Hedging in Political Discourse: The Case of Trump’s Speeches

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Abstract

This study examines the use and functions of hedging devices in political discourse by analysing two of the now former American President Donald Trump’s speeches. The study adopts Salager-Meyer’s (1997) framework to analyse the use of hedging devices and Rabab’ah’s and Abu Rumman’s (2015) framework to assign functions to hedges. The findings reveal that approximators and modal auxiliary verbs were the most frequently used hedging devices in the two speeches and that there is a noticeably frequent use of the modal auxiliary verbs will and must, an indication of power. In addition, the findings show that Trump used hedging devices almost equally between the two speeches although there is a one-year gap between the speeches selected. As for the functions, the analysis shows that, in addition to the five functions in Rabab’ah and Abu Rumman (2015), there emerged three additional functions; namely, emphasis, power and multi-functional hedges. Most hedges were generally used to mitigate language while some were used to indicate necessity and authority.

Keywords: Hedging, Political discourse, Functions, Trump.

Introduction

Discourse is broadly defined as “language in its contexts of use” (Flowerdew 2013, 1). Thus, different contexts produce different types of discourse, which are characterized by different linguistic and metalinguistic features. For example, informal contexts do not usually require cautious preparations, unlike formal contexts in which speech is carefully prepared, particularly if it is addressed before a large audience and produced by popular speakers such as politicians (Teodorescu 2018). In this vein, van Dijk (2009) argues that political discourse is carefully planned because participants in this type of discourse are aware of the context in which it is to be produced. Given this, politicians who give public speeches, for example, avoid misuse of words and expressions because their speech is usually recorded by the media.

In order to succinctly understand political discourse — as is used in this study — we shall define both politics and discourse. Chilton (2004) argues for two ways of seeing politics: One is related to power and authority and another is practically social. The former is related to how power relations are established in society between those who want to impose their power and those who try to resist this, and the latter is seen as “cooperation, the practices and institutions that a society has for resolving clashes of interest over money, influence, liberty, and the like” (Chilton 2004, 3). Delving into deeper conceptualizations of the term, politics

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is, despite being an interesting endeavour, beyond the scope of this study. Political discourse refers to how language is used in politics to express power relations, to experience authority, to construct societies, and to shape identities.

Political discourse is different from other forms of discourse because of the consequences of (in)appropriately analysing its linguistic and paralinguistic components. Guerra (2013) argues that political discourse is unique because it is often given before a large audience for particular reasons. That is, it is normally (and should be) carefully prepared, so that it achieves the objective of reaching out to the audience and making the change/influence intended. For example, a president delivering a speech to her/his people should always be careful about the language s/he uses because every word counts, particularly in electoral debates and campaigns in which the use of words may have a great impact on the voters. To achieve the objectives of political discourse, politicians opt to employ some metadiscoursal devices to avoid directness in delivering a message. Of these metadiscoursal devices is hedging which is the focus of the present study.

Hedging

Lakoff (1972) is thought to be the first to introduce the word ‘hedge’ and to use it to mean words or phrases that function to reduce fuzziness or vagueness of some language constructions. Hyland (1994) states that hedges are used to show hesitation or possibility. In other words, hedging is related to uncertainty and/or to manipulation. Fraser (2010) argues that hedges can indicate “a lack of a full commitment” to the content of one’s utterance or to the speaker’s intention (201). Brown and Levinson (1987) define hedging as follows:

[a] particle, word or phrase that modifies the degree of membership of a predicate or noun phrase in a set; it says of that membership that it is partial, or true only in certain respects, or that it is more true and complete than perhaps might be expected. (145)

A hedge is a device that is used differently in different forms of discourse. For example, in informal casual conversations, hedging may not figure predominantly while in more formal forms of speech, it is an important tool that characterises that form of discourse.

Hedging: A Metadiscoursal Feature

Hyland (2018, 4) describes metadiscourse as a “dynamic view of language” to reflect the fact that speakers and writers do not only transfer information to their audience, but they also affect their audience through their use of language. This is what makes the use of language interactive and, as Hyland (2018, 4) argues, a “social engagement” and “communicative acts, not lists of propositions” (27). Thus, speakers and writers should expect the knowledge and needs of the audience so that they make the intended effect. This implies that a triadic relationship between producers of the text, the text itself and the audience is created.

There are some important metadiscoursal features that help producers of texts establish a link with texts and the audience. These features determine how producers of texts should use language to communicate their ideas, whether formally or informally. As Hyland (2018, 16) puts it, texts include “expressions which refer to the text producer, the imagined receiver and the evolving text itself.” These features are of two different types: explicit textual markers (e.g., firstly) and stance markers (e.g.,
surprisingly) (Hyland 2018). There are also some discourse-specific features such as non-verbal markers (e.g., facial expressions) and punctuation and capitalization which are found in written texts. Hyland (2018) further classifies these features into interactive and interactional. Of the interactional features of metadiscourse is hedging which is the concern of this study.

Hedges are used to show the speaker’s or writer’s degree of commitment to or reliability in the text (Hyland 1998). For example, a speaker may use a verb like ‘claim’ to show that he is not completely certain about a statement or proposition. Hyland (1998, 3) states that a hedge “indicates unwillingness to make an explicit and complete commitment to the truth of propositions.” Some examples of hedging devices are modal auxiliaries, like ‘may’ or ‘could’, and epistemic lexical verbs, such as ‘suggest’ or ‘indicate’ (Hyland 1998). These devices are used to show that the speaker is not completely certain about the given information as a way of protecting his own face.

Hedging devices were classified differently. Martin (2008), for example, focuses mainly on the context in which a hedge is used. Hyland (1996) also presents a pragmatic framework for categorizing hedges to be used by academic writers. Another categorization was introduced by Salager-Meyer (1994) who proposed five categories as follows:

1) Shields: This category consists of “modal verbs expressing possibility, semi-auxiliaries, probability adverbs and their derivative adjectives, and epistemic verbs”. For instance, to seem, likely.

2) Approximators: This category consists of “stereotyped “adaptors” as well as “rounders” of quantity, degree, frequency and time”. For example, approximately, quite.

3) Expressions that show “personal doubt direct involvement” of the speaker. For example, I believe.

4) Intensifiers that are emotionally-charged: This category includes words that are used to attract the listener’s attention to the speaker; such as surprisingly.

5) Compound hedges: This category combines more than one hedging device together; such as “it could suggest that…”. Of course, this means that we might have double or triple or more combinations of hedges all together. (Salager-Meyer 1994, 154)

In 1997, Salager-Meyer conducted another study on hedging in written scientific discourse instead of medical discourse (the 1994 study was conducted on medical written discourse). In this study, she conducted a similar analysis on the use of hedges in different rhetorical sections of scientific research papers. The study followed the same categorization for hedges, but there was an additional category of ‘if’ clauses to make the classification more inclusive. Furthermore, some of the other categories were more detailed, although the same, with different labels.

**Hedging in Non-Political Discourse**

Language use in non-political discourse is different from that in political discourse because of differences in the context and the participants in each type of discourse. For example, medical discourse is often characteristic of certainty and accuracy of the producer unlike academic discourse which is, as Hyland (1994) argues, rich in hedges.
Empirically, Nguyen Thi Thuy (2018) analysed the production of academic discourse in the form of research articles by English native writers and Vietnamese native writers and found that academic writers make much use of hedging to express their opinions and to convince their readers of their thoughts. The results indicated that English native writers used hedges more than Vietnamese native writers in research articles. The study explained that this difference in the frequency of hedges is attributed to the different culture, addressees or the “conventional rules of two discourse communities” (1). Similarly, Loi and Lim (2019), who examined the use of hedges in the Discussion sections of both English and Malay educational research articles, found that academic writers use hedges in the presentation of the findings of their research to seek acceptance of these findings in the academic community. The researchers also found that hedging was used more in English Discussion sections than that in Malay attributing this to the fact that English is of a culture that tends to frequently use hedging.

As for scientific and social discourse, Elheky (2018) analysed business and social texts taken from 40 scholarly articles and found that hedges are more frequently used in social discourse than business discourse. As for computer-mediated communication (CMC) discourse, Hamood (2015) analysed group discussions on WhatsApp by Malaysian and Arab learners of English with relation to politeness and found that both types of leaners used hedges to state their opinions, but they used different types of hedges: Malaysian learners seemed to be more indirect than Arab learners; however, both groups used hedges as a way of positive politeness to show respect to their addressee. Finally, the researcher concluded that Arab learners used fewer types of hedges in their texts and suggested that they should increase their corpus of hedging devices.

Hedging in Political Discourse

Al-Rashady (2012) analysed the functions of hedging devices in three presidential electoral debates between Barack Obama and John McCain in 2008 using three frameworks: Hyland (2005), Salager-Meyer (1997), and Martin (2008). The results showed that hedging devices were highly used in political discourse and that some hedging strategies like modal auxiliaries and subjectivization are more frequently used than others. Multiple functions for hedging devices were found in the study: expressing modality, uncertainty, probability, convincing the reader of the truthfulness of ideas and showing the speaker’s confidence. Idowu and Owuye (2019) conducted a study on the Nigerian president Muhammadu Buhari’s Inaugural address in 2015 to investigate his use of hedging devices using the framework of Salager-Meyer (2007 [sic]). The results indicated that the most frequently used hedging device was modal auxiliary verbs and that hedging was used in the president’s speech for three contextual reasons: indicating uncertainty, saving the face of the president, and toning down the speech by presenting criticism indirectly.

Fraser (2010) examined the use of hedging by President George Bush Jr. in response to questions directed to him by reporters in the 2007 Press Conferences. The researcher hypothesised that using hedging as a way of mitigating any chance of face threatening should not be commonly used; he said that the reason is because he would not be debating with others but rather answering questions. The findings showed that many hedging devices were used in a “non-hedging manner” (207). Moreover, the hedging
devices used did not indicate politeness but rather a lack of precision. Very few hedging strategies were used for evasion when Bush was expected to avoid a direct answer. The findings explained that a huge number of hedging strategies were not used to hide Bush’s intentions in a way that makes his responses sound vague, or by evading his answers to some specific questions as a way of avoiding his actual response to them. On the other hand, the evasion strategies used were refusals of answering a question, redirecting the answer to another person or party, and “self-reformulation and narrowing down the scope of the original question sequence” (Fraser 2010, 210).

Within the same genre of political interviews, Jalilifar and Alavi (2012) analysed four interviews taken from the BBC and CNN online websites. Each interview addressed a single interviewee that was a well-known political figure: the then US President George Bush, the US former president Jimmy Carter, David Coltal, and vice president Sarah Palin. The results showed that the president was the interviewee who used hedges the least. The researchers inferred that the reason behind using very few hedges by the president was due to his political power. This means that his power caused him to be the most committed to his answers in the interview which also shows his confidence. In other words, there is an inverse relationship between political power and hedging, in terms of the quantity and quality of hedges. Another finding was that the most frequently used hedging devices by the president were the first-person plural pronoun ‘we’ and introductory phrases. The other politicians, except Jimmy Carter, depended heavily on the use of the first-person plural pronoun as a hedging device. From this point, the study concluded that there is a relationship between the use of hedges, politeness and face. The reason is that using the pronoun ‘we’ indicates solidarity with the audience, which implies that the speaker saves the face of their audience by using hedging as a positive politeness strategy.

In another study, Gribanova and Gaidukova (2019) explored the most frequently used hedging devices in the two discourse genres of interviews and political speeches. The data were collected from interviews with British celebrities and political speeches of British politicians between 2000 and 2013. The analysis was both quantitative and comparative. The findings showed that “colloquial plausibility shields” were used in interviews (e.g., I think) (97). However, their formal counterparts were not used in interviews at all (e.g., I assume). Additionally, plausibility shields, like I believe, were used in political speeches to indicate that the speaker is involved in the speech. As for Approximators, rounders, which are a part of approximators like approximately, are not usually used in interviews because they show more formality. Thus, rounders are more frequently used in political speeches because they indicate more proficiency. All in all, the study concludes that there is a relationship between the type of hedge used, the “stylistic reference” of the hedge and how it transfers the meaning of the message (97).

Some researchers examined the use of both hedges and boosters in presidential events. For example, Yeganeh, Heravi and Sawari (2015) conducted a comparative study on the use of hedges and boosters in two mass-circulation newspapers: one in Iran and another in America. The study was comparative in two aspects: by comparing the use of hedges and boosters between the two newspapers, and by comparing the use of hedges and boosters before and after the elections. The analysed corpus included issues that were published seven days before the elections and those published seven days after the elections. The findings
showed that boosters were used more than hedges in both newspapers which means that they were certain of the results of the elections. On the other hand, the use of boosters was high post-elections in the Iranian newspaper and very few hedges were used which indicates that the people of Iran were confident about the results of the elections and they kept “strong stance about it” (682). However, the American newspaper articles used more hedges and very few boosters which indicates that the Americans had doubt in the results of the elections in Iran.

In the Arab context, Rabab’ah and Abu Rumman (2015) analysed 25 political speeches of King Abdullah II of Jordan for the use of hedges adopting the taxonomy of Salager-Meyer (1994). Their results revealed five functions for hedges as follows: expressing uncertainty, indicating lack of full commitment, showing politeness, avoiding direct criticism and requesting the involvement of the listener. The findings also revealed that political discourse generally depends on the use of hedges “to express fuzziness and lack of precision” (181). Additionally, the study found that the hedging strategy that was mostly used in the speeches of King Abdullah II was modal auxiliaries, specifically the modal auxiliary ‘can’.

Methodology

Research Questions

This study seeks to answer the following questions:

1) What are the most frequently used hedging devices in the two speeches of Donald Trump before the UN General Assembly in 2017 and 2018?

2) What are the pragmatic functions of the hedging devices used in Trump’s speeches?

Data Collection

The data were collected from two different American online magazines which included the transcripts of Trump’s two speeches. The first transcript was retrieved from the Politico online magazine, and the second was taken from the Atlantic online magazine. These two magazines were chosen because they provided the complete transcripts of the targeted speeches. After choosing the two sources for the transcripts on Google search, the full transcripts were copied and saved in a Microsoft Word file to be used in the analysis of the study. The first speech was given on September 19, 2017 and consisted of 4,585 words, and the second was given on September 25, 2018 and consisted of 3,601 words. The selection of these two speeches was purposeful because they represent a one-year gap which is expected to have affected the speaker’s perspectives on events and actions. In both speeches, Trump discussed political issues like the civil war in Syria and the rogue regime in North Korea, social issues like uncontrolled migration, and economical issues like the financial situation and trade in America.

Data Analysis

Two approaches were adopted to analyse the data: The first was content analysis which was employed to find hedging devices in the two speeches, and the second was quantitative analysis which was utilised to find the frequencies of each hedge. The framework of Salager-Meyer (1997) was adopted to categorize the types of hedges in the two speeches. A careful analysis of the two transcripts was
conducted. The researchers began by eliciting all examples on each category of hedge by typing each example in the search box by using the search function in the Word document and highlighting all the words in each category in a different colour. After that, the total number of occurrences of each hedging word was manually calculated, taking into consideration the exclusion of non-hedging words. As for the second research question, the study adopted the framework of Rabab’ah and Abu Rumman (2015) to examine the pragmatic functions of the hedges used in the two speeches. The researchers examined each function by reading the transcripts and checking any hedges that behaved accordingly based on the context. Each pragmatic function of hedges in Rabab’ah and Abu Rumman (2015) was assigned to hedging words by providing examples from the transcripts supported by the researchers’ interpretation. After that, the researchers added additional pragmatic functions after analysing the speeches by reading their transcripts carefully and examining how hedges function according to their different occurrences.

**Salager-Meyer’s (1997) Framework**

Below are the categories of hedging devices that are used in Salager-Meyer (1997, 131-133):

1. Modal Auxiliary verbs: e.g. may, might, can, could, would, should.
2. Modal Lexical verbs: e.g. to seem, to appear (epistemic verbs), to believe, to assume, to suggest, to estimate, to tend, to think, to argue, to indicate, to propose, to speculate.
3. Adjectival, adverbial and Nominal modal phrases: e.g. possible, probable, un/likely, assumption, claim, possibility, estimate, suggestion, perhaps, possibly, probably, practically, likely, presumably, virtually, apparently.
4. Approximators of degree, quantity, frequency and time: e.g. approximately, roughly, about, often, occasionally, generally, usually, somewhat, somehow, a lot of.
5. Introductory phrases: e.g. I believe, to our knowledge, it is our view that, we feel that.
6. “If” clauses: e.g. if true, if anything.
7. Compound hedges (double, triple or quadruple): e.g. it would appear, it seems reasonable/probable, it may suggest that, it seems likely that, it would indicate that, this probably indicates, it seems reasonable to assume that, it would seem somewhat unlikely that, it may appear somewhat speculative that.

**Rabab’ah’s and Abu Rumman’s (2015) Framework**

Rabab’ah and Abu Rumman (2015, 175-179) discuss five pragmatic functions of hedges as the following:

1. Mitigating claims by showing some kind of uncertainty
2. Expressing lack of full commitment
3. Expressing politeness and searching for being accepted
4. Avoiding direct criticism especially when predicting future events or consequences
5. Requesting the listeners’ involvement

**Results and Discussion**

This section presents the results of the study. First, it shows the hedging devices used in Trump’s two speeches. After that, the study explains the functions behind using hedging in the two speeches based
on the framework of Rabab’ah and Abu Rumman (2015). Finally, a discussion of the major findings is presented. The two speeches are presented separately below with multiple examples and their explanations.

Hedges in the 2017 Speech

Table (1) below displays the frequency and percentage of each category of hedging as used in Trump’s speech in 2017:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hedging device category</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Approximators of degree, quantity, frequency and time</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>43.19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modal auxiliary verbs</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>29.18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modal lexical verbs</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>12.45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘If’ clauses</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5.45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compound hedges</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5.06%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjectival, adverbial and nominal modal phrases</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3.89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introductory phrases</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>257</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results showed that the most frequently used type of hedges in the 2017 speech was the category of approximators of degree, quantity, frequency and time. The percentage of the category of approximators was 43.19% (a total of 111 approximators). Examples under (1) below show the use of approximators in the 2017 speech:

a. In fact, our country has achieved more against ISIS in the last eight months than it has in many, many years combined.

b. Companies are moving back, creating job growth the likes of which our country has not seen in a very long time.

In these examples, we notice that the approximators more, many, very and long were used by Trump to show lack of precision in the presentation of his ideas and thoughts. In Example (1 a), Trump used two approximators of quantity more and many to show an uncertain amount of something. Trump is hedging here probably because he is not mentioning the exact number of achievements his country has accomplished, or the number of years he is referring to. Therefore, Trump is being cautious. We notice that Trump used the hedge many twice in a row, which is a double hedge (i.e., compound), and we can refer to this as an emphasis on his use of this hedging device. In Example (1 b), Trump also used a double hedge, although non-identical, by combining both very and long to show a length of the duration of time that is, again, not specified. All in all, Trump was trying to be alert by his use of approximators.

The second most frequently used category of hedges in the 2017 speech was modal auxiliary verbs. He used a total of 75 verbs from this category, which equals the percentage of 29.18%. The excerpts below manifest the use of modal auxiliary verbs in the 2017 speech:

a. No society can be safe if banned chemical weapons are allowed to spread.

b. We must protect our nations, their interests, and their futures.

c. We realized who we were, what we valued, and what we would give our lives to defend.
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We notice in these three examples that all three modal auxiliaries (can, must and would) have different meanings/functions. However, all of them share the notion that an action is not certainly going to happen. Can indicates the ability to have an action happen, must implies that it is necessary for something to happen, and would expresses a desire to do something. In other words, none of them means that something will certainly happen. We can, additionally, say that the functions of these auxiliary verbs range from expressing a possibility (e.g., may) and an intention or a necessity (e.g., will or must).

On the contrary, the least frequently used hedging category in 2017 was introductory phrases, representing only 0.78% (i.e., two occurrences only). Below are the two occurrences of introductory phrases in the 2017 speech:

a. In the meantime, we believe that no nation should have to bear a disproportionate share of the burden, militarily or financially.

b. We have learned that, over the long term, uncontrolled migration is deeply unfair to both the sending and the receiving countries.

In the two examples under (3) above, the two introductory phrases we believe that and we have learned that were used as hedges. Trump here is showing that the statements are of his point of view which also holds some meaning of doubt. By saying we believe that, he is saying that the thought he is expressing is as he believes it to be but it is not necessarily the truth. Similarly, by using the expression we have learned that, he is referring to some sense of a personal opinion which also puts him in a safe side for not stating something directly; this way, he is saving his own face by using this as a hedge.

Another category of hedges that Trump used in his speech was the category of modal lexical verbs. He used these verbs 32 times with a percentage of 12.45%. Modal lexical verbs were referred to by Salager-Meyer (1997) as being speech-act verbs that indicate a sense of doubt or evaluation. Examples under (4) below show Trump’s use of these hedges in his speech in 2017.

a. We seek the de-escalation of the Syrian conflict, and a political solution that honors the will of the Syrian people.

b. We do expect all nations to uphold these two core sovereign duties: to respect the interests of their own people and the rights of every other sovereign nation.

In Examples (4 a & 4 b) above, Trump used the modal lexical verbs seek and expect to indicate a degree of uncertainty. In Example (4 a), Trump was expressing America’s intention and attempt to de-escalate the conflict in Syria. By using the modal lexical verb seek, Trump indicates some sense of doubt in his statement. In Example (4 b), Trump, again, used another verb of modality, which is expect. Trump here is asking nations to be sovereign; however, he softened his request by using the modal lexical verb expect as a way of indicating politeness in his language.

In addition, Trump used ‘if’ clauses 14 times (a percentage of 5.45%) in his speech in 2017. The excerpts under (5) show his use of ‘if’ clauses in this speech.

c. The United States has great strength and patience, but if it is forced to defend itself or its allies, we will have no choice but to totally destroy North Korea.
d. If we are to embrace the opportunities of the future and overcome the present dangers together, there can be no substitute for strong, sovereign, and independent nations.

In Example (5 a), Trump is threatening North Korea to fight back if they do not stop nuclear weapons. As a way of softening his threat, Trump indicated some sense of doubt in his statement by using the conditional ‘if’ clause. As for Example (5 b), Trump is making a request for nations to be sovereign and independent. However, he used the ‘if’ clause here to soften his request.

**Compound hedges** were also used by Trump in his speech in 2017. He used this category of hedges 13 times with a percentage of 5.06%. The examples under (6) below manifest Trump’s use of compound hedges in his speech in 2017:

- **Our military will soon be the strongest it has ever been.**
- **As President of the United States, I will always put America first, just like you, as the leaders of your countries will always, and should always, put your countries first. (Applause.)**

In Example (6 a), Trump used the double hedge will soon by combining a modal auxiliary verb with an approximator of time. In this statement, Trump is showing his intention to improve the situation of the military strength in America. Here, Trump is making a statement about the future, but he combined his intention with the approximator soon to indicate some sort of uncertainty as a way of protecting himself from criticism by softening his claim. As for Example (6 b), Trump used the modal auxiliary verb will with the approximator of time always to emphasize his intention of prioritizing his nation and the citizens of America above all. He also used should always as a more softened advice for other leaders to do the same for their citizens, since the use of should is softer than will. However, the use of always with both auxiliary verbs indicates a sense of emphasis.

Furthermore, Trump used **adjectival, adverbial and nominal modal phrases** to indicate uncertainty and to soften his speech. These phrases were used 10 times with a percentage of 3.89%. The use of these phrases is manifested in the excerpts under (7) below.

- **We support recent agreements of the G20 nations that will seek to host refugees as close to their home countries as possible.**
- **To put it simply, we meet at a time of both of immense promise and great peril.**

In the examples under (7) above, the adjectival modal phrase possible and the nominal modal phrase promise were used to indicate a degree of uncertainty in the statements. Both words hold a meaning of some doubt which softens Trump’s language in his speech.

### Hedges in the 2018 Speech

Table (2) displays all the hedging categories used in the 2018 speech along with their frequencies and percentages. Similar to the 2017 speech, the most frequently used hedging devices in the 2018 speech were **approximators**, representing a total of 107 tokens (51.94%) which is nearly half of the total number of all the hedges used in this speech.
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Table 2: Frequency and percentage of hedges in the 2018 speech.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hedging device category</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Approximators of degree, quantity, frequency and time</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>51.94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modal auxiliary verbs</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>28.64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modal lexical verbs</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5.34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compound hedges</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5.34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjectival, adverbial and nominal modal phrases</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4.37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introductory phrases</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘If’ clauses</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Examples under (8) manifest the use of approximators by Trump in his speech in 2018.

i. Our military will *soon* be *more* powerful than it has *ever* been *before*.

j. We have started the construction of a major border wall, and we have *greatly* strengthened border security.

Like the use of approximators in the 2017 speech, Trump used the approximators *soon, more, ever, before* and *greatly* to show lack of precision in an expression. The approximators *soon, ever and before* were used in Example (8 a) to show an estimated timing and *more* was used to show an estimated amount or quantity. In the second example (8 b), the approximator of quantity *greatly* was used to indicate the high amount of security that has been built on borders, as an approximator of quantity that expresses lack of commitment. The main function of all the mentioned approximators is to indicate imprecision or vagueness which includes saving one’s face.

The second highly used category of hedges in the 2018 speech is also similar to the one in the 2017 speech, which is the category of *modal auxiliary verbs*. Trump used modal auxiliary verbs 59 times in his speech, representing a percentage of 28.64%. Examples under (9) below show the use of modal auxiliary verbs by Trump in his speech in 2018.

k. All nations of the world *should* resist socialism and the misery that it brings to everyone.

l. We *will* continue to work with friends and allies to deny radical Islamic terrorists funding, territory, or support or any means of infiltrating our borders.

The two examples above include the modal auxiliary verbs *should* and *will* as used by Trump in his speech in 2018. Example (9 a) included the hedging word *should* to indicate advice from Trump for all nations to resist socialism. Here, Trump used this word as a hedging device to soften his request and make it in the form of a piece of device. In Example (9 b), Trump used the modal auxiliary verb *will* to show America’s intention to cooperate with other countries to stop supporting terrorist countries. Again, Trump is showing an intention to do an action but this still does not mean that he will actually do it. This is a type of hedging because he did not state a fully-direct sentence about something that is going to happen for sure.

On the contrary, the least frequently used category of hedges in Trump’s speech in 2018 was the ‘*if*’ *clause* one. Trump used ‘if’ clauses in his speech two times with a percentage of 0.97%. Excerpts under (10) below manifest the two occurrences of ‘if’ clauses as used by Trump in the 2018 speech.
m. But rest assured, the United States will respond if chemical weapons are deployed by the Assad regime.

n. Germany will become totally dependent on Russian energy if it does not immediately change course.

The use of ‘if’ clauses in the two sentences above implies a conditionality of an action. In other words, they indicate an action that might or might not happen. The idea of implying conditionality is another way of hedging that can be used to save the face of the speaker.

Moreover, Trump used modal lexical verbs to hedge 11 times (i.e., 5.34%) in his speech in 2018. The examples under (11) below display Trump’s use of these verbs in this speech.

o. We believe that trade must be fair and reciprocal.

p. We expect other countries to pay their fair share for the cost of their defense.

In the two examples above, Trump used the modal lexical verb believe and expect to hedge his statements. In Example (11 a), he used the verb believe to express a belief about a thought. Expressing a belief about something indicates a sense of uncertainty because it does not necessarily mean that it is true, but that it is rather an opinion. In the second example (11 b), the verb expect was used to indicate a softened request to other countries to pay their share to the UN council to continue to get protection. He used the hedging verb here to be polite in his request.

Similar to the use of modal lexical verbs, Trump used compound hedges 11 times in his second speech (i.e., 5.34%). The excerpts under (12) below manifest the use of compound hedging by Trump in his speech in 2018.

q. Looking around this hall, where so much history has transpired, we think of the many before us who have come here to address the challenges of their nations and of their times.

r. Since that meeting, we have seen a number of encouraging measures that few could have imagined a short time ago.

In Example (12 a), Trump used the double hedge so much as two approximators to emphasize the high number of events that were accomplished at the UN council hall in the past. However, there is also some kind of cautiousness because he did not specifically mention the number of events given at that place where he was giving his speech. As for the second example (12 b), Trump used the approximator of quantity few with the modal auxiliary verb could when he was expressing the improvement in the relationship with North Korea. The approximator few indicates uncertainty about the number of people who expected this improvement to happen. And the use of could indicates their ability to understand that there was a possibility for North Korea to stop nuclear weapons. We can say that Trump used these hedges to avoid being direct and to soften his claim in order to save his face.

Additionally, Trump used adjectival, adverbial and nominal modal phrases to soften his language. He used these phrases 9 times with a percentage of 4.37%. Examples under (13) below manifest his use of this category of hedges in his speech in 2018:

s. To unleash this incredible potential in our people, we must defend the foundations that make it all possible.

t. For similar reasons, the United States will provide no support and recognition to the International Criminal Court.
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In the two examples above, the nominal modal potential and the modal adjectives possible and similar were all used to indicate some kind of uncertainty to Trump’s claims as a way of mitigating and softening his language in order to protect his face.

As for his use of introductory phrases in this speech, 7 occurrences were found with a percentage of 3.40%. Most of these consisted of a pronoun with the verb believe. Some of the examples are shown below:

u. We believe that when nations respect the rights of their neighbors and defend the interests of their people, they can better work together to secure the blessings of safety, prosperity, and peace.

v. As for Americans, we know what kind of future we want for ourselves. We know what kind of a nation America must always be.

In the two examples above, Trump used the introductory phrases we believe that and we know to indicate a sense of doubt indicating that the statement is an opinion related to his own knowledge. Here, Trump is protecting himself because he is telling the audience that the thought is what he believed it to be right and it is not necessarily the truth. We also notice that he used the plural pronoun we instead of I as a way of involving the listener to indicate politeness. These phrases show a degree of uncertainty to soften the claim and make it sound more polite.

Comparison between the Two Speeches

Table (3) below displays the similarities and differences between the total number and percentage of each category of hedges in the two speeches. It also shows the percentage of the difference in the use of each category between both speeches, as shown in the last column in the table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hedging device category</th>
<th>2017 Speech</th>
<th>2018 Speech</th>
<th>Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Approximators of degree, quantity, frequency and time</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>43.19%</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modal auxiliary verbs</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>29.18%</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modal lexical verbs</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>12.45%</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘If’ clauses</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5.45%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compound hedges</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5.06%</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjectival, adverbial and nominal modal phrases</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3.89%</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introductory phrases</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.78%</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td><strong>257</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
<td><strong>206</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Closing Remarks

As for the most frequently used hedging devices in Trump’s two speeches, the results indicate that Trump preferred using some categories of hedging devices over others in the two speeches. We notice that the majority of the hedges used in the two speeches were approximators possibly because the main function of approximators is to express an indirect and non-straightforward thought. Moreover, they involve a sense of vagueness and generalization. This is related to the main function of hedging, which is showing uncertainty and being cautious when transmitting information or communicating with others. For example, saying “She has read seven books” is more accurate than saying “She has read more than five
books.” Therefore, the approximator more in this example communicates the idea imprecisely, though grammatically correctly. As for using modal auxiliaries, they may have different functions when they are used. Some of them such as would and might may be used to indicate doubt, and others such as will hold the meaning of an intention to make something in the future, but the speaker is not committed to what he says. Modal auxiliary verbs have different degrees of precision and emphasis in the way they express an idea and can be used according to the context and situation of their occurrence; for example, might indicates more uncertainty than may does. However, they all share the notion of cautiousness in communication.

Pragmatic Functions of Hedges

Before embarking on an analysis of these functions, it is essential to state that although many scholars examined the functions of hedges in different types of discourse, few examined the functions of hedges in political discourse. For example, the functions of hedging were explored in medical discourse (e.g., Salager-Meyer 1994), academic discourse (e.g., Ghazanfari and Abassi 2012), classroom discourse (e.g., Hua 2011) and business and social discourses (e.g., Elheky 2018). Other scholars studied the functions of hedges in political discourse such as political interviews (Taweel et al. 2011) and presidential debates (Al-Rashady 2012). Within political discourse, despite the low amount of research on hedging in political discourse, very few have examined the functions of hedges in the genre of political speech in specific (Idowu and Owuye 2019; Rabab’ah, and Abu Rumman 2015). The present study adopts the analysis of hedging functions presented by Rabab’ah and Abu Rumman (2015) because they focused on a presidential speech similar to this study’s focus (though in a different context). Analysis of the findings of this study shows that hedging can serve additional functions which shall be explored below. Rabab’ah and Abu Rumman (2015, 175-179) found five functions for hedges in their study. The functions include the following: (1) mitigating claims by showing some kind of uncertainty, (2) expressing lack of full commitment, (3) expressing politeness and searching for being accepted, (4) avoiding direct criticism especially when predicting future events or consequences, and (5) requesting the listeners’ involvement. Each function is illustrated further with examples below.

Mitigating claims by showing some kind of uncertainty

One of the main reasons for using hedges is to show some kind of uncertainty in a claim as a way of softening it. Many types of hedging devices can be used to tone down the conversation. For example, modal auxiliary verbs (can, might), approximators (mostly, about), modal lexical verbs (tend to, suggest), or nominal, adjectival or adverbial phrases (probably, possible). The examples below show how hedges were used to mitigate claims in the language of Trump in his speeches.

w. But in fulfilling our obligations to our own nations, we also realize that it’s in everyone’s interest to seek a future where all nations can be sovereign, prosperous, and secure.

x. As we see in Jordan, the most compassionate policy is to place refugees as close to their homes as possible, to ease their eventual return to be part of the rebuilding process.
y. If this organization is to have any hope of successfully confronting the challenges before us, it will depend, as President Truman said some 70 years ago, on the “independent strength of its members”.

In Example (15 a), Trump used two hedging devices to mitigate his language by showing some kind of uncertainty. He used the modal lexical verb seek and the modal auxiliary verb can. He is pointing to the importance of sovereignty in all nations including America. The language is softened by his use of hedges. Similarly, in Example (15 b), Trump used the modal adjectival phrase possible and the approximator of time eventual to tone down his request to Jordan to stop hosting refugees for their own good. In Example (15 b), Trump also used the introductory phrase as we see in the same example to show some degree of uncertainty by involving his own opinion in the proposition. In Excerpt (15 c), Trump used the approximator of quantity some to express an indefinite number of years; that is when he referred to the time President Trump mentioned that the strength of nations comes from the independent strength of its citizens and the bond between them as one unit. Trump was asking the UN that all nations, even though they should cooperate together, should still have independent strength among its own citizens. Here, Trump is mitigating his claim by showing some kind of uncertainty when he used the approximator some along with the use of the conditional ‘if’ clause.

Expressing lack of full commitment

Another function for hedging is to show that someone is not completely committed to what they say. If someone states a proposition using emphasized words, this might put them in some kind of risk if any of their promises were not accomplished or if they were not 100% sure about what they claimed. Therefore, people use hedges as a way of protecting themselves by showing that they are not completely committed to their words. The excerpts below show how hedging was used by Trump as a way of not committing to propositions.

z. But the powerful people in this room, under the guidance and auspices of the United Nations, can solve many of these vicious and complex problems.

aa. Like them, I intend to address some of the very serious threats before us today but also the enormous potential waiting to be unleashed.

By using the modal auxiliary verb, can, in Excerpt (16 a), Trump was referring to the ability of the United Nations to solve financial issues. The use of can here indicates lack of commitment because the expression does not commit the United Nations to solve these issues. Moreover, the use of the modal lexical verb intend in Excerpt (16 b) indicates a sense of lack of commitment by Trump to talk about all the issues he aimed at discussing before the UN General Assembly.

Expressing politeness and searching for being accepted

Politicians in general tend to make an effort to convince their addressees of their opinions and thoughts, especially when they have a huge audience. Being polite in using language is one of the methods to seek agreement from addressees. Trump used hedges as a way of showing politeness in his speech. In Excerpt (17 a), Trump wanted to discuss some negative side-effects of uncontrolled migration. Since the points he was about to discuss were not positive, he tried to indicate some kind of politeness in
his words, by using the introductory phrase *we have learned that*, to mitigate the sentence and be more accepted by his listeners. Moreover, the approximator of time *long* was used to show indefiniteness to describe the period of time uncontrolled migration has been going. As per Rabab’ah and Abu Rumman (2015), approximators can function as a way of minimizing face-threatening acts. Moreover, we notice that Trump used the adjective *unfair* as a euphemism to show politeness to his addressees by not using harsh words. In Excerpt (17 b), Trump, again, used an introductory phrase to show politeness when he stated his opinion and advice to nations to be good to their neighboring countries and always cooperate together for their good. He also used *can* to soften and make his opinion more accepted. In Example (17 c), Trump used the modal lexical verb *expect* to show some kind of softness in his request which makes it more polite.

bb. *We have learned that*, over the *long* term, uncontrolled migration is deeply unfair to both the sending and the receiving countries.

c. *We believe that* when nations respect the rights of their neighbors and defend the interests of their people, they *can* better work together to secure the blessings of safety, prosperity, and peace.

dd. Moving forward, we are only going to give foreign aid to those who respect us and, frankly, are our friends. *We expect* other countries to pay their fair share for the cost of their defense.

**Avoiding direct criticism especially when predicting future events or consequences**

Sometimes, when we predict something about the future, we try to be careful about our choice of words in order not to be criticized in case what we predicted was not true. People also pay attention to their choice of words, by using approximators for example, if they were giving a piece of information about something, they are not accurately sure about. Thus, instead of saying an exactly detailed statement, the speaker provides the information in an approximate description by going around the bush. Choice of words in these cases is very important, especially when the speaker is an important figure like a political leader. Examples under 18 display how Trump hedged his statements in order not to sound wrong.

ee. *Some* countries abused their openness to dump their products, subsidize their goods, target our industries, and manipulate their currencies to gain unfair advantage over our country. As a result, our trade deficit ballooned to *nearly* $800 billion a year.

ff. In *less* than two years, my administration has accomplished *more* than almost any administration in the history of our country.

In the first example (18 a), Trump used the approximator *some* and *nearly* as a way of showing an approximate estimation of the number of countries that abused the trade in the United States for the benefit of their own economy, and an estimate number of the amount of money the United States had economically lost as a reason of that. In Example (18 b), Trump used the approximator *less* to estimate the number of years he had ruled, and the approximators *more* and *almost* to make an imprecise estimation about the number of achievements he claimed to have accomplished for the US by that time. The reason for using hedges here was that Trump was avoiding to be criticized by his addressees in case he gave a detailed but wrong description in his claim. In order to get the protection of the UN, Trump
asked the countries which do not pay their part to the United Nations to start making the necessary payments.

**Requesting the listener’s involvement**

Hedging devices were also used as a way of involving the listener in the speech and the thoughts the speaker is discussing. Trump used introductory phrases to fulfil this function as shown in Example 19 below.

(2) As for Americans, *we know* what kind of future we want for ourselves. *We know* what kind of a nation America must always be. In America, *we believe* in the majesty of freedom and the dignity of the individual. *We believe* in self-government and the rule of law.

In Example (19) above, Trump repeatedly used the introductory phrases *we know* and *we believe*. Both of them include the inclusive pronoun *we*, which does not refer to Trump himself only, but to all Americans as well. Trump was stating his opinions about America and how its future should be, and he included Americans in his opinion too as a way of hedging. We can also point out here that using the plural form instead of the singular one indicates politeness.

In addition to these five functions which were taken from Rabab’ah and Abu Rumman (2015), as noted earlier, this study found three new functions of hedges that were not used in Rabab’ah’s and Abu Rumman’s (2015) study but were used by Trump in his two speeches. The first is the function of **emphasis**, the second is the function of **indicating power**, and the third is of **multi-functional hedges**. All of these functions are explained further below.

**Emphasis**

Approximators include a wide variety of words that can be used to describe degree, quantity, frequency or time. However, they can also function differently according to the context. Although approximators can be used to show some kind of uncertainty to soften the speaker’s proposition, it appears that they can also be used to emphasize a proposition. Trump used approximators for emphasis as shown in the excerpts under 20 below.

a. It is a horrible thing that is going on, at levels that nobody has *ever* seen *before*. It is very, very cruel. Illegal immigration funds criminal networks, ruthless gangs, and the flow of deadly drugs.

b. Our approach has *always* yielded incredible change. With support from *many* countries here today, we have engaged with North Korea to replace the specter of conflict with a bold and new push for peace.

c. In June, I traveled to Singapore to meet face-to-face with North Korea’s leader, Kim Jong Un. We had *highly* productive conversations and meetings.

In Excerpt (20 a), Trump used the approximator *very* twice in a row to emphasize how cruel the threats of uncontrolled migration are. We notice that this was used as a double hedge here which adds more weight on the emphasis of his thoughts. Repetition is also known as a linguistic method for indicating emphasis (Khdair, 2016). Moreover, the approximators of time *ever* and *before* were used in the same excerpt to emphasize the long duration that uncontrolled migration has lasted for. Both Excerpts
(20 b & c) were about the conflict between the United States and North Korea and how they were trying to work together to improve the issues they had. Trump used the approximator of time always to stress that America continuously tried to improve its relationships with other countries including North Korea. The approximator of quantity many was used to emphasize the high number of countries that were working with America and supporting it to solve its issues with North Korea. Again, the approximator of degree highly was used by Trump to highlight the importance of his meetings with the North Korean president and their effect on their relationship.

**Indicating power**

Although hedging can be used to mitigate the expressing of one’s thoughts, it can also refer to the high authority of the speaker in some contexts. Since the speaker of the two examined speeches was the president of the United States, his language indicated the power of his position as a leader. Some of the main hedges that indicated the authority of Trump in his speeches were will, must and the use of some compound hedges like will always or must never. Examples under 21 below show how Trump used hedges to indicate his power.

d. As President of the United States, I will always put America first, just like you, as the leaders of your countries will always, and should always, put your countries first. (Applause.)

e. The United States will forever be a great friend to the world, and especially to its allies (…, etc.). As long as I hold this office, I will defend America’s interests above all else.

We notice in Excerpt (21 a) that Trump used the double hedge will always to indicate his authority and power. Furthermore, he used the approximator of time always as a confirmation of his intention to prioritize his nation above all. Despite his use of should as mitigated advice to the leaders of other countries, since he mentioned both will always and should always together being directed to other leaders, then he was expressing an emphasis in this case. In Excerpt (21 b), Trump used the modal auxiliary verb will to express his strong intention and ability to be protective of his nation. His use of this hedging verb shows his power and high authority, as using a verb like can, for example, would indicate a weaker proposition.

**Multi-functional hedging devices**

The researchers noticed that there were some hedging devices that had more than one function in the speeches of Trump. One of these hedges was the use of the introductory phrase we believe as in the examples below:

a. In the meantime, we believe that no nation should have to bear a disproportionate share of the burden, militarily or financially.

b. We believe that trade must be fair and reciprocal.

In the above two examples, the introductory phrase we believe that is multi-functional. We can consider that it involves the listener in the speaker’s opinion, but it also avoids direct criticism. This is because the speaker’s use of the verb believe means that this is an opinion only and there is a possibility for it to be untrue. A third function of the use of this hedging device is to indicate politeness, in the sense
Hedging in Political Discourse: The Case of Trump’s Speeches

that Trump was trying to be polite in his way of convincing the listener of his claims even if the listener did not initially agree with him.

c. The United States is working with the Gulf Cooperation Council, Jordan, and Egypt to establish a regional strategic alliance so that Middle Eastern nations can advance prosperity, stability, and security across their home region.

d. Reliance on a single foreign supplier can leave a nation vulnerable to extortion and intimidation.

In the above two Excerpts (22 c & d), the modal auxiliary verb can is multi-functional. First, the verb was used to soften Trump’s claims, which makes them polite. However, they indicate some lack of full commitment to Trump’s thoughts as a way of protecting his own face by not asserting his claims and by showing them as an ability for something to happen. Therefore, this also makes it a way of avoiding direct criticism, since he did not fully assert his claims. Finally, we can say that many of the hedging functions are related to each other and can sometimes interrelate for a specific hedging device.

Conclusion

This study has analysed the two speeches of President Donald Trump before the UN General Assembly in 2017 and 2018 for the use of hedging devices. The findings of this study revealed that the two mostly-used hedging devices in both speeches were approximators and modal auxiliary verbs. The study has shown that the main function of approximators is to express non-specification and vagueness. It also added that modal auxiliary verbs can have different functions such as indicating doubt or expressing an intention (e.g., will). Modal auxiliary verbs show a sense of cautiousness, which is the main function of hedging. The study has also examined the functions of hedges as used in Rabab’ah and Abu Rumman (2015). The functions were the following: (1) softening claims; (2) expressing less commitment; (3) being polite; (4) avoiding direct criticism; and (5) requesting the involvement of the listener. Furthermore, the study added three extra functions of hedges as used in the two speeches of Trump. The functions were expressing emphasis, indicating power, and multi-functional hedges.

The language of political figures, especially political leaders, is different from the language of non-political ones. Trump was obviously careful in his choice of words in his two speeches before the UN General Assembly. The speeches were previously prepared in order to avoid any possible criticism and as a way of protecting Trump by the use of hedging when required because every word counts. Trump was cautious in his speeches and used hedges in order to avoid committing himself to his words, so that it is not taken for granted. This is because if one of his future promises did not happen then he will be held accountable for it. Therefore, a significant speaker, like President Trump, who is heard by many people, tends to use hedging when he talks to people in order to protect himself. We notice that Trump used hedges in both of his speeches even though each speech was given at a different time and with a different amount of achievements that were accomplished before. Trump did not decrease his use of hedges in his second speech even though he expressed his pride in the achievements he has done for America from the beginning of his presidency. Another aspect that was noted in this study was the one of power. Higher authority is expressed by one’s choice of words. It is not possible for someone with no power to use...
unmitigated words. Using will is more powerful and determined in expressing one’s claims than should, for example. Furthermore, the use of must indicates an authority of the speaker over the addressee. Trump used these two modal auxiliary verbs extensively in his two speeches, which shows his high power as a president of the American nation.

**Recommendations for future research**

As mentioned earlier, this study examined the use of hedging devices in the two speeches of Trump before the UN General Assembly in 2017 and 2018. It would be recommended to expand the analysed data of the study to include more than two speeches; this would make the analysis even more generalizable. The study could also include different speeches by more than one speaker. Finally, future research might examine the use of specific hedging words that are included in the hedging categories, since this study mentioned that Trump used specific hedging words like will or must significantly more than others.

**Implications**

Presenting the use of hedging words in presidential political speeches is essential because it increases the awareness of people on the understanding of political speeches; this includes any hidden meanings that are indirectly implicated by politicians. Moreover, analysing the use of hedging in political discourse decreases any chances of face threats by being more polite when transferring ideas.
التحوط في الحوار السياسي: خطابات دونالد ترامب

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الملخص


الكلمات المفتاحية: التحوط، الحوار السياسي، وظائف، ترامب.
Endnotes

1 The first speech was given in 2017 before the UN General Assembly after Trump was inaugurated for presidency. The second was given a year later before the UN General Assembly; that is, in 2018.

2 Hyland (2018, 61) states that interactional resources are features which “involve readers and open opportunities for them to contribute to the discourse by alerting them to the author’s perspective towards both propositional information and readers themselves.”

References


