Hedges in World University Parliamentary English Debate Championships: A Pragmatic Study

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A B S T R A C T

Debating is recognized as a way of doing persuasion in speech that deals with four points of debate pillars, namely: *assertion, reasoning, evidence, and link back*. In the last two decades, every country debater champions have gathered and involved in a high level of debate atmosphere to compete each other as their country's representatives to have worlds' champion title. In conjunction to the glance of debate definition, the researcher analyzed the annual world most prestigious debating championship, WUDC 2016, which took place in Thessaloniki, Greece. In this research descriptive qualitative method was used. The source of this research was taken from video streaming on Youtube showing ESL grand final round between University of Indonesia team A (Indonesia) as Prime Minister (PM) and RWTH Aachen team A (Germany) as leader of opposition (LO). The result shows that hedges are used to make the debate performance run smooth and thoroughly powerful and convincing.

1. Introduction

The use of hedges in the debate could be one of other determinations to make debate look powerful, where in this case, all of debaters should pay attention to whether they need to hedge or avoid making hedges in their argumentative speech. According to [1], basically, hedges are, for example: *single or multiple words, adjectives, adverbs*, or even *particles* that functions to be *'controller'*, even *'disfluency-maker'* to sensationalize the taste of utterance that is to create 'intension' of meaning they utter. In addition, to engage with appropriate use of hedges in a good way, debaters should select appropriate hedges which are apparently to give values on how they are going with their using of verb even other elements that the opposite team might fully concentrates on. Furthermore, hedges could also be used for 'speculating' [2]. According to [3], hedges can be words or expressions used for minimizing forces or strengths of utterances.

There are two types of hedging [4], first *shields* and second is *approximators*. According to [4], shields do not change the content and true value of discourse, simply conveying speakers' doubt or reservations towards the discourse and showing speakers' attitudes indirectly to moderate the tone. Shields can be divided into two subcategories: plausibility shields and attribution shields. [4] in [2] mentions that, *approximators* can change peoples' perception on the topics of conversations and the original meaning of the discourse structure according to the communicative context. *Approximators* can change the true value of discourse, or make a certain degree of amendments based on the given facts, or provide certain range of variation to the original discourse. This implies fuzziness of using hedges. According to [5] hedging may imply the use of fuzzy modal logics conveyed by vague words, for example, the expression 'almost all'. The expression indicates vagueness of the truth of the number of the entities mentioned.

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2. Research Methods

The method used in this research is descriptive qualitative. This researh aims systematically at explaining some steps in this research. Dealing with the steps, first, the researcher began with an elaboration of what is merely to be the main discussion on the debate. Second, the researcher analyzed the appearing hedges in their utterances. Having done the analysis of the verbal hedges, the researcher then explained the debate contents and the meaning of the utterances pragmatically. To sum up, this research has the area of analysis which covers area of pragmatics and semantics.

3. Results and Discussion

This section presents the use of hedges in debates namely indicating plausible shields of the speaker, plausible shields of reliability, attribution shield of the speaker, attribution shields of the reliability, adaptor shield of the speaker, and rounder shield of the speaker. Each use is characterized by its own indicators.

3.1 *Plausible Shield indicating 'Speaker-oriented'*

The expressions indicating the shield can be "we think that" as seen in example (1).

(1) *We think that in globalized world, self-determination of individuals should not be limited by the borders of the states of definition of nationality that the states define with its power. The world that we imagine in opening government with the decline of nation state power will look like this:*

Beginning the opening statement of *'we think'*, the speaker used *'we'* to indicate the personal pronoun in plural form to indicate entity point of strength in which all authorities should depend on the speaker or someone who is to talk in the debate as the status quo. This has also a sense of reference of *'according to'* that points out *'own-selfness'* which might be true or false in the eyes of opponent side. In this data the researcher also found the word *'think'* as mental verb that shows the intellectuality of speaker. In terms of 'speculation' in the way how debaters to speculate, *'we think'* is also as a reflection of the speaker's emotion within the tentativeness and also show the direct speculation. Furthermore, the indicator that shows *'speaker-oriented'* in this case is reflected within *the speaker's view point* and *the tendency* through the pragmatic marker of *'we think that',* confirming crucial point of persuasion. In addition, *'that'* has the role in this constituent as relative pronoun to relate something either personal or impersonal. Thus, what researcher wants to show by the terms of the *'plausibility shields'* in this data is the pronoun *'we'* and the verb *'think'.* To be what the *'that'* for on the above data, researcher has learned empirically towards related literatures, *'that',* in accordance with the emerging hedges featured at this point, it could be either exist or not, but the fact that plausibility shields, can only be seen within the appearance of its 'pronoun' and 'verb'. Thus, this has the indication that this is solely has the orientation as *'own-speaker-oriented.'*

(2) *Number one, **we think that** there will be less and less-likely regulation coming from the state to limit economic activities from the individuals and allow individuals to invest the various form of businesses, allow individuals to invest capitals in other nations without any barriers established by states in forming of cost.*

The expression *'we think'* was found again as the identity of the debater's 'justification' as the strengthening point of the statement uttered by the prime minister in the team of the opening government where it is primarily to be basic premise which belongs entirely to the debater, in which the word 'we', as a personal pronoun in plural that is, associated entirely through the entity of 'government' who has full of authority as the policy maker. Next, 'Think' as in 'we think', in this sample, indicates debater's intelligence on how he defines and shows his whole argumentations in line with the motion whose core is mainly discussing 'regulation'. In addition, 'that' has the role as relative pronoun to relate something either personal or impersonal. Having been proven empirically, the exactitude of how the 'plausibility shields ' could be clearly found, it could merely be distinguished from two emerging lexical items, that is, in its 'pronoun' indicating the spokes person who has solely the right of the background knowledge within their own self- justification and tentativeness. In addition, to verify that this is still in the restricted border on how the concept of 'hedging' within verbal hedges to be used on the debate, the speaker should be as it is such a 'downtowner', or 'softener', or anything else in maintaining

politeness strategy, 'plausibility shields' never comes to the area of verbal aggressiveness which is in the fact that the world of debating is such matter of idea and proposal convincing. Thus, this has the indication that this is solely has the orientation as 'own-speaker-oriented' through the convincing of the personal viewpoint towards something.

Furthermore, to confirm the 'speculation' on the above data, the researcher also found the modal 'will' as in 'there will be less and less-likely regulation coming from the state' that lexically explains the futuristic thing whether it is to happen or not in the opening or argumentative classification on the debate. In addition, the researcer found the word 'less and less-likely' to characterize the word regulation which attributes and sensationalizes the noun to be found powerful however tentative and under consensus of the 'speculation'.

3.2 *Plausibility Shield indicating 'reliability'*

The plausibility shield indicating 'reliability' can be found in the expressions like **we can say that** as in the following example.

(3) *We can say that if we're strong enough we can force our companies not only to stay here but also to enforce for example the labor regulations* but in the world where we lose that, when we for example can be influenced by ISDS and other process of non-sovereign influences for example companies influences we say that the loser of these are often times the very people that you want to give this liberty.

To deal with the role of *'reliability',* the speaker shows the confidence within personal point of view in assessing something towards the proposition he makes that lies within the pragmatic marker of *'we can say that'.* In this data, the researcher found the word *'we'*, personal pronoun in plural form. Secondly, the pragmatic marker is found in the different form, such as in *'we say'.* Since the word **'can'** as the modal to appear on this data, it is still felt unreliable to whom the agreement and consensus of 'truth' that may belong to. Moreover, the researcher found the verbal verb indicating the signaling point to the speaker in this group as it is found in the word *'say'.* Having been proven empirically, the exactitude of how the 'plausibility shields' could be clearly found, it merely can be distinguished within two emerging lexical items, that is, in its 'pronoun' indicating the spokes person who has solely the righteous of the background knowledge within their own self- justification and tentativeness.

(4) *we say that when you weaken the nation state these weak people may have to freedom to do something on paper but in the end it's really just in individualization of a collective failure, because they cannot more effectively lobby any governments, or anyone into doing things which effects their life.*

To the basic concept of the pragmatic marker that appears in this statement, the researcher found it clearly in this data. It is, *'we say that'* that differs from previous one like in *'we think'*. In fact that it has the same function to express the tentativeness within the emotion and passion in the way of how the speech is devastatingly distributed in which the plural pronoun **'we'** indicates the representation of people to have their own authority towards something and also **'think'**, tends to appear as mental verb showing own-selfness as the point emphasis of speculation that is existed within tentativeness and also speculation. Another thing to deal with the role of 'reliability', is that how the speaker 'showing the assessment' confidently towards the proposition he makes that lies within the pragmatic marker of 'we think that' together with those underlined point. Figuratively, there is a hyperbolic point that is found at 'more effectively lobby any governments' as if it is the most correct statement however, in terms of the function of the pragmatic marker, it is to say that it is still tentative. In addition, 'that' has the role as relative pronoun to relate something either personal or impersonal. In terms of the idea of 'reliability', this is in fact that all the things should be responsible to the authority of the speaker, which is actually 'reliable' to them, however hard other people to prove.

To strengthen the role of plausibility shields indicating the reliability, there is another pragmatic marker to be observed as the researcher found in this data. It is the word 'may', in which lexically and in the form of word class is included as the 'helping verb' or modal. It appears in 'when you weaken the nation state these weak people may have to freedom to do something on paper', as something that is needed 'to be proposed'. The word **may**, in the other forms could be found as 'might', to show suggestion and thus, from that, it might be realized or not depending on what is happening later on. To sum up, this is to indicate speculation and something which is not exact or still tentative or optional and reliable to the background knowledge of the speaker itself.

3.3 Attribution Shields indicating *'Speaker-Oriented'*

Attribution shields indicating 'speaker-oriented' can be seen in the following example.

(5) *In comparisons, ladies and gentlemen, **it is said that** in opening government, when there is a declining of state power, in which that states are not able to create policies in defining "what does it mean to be American?" most likely individuals, probably will have more freedom In defining their identity as individuals in current status quo*

Researcher in the above data found the signaling word as the pragmatic marker indicating 'attribution shields' of the lexical item **'said that',** as in '*In comparisons, ladies and gentlemen, it is **said that** in opening government*', to mitigate their speech to be lack of responsible of what is being said. First of all, lexically on the above data, the researcher found the word **'said'** in which it is included in the sense of 'saying' which shows a sense of 'signaling' thing. In addition, *'that'* has the role as relative pronoun to relate something either personal or impersonal. In addition, to point out the exact point of *'attribution shields' o*n the above data, can be seen from the featured 'lexical verb' and 'pronoun' where on the above data are: *'it', 'is', 'said', and 'that'.* To engage with the role of *'speaker-oriented',* the indicator can be seen is that from how the way the speaker shows his point of view in which in this case, the point of view is based on other 'thought however it is said by the speaker himself. Another point of emphasis that is to become the object of 'attribution shields' to show how it is underlying the point of 'quoting' something is clearly seen in the word *'in the opening government',* which refers all the things solely to the team of the opening government as this statement to be said by the opposite team.

(6) *Ladies and gentlemen, Team of opposition cannot win this debate **by saying that** they want the globalization and government is still in control because that cannot be achieved hand in hand.*

In extension to the previous data, this is still to talk more about attribution shields. In this opening remarks, researcher found lexical item of **'by saying that'**, as in *'Ladies and gentlemen, Team of opposition cannot win this debate by saying that they want the globalization and government is still in control because that cannot be achieved hand in hand., where in this case, the researcher tried to find out what it is*. The appearance of **'by saying that'** indicates how the speaker tried to get rid of the responsibility of the thesis upon the idea of 'globalization and government' which is still in control. On the above data, the speaker aims at protecting herself by blaming other people towards this conception that lies within the 'attribution shields'. To sum up, the sense of 'speaker-oriented' as its role, here is belong to other people, yet, still being used by the spokesperson. In addition, the role of 'speaker-oriented' point of view is clearly seen in this data to the way the speaker showing his point personal point of view which is relied on other's thought.

In addition, researcher tells the core of her opening remarks in which she is disagreeing and showing her way of mitigating thing on how the opposite team cannot win the debate by simply saying that the notion of 'globalized world' through the accepting of the nation state power however the dominant control is going hand on hand at certain countries. Linguistically, on this data, researcher only finds two modifications. First of all is 'government is still in control', where the 'government' as noun is modified by 'in control' as adverbial to form an adjective phrase. Second of all, is 'achieved hand in hand' in which 'achieve' is verb that is modified by 'hand in hand' as adverbial. Both of findings are to show about the modification in which degree of membership is existed there.

3.4 *Attribution Shields indicating 'Reliability'*

Attribution shields indicating 'reliabiligy' can be found from the text by indicating the use of the expressions like 'according to'.

(7) ***According to** some reputable experts, this will happen and we say that this is through the determination of everyone within societies. We want globalization; we want it in the world where the strong nation states can create democratic interest of the people, because democracy protects the weakest of that not only the strongest. Definitely we are very proud to oppose. Thank you.*

On the above data, researcher found the lexical item of *'according to',* as in '*according to some reputable experts*', in terms of 'attribution shields' in which it is clear that the speaker tried to rely his argumentative speech on the experts that appears in the statement to simultaneously express his own thoughts to mitigate the responsibility and to avoid personal factor as one of the ways of the rhetoric. The point which highlights about the 'attribution shields' in the above data is *'according to',* to make his statement is a little bit controlled. To indicate the role of *'reliability',* it can be explained that this is to the bases of the speaker background of knowledge that relied on other's thought. Thus, the role of reliability of *'speaker-oriented'* can be found in the way how the pragmatic marker *'according to',* reflects other's thought.

(8) ***So the analogy*** <u>*is that we don't think that like in government team, to say that with huge economic factors as mutual countries like Luxemburg and the Netherland like specifically capture their tax*</u>*, their policy towards rich globalized and you are actually having a policy anymore it is if Hillary Clinton said that she is willing to carry the ring all the way she is and Indian throwing it into the volcano.*

The phrase of *'so the analogy is that'* on the data is also being categorized as attribution shields in which the speaker tends to express his/her thought indirectly that is embodied, on the above data, to the notion of 'analogy', researcher claims based on the function that it is to refer or quote something to other object in which basically and simultaneously the speaker also tried to express own opinion to save himself from 'doubt' and 'falsification' as the face saving strategy in a form that similarly like a 'quote'. This is, to say the role of the 'reliability' on the above data is, reliable to the background of the spokes person who has the background knowledge, yet, still to be relied on to other's thought to save himself from falsification. To highlight which exactly indicates the attribution shields on the above data is in 'so the analogy is'. In addition, the role of 'reliability' in this data can be seen in the way how the speaker put and rely on his personal point of view to other people's thought. To engage with the role of 'reliability', what researcher can explain descriptively is that the speaker, towards this utterance, can assess the truth towards the proposition they make by showing the pragmatic marker 'so the analogy is' as the judgment together with those underlined point.

3.5   *Adaptors Indicating 'Speaker-Oriented'*

Adaptors indicating 'speaker-oriented' can be seen from the use of the expressions like 'probably', 'it could be bad', 'why this bad?'.

(9)   *Why this is **probably** bad? Why this is exclusive when we have a power? Because the incentives that these particular dominant states would like to have in the status quo is to control as much market as possible, this will result in the ability of these particular states to control the government in developing countries.*

In the above data, researcher found the word *'probably'* where in the word class it is known as adverb, as in *'Why this is probably bad?'*. Actually, the existence of the 'probably' on the above sentence is weakening and giving a color into what it is supposed to be in exact. Within the use of the above marker, the clause becomes complicated in the hearer's interpretation. First whether it is 'bad' or 'a little bit bad' or 'very bad' or even 'not bad'. In fact, in the world of debating, to make the speech to become powerful, such marker should not be existed. Unlike the clause **'*Why this is probably bad?,*** this clause, *'**Why this is bad?,*** has a lot to be properly used to indicate debaters' confidence. To re-confirm about the pointed object as the 'speaker-oriented' on this data is located in the meta-linguistic operator of <u>*'probably'*</u>, in which, to the base of the situational context, **it could be bad** or **could not be bad at all.** In addition, to reflect the role of *'speaker-oriented'* in this case is that the speaker shows his personal point of view towards something using *'probably'* as adverb. In the way of speech delivery, the speaker or debater started again his proposition by two rhetorical questions, then, followed by the appearance of the pragmatic marker in which it differs from the previous one. The use of 'is' + 'probably' which precedes the adjective 'bad', is another type of pragmatic marker in to analyze this data which researcher considers that this has no weakening point at all.

(10) *Let's characterize how company interacts with the country that they come in developing and under developing nation, right! The reason isn't those countries aren't developing under developing countries boiling to rise to the bottom by reducing all the requirements to get investors are because there are*

somewhat insecure that there are other dominant countries out there that are waiting to be strong in order for them to be able to compete

Based on the above data, the researcher found a weakening marker in terms of 'approximation indicators' that is specifically in the point of 'adaptor'. He found the word 'somewhat' as in 'because there are somewhat insecure' to indicate that the clause has the degree to be understood. 'Somewhat' in other word has the same sense in meaning like 'a little bit' or 'a little less' or 'rather' or 'a bit'. In this sense, the hearer may have some other argumentations on how they comprehend this clause. To the point of view of the researcher, this kind of clause may have some interpretation whether it is 'a little bit insecure' or 'insecure but there something to do with'. Instead of having this on the debate, this clause 'there are insecure' is better than the example on the above data and easy to be accepted in mind. To sum up, the researche may say that this can be put within the role of the 'speaker-oriented'. To engage with the role of the 'speaker-oriented', in addition, it is seen from how people see something.

3.6   *Rounder Indicating 'Speaker-Oriented'*

Rounders indicating 'speaker-oriented' can be identified from the use of the words like **quite, less** as can be seen from the examples**.**

(11) *But secondly we think that even if there is politicization or even the fact that there are **quite** numerous dominate majorities that are ruled in democratic systems. State or uncountable citizens, we think that more minorities have to be heard that's why what we think that ever going the righteous are to closing government case about opt-in. We think it's better to opt in other system where nation states are stronger because of values given that strengthen of that democratic system advocacies are stronger when it's madly goaled through the nation state.*

In the above data, researcher found another signaling lexical item at the concerns of 'rounder' that exhibit its feature to the word coming afterwards. Researcher found the word ***'quite'*** in which functionally, it is to be used to indicate the size of something or as a way of measuring the degree of something that is, in this case still being general instead. On the above data as in '*there are **quite** numerous dominate majorities that are ruled in democratic systems.*' this word, ***'quite'***, showing in this example, that there are a lot of countries which are ruled in democratic system. The word ***'quite',*** as it is put before the adjective, also indicates the range or limitation to which extents as it is perceived as 'degree quantifier'. So, to say that 'rounder' in this data is ***'quite',*** to the idea of the role of ***'speaker-oriented',*** it might be true or not, that is, in this case back again to the background knowledge and the personal view point of the speaker because in reality, it can be used by the other 'rounder' to limit the range of something. Linguistically, the researcher found the lexical item of 'secondly' in 'but we think that even if there is politicization or even the fact that there is some dominate majorities are ruled in democratic systems.' to indicate the second important point of its all. On this statement she also tries to do the weighing the policy and the approximations if the politicization will still have existed.

(12) *In our proposal, in our role that's not going to have it because none of the country feel insecure if they have **less** money because the other country are equally integrated with them and equally dependent and no country is going to be much more powerful and can dictate in the future what joined-economy should be.*

To the focus of 'rounders' on this data, researcher found the word ***'less'***, as in 'if they have less money', indicates an inexact size of the thing which is modified by, in this case, 'money'. 'less' is actually a kind of suffix to indicate the sense of 'no' or 'minimum' or 'has no/ nothing something to have'. In the above data, researcher found that it is not straight forward to the exact point. On the context of 'less money', it implies some possibilities, whether it is 'minimum in money' or 'have no money'. It should be better, on the other hand, to say 'have money' or 'have no money' in order that the point could be accepted. Therefore, it is to confirm that the 'rounder' has a role as 'speaker oriented' in this case is the use of ***'less'***. However, in this case, the researcher highlights its 'rounder' that might be able to be changed by other 'rounder' since the background knowledge belongs to the speaker. To engage with the function of the 'speaker-oriented', researcher claims that it is based on the personal point of view that subject to the speaker him/herself.

4. Conclusion and Suggestion

Among hundreds of debaters' utterances in which the types of hedges are different, the researcher selected only some. On the above data, the types of hedges that frequently to appear are in the type of 'shield'. Dealing with the roles as what the researcher means, 'speaker-oriented' could be as a means of the speaker's choice or dependency to speak based on view point in general. In addition the role as it is called 'reliability' is that, it could be as a means of 'personal assessment' whether something to be said or explained is reliable to the speaker's background knowledge as a self-justification. To sum up, each of hedges has a 'power' and 'supremacy' in regards with how attractive the debate is. In addition, those roles were also explained in line with the types of hedges.

It can be suggested that the future researchers can explore more what is new towards the concept of hedging with other perspectives and other experts. In regards with the pragmatic markers as the attributes of hedges, the researcher suggests future researcher in order that they are able to find out any other markers which are uncommon to enlarge the horizon, especially all related words of English. Thus, this research also needs empowerment on how it can be taken into account of Indonesian debaters' betterment.

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