILLY [OVERLAP] - You would revisit that? I-I just think — I used to be, teach in a Catholic school, and I just know —

PRESIDENT OBAMA [OVERLAP] - Bill — you know, I — I've taken, I've taken — I've taken a look at it. As a general proposition, vouchers has not significantly improved the performance of kids that are in these poorest communities —

O'REILLY [OVERLAP] [INAUDIBLE] -

PRESIDENT OBAMA - Some charters — some charters are doing great. Some Catholic schools do a great job, but what we have to do is make sure every child —

O'REILLY [OVERLAP] - I got three more questions.

PRESIDENT OBAMA - Go ahead.

O'REILLY - All right. Keystone pipeline, new study comes in, environmental impact, negligible. Forty-two thousand jobs. You're gonna okay it, I assume.

PRESIDENT OBAMA - Well first of all, it's not forty two thousand. That's — that's not, uh, correct, it's a couple thousand to build the pipeline, but —

O'REILLY [OVERLAP] - Forty-two all told.

PRESIDENT OBAMA - Well, that, bottom line is what we're gonna do is to, uh, the process now goes agencies comment on what the State Department did, public's allowed to comment, Kerry's gonna, uh, give me a recommendation, uh —

O'REILLY [OVERLAP] - All right, so I assume we're gonna do that, after five years —

PRESIDENT OBAMA [OVERLAP] [INAUDIBLE] -

O'REILLY - Okay. I'll take that as a yes. Little Sisters of the Poor, come on, give them the little waiver that they don't have to —

PRESIDENT OBAMA [OVERLAP] - They have, you know —

O'REILLY [OVERLAP] - Come on, the Little Sisters of the Poor? Give them what they want.

PRESIDENT OBAMA - Bill, I —

O'REILLY - Right now. Let's-let's just do this.

PRESIDENT OBAMA - Bill, take, here-here's the way this thing works. All they have to do is sign a form saying they don't — they are a religious institution —

O'REILLY - And then they get what they want, right?

PRESIDENT OBAMA - And — and they get what they want. What they — the problem is they don't want to sign the form —

O'REILLY [OVERLAP] - Well, we'll —

PRESIDENT OBAMA - Because they think that that somehow, uh, uh, makes them complicit.

O'REILLY - I'm happy now that the Little Sisters are going to get what they want. Uh, no 17
Um. FOX News. Uh, I can't speak for FOX News. All right, but I'm — I'm, you know, table setter here [INAUDIBLE] -.

PRESIDENT OBAMA [OVERLAP] [INAUDIBLE] -

O'REILLY - Do you think I'm being unfair to you, do you think I've been giving you —

PRESIDENT OBAMA [OVERLAP] - Absolutely. Of course you have, Bill. But, I like you anyway, Bill.

O'REILLY [OVERLAP] - Okay, but — give me how I'm unfair.

PRESIDENT OBAMA [OVERLAP] - It-it-but — look —

O'REILLY - Give me how I'm unfair. Come on, you can't make that accusation without telling me.

PRESIDENT OBAMA - Bill — we've just run through an interview in which you asked about health, uh, health care not working, IRS where-where we, uh, wholly corrupt, Benghazi —

O'REILLY - All right.

PRESIDENT OBAMA - Right, so the list of issues that you talk about —

O'REILLY [OVERLAP] - But these are unanswered questions —

PRESIDENT OBAMA - Yeah, but-but-but they're defined by you guys in a certain way. But this — look, this is okay. This-this is —

O'REILLY [OVERLAP] - Do you not —

PRESIDENT OBAMA - If you want to — if you want to be President of the United States, then you know that you're going to be subject to criticism, and —

O'REILLY - But if it's unfair, I-I want to know if it's unfair. Is it un — criticism is criticism. It's my job to give you a hard time.

PRESIDENT OBAMA [OVERLAP] - Here — here — here's what I would say. I think regardless of whether it's fair or not, uh, it has, uh, it has made FOX News very successful.

O'REILLY - But if I'm unfair, I want —

PRESIDENT OBAMA [OVERLAP] - Here's what — here's the thing you guys — here's what you guys are gonna have to figure out is what are — what are you gonna do when I'm gone? I'm telling you —

O'REILLY [OVERLAP] [INAUDIBLE] [LAUGHS] -

PRESIDENT OBAMA [OVERLAP] [INAUDIBLE] -

O'REILLY - Ah-ha-ha — ask President Clinton. Ask President Bush. I gave President Bush a real hard time. Are you the most liberal President in US History?

PRESIDENT OBAMA - Probably not.

O'REILLY - Probably not?

PRESIDENT OBAMA - Probably not. That's-that's fair to say.

O'REILLY [OVERLAP] - Who-who would be?

PRESIDENT OBAMA - You know, the truth of the matter is, is that when you look at some of my policies, um, in a lot of ways, Richard Nixon was more — more liberal than I was. Started the EPA. You know, uh, you know, started, uh, uh, a whole lot of the regulatory state that, uh, has helped make our air and water clean. Um.

O'REILLY - That's interesting — Nixon — that's interesting. I thought you were gonna say FDR.

PRESIDENT OBAMA - Well, FDR — Johnson. But I tend not to think about these things in terms of liberal and democrat — or liberal and conservative because at any given time, the question is what does the country need right now? And what — right now what the country needs is, uh, roads, bridges, uh, infrastructure, we-we got 2 trillion dollars worth of, uh, unmet needs. We could put — be putting construction workers back to work right now, folks that you like to champion. Why aren't we doing it? That's not a liberal or conservative agenda —

O'REILLY [OVERLAP] [INAUDIBLE] -

PRESIDENT OBAMA [OVERLAP] - Well, why-why aren't we funding it? The, uh, when it comes — comes to something like basic research to keep our innovation edge. That's the thing that sent the man to space, that's the thing that created the internet. Why aren't we — why aren't we funding —

O'REILLY [OVERLAP] - Because we have a seventeen trillion dollar debt. We can't do these things.

PRESIDENT OBAMA - No, the uh — but the reason we don't do them is because we're not willing to make decisions, for example, uh, our tax code is rife with loopholes —

O'REILLY [OVERLAP] - That's true, you can't —

PRESIDENT OBAMA [OVERLAP] - And for us to close those loopholes, we could put people to work right now. Is that a Democrat — is that a Democrat, Republican, conservative, liberal thing? It's neither. It's common sense. That's what we should be doing.

O'REILLY -All right.

PRESIDENT OBAMA - In fact, you and I, if we sat down, we could probably agree on —

O'REILLY [OVERLAP] - Well, I've said that on air. We don't disagree on —

PRESIDENT OBAMA [OVERLAP] - Raising the minimum wage, something that you —

O'REILLY [OVERLAP] - But one — one thing we do —

PRESIDENT OBAMA [OVERLAP] - Yes, right.

O'REILLY [OVERLAP] - I support this.

PRESIDENT OBAMA - I know. And that's —

O'REILLY [OVERLAP] - You have to do it.

PRESIDENT OBAMA - And that's —

O'REILLY [OVERLAP] - You want to get people off welfare, you raise the — minimum wage.

PRESIDENT OBAMA [OVERLAP] - That's not a liberal or a-a conservative agenda.

O'REILLY [OVERLAP] - No, fine. But I think that you are much more friendly to a nanny state than I am. I'm more of a self-reliance guy, you're more of a big government will solve your problems guy.

PRESIDENT OBAMA - And I — and I —

O'REILLY - That's it.

PRESIDENT OBAMA - And I disagree with that because I think that what used to be considered sensible we now somehow label as-as liberal. Think about this — Social Security, Medicare —

O'REILLY [OVERLAP] - But you pay into that. It's the freebies that are the problem.

PRESIDENT OBAMA [OVERLAP] - Is it? What-what freebies are we talking about? Welfare, actually is worth less now than it was 20, 30 — it's worth less than it was under Ronald Reagan. And the uh —

O'REILLY [OVERLAP] - Take a look at the disability explosion. I mean, it's insane. The workplace isn't any more dangerous now than it was it was 20 —

PRESIDENT OBAMA [OVERLAP] - Well —

O'REILLY — years ago, it's through the roof. You know people are conning you.

PRESIDENT OBAMA [OVERLAP] - You know, Bill, the point is, we have not massi 19
expanded the welfare state. That's just not true. When you take a look at it, actually, that the levers of support that we provide to folks who are willing to work hard, they're not that different than they were thirty years ago, forty years ago, fifty years ago. You and I took advantage of certain things. I don't know about you, but I got some loans to go to college.

O'REILLY [OVERLAP] - Nah, I painted houses, I didn't get any —

PRESIDENT OBAMA [OVERLAP] - The, uh, well, I, no —

O'REILLY [OVERLAP] - See, that's who I am. I —

PRESIDENT OBAMA - I painted houses during the summer too. It still wasn't enough. So, the, uh, so my point is is that that's not a nanny state. That's an investment in the future generation. G.I. Bill — is that a nanny state? My grandfather came back for World War II, you're about to write a book on World War II. Smartest thing we ever did was make an investment in the American people. When those guys came back from war, that's what created our middle class. We-we suddenly trained up and created skills for folks. We gave 'em subsidies so they could go out and buy homes. Through the FHA, those things weren't giveaways. We-we understood that what that would do would create a base middle class of folks who were able to, uh, work hard and get ahead.

O'REILLY - The work ethic was different then than it is now.

PRESIDENT OBAMA [OVERLAP] - Well —

O'REILLY - All right, last questions.

PRESIDENT OBAMA - We'll have to improve the work ethic.

O'REILLY - And here's something that you and I agree on.

PRESIDENT OBAMA - What's that?

O'REILLY - And I'll tell everybody. You helped the Veterans. Now I believe the VA should be doing a lot more than it's doing. But you, I have come to you four times, and every time you have, uh, done what I have asked, and we have raised more than twenty million dollars for wounded veterans and their families. And I — you know, so when they say that you don't

care and all of that I know that's not true. But fundamentally, the self-reliance thing in America I think is going down, and the nanny state is going up. Last word. You get it.

PRESIDENT OBAMA - Here's-here's-here's what I believe. First of all, biggest honor I've ever had and will ever have is serving as Commander in Chief, and when you meet our military families and our men and women in uniform, they-they, uh. They are so outstanding. You just have to want to help. And you have done great work, Bill, uh, on behalf of our veterans. Number two, I think self-reliance is alive and well in America. I think the problem is people don't see as many opportunities to get ahead. My job as President, as long as I'm in this office, is to give them the tools to get ahead. They gotta work hard, they gotta be responsible, but if they are, let's make sure that they can make it in America. That's what it's all about. That's how you and I ended up sitting here talking.

O'REILLY – Mr. President, thanks, always a pleasure to talk with you.

PRESIDENT OBAMA - I enjoyed it, Bill. Thank you very much.