

# **Expressing Politeness in American TV Programmes**

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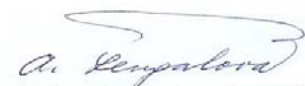
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## ABSTRAKT

Bakalářská práce se zabývá tématem lingvistické zdvořilosti, která se v posledních letech dostala do popředí zájmu lingvistických a pragmatických výzkumů anglického jazyka.

První část bakalářské práce rozebírá hlavní teoretická pojetí lingvistické zdvořilosti a její postupný vývoj se zaměřením především na teorii Penelope Brownové a Stephena Levinsona.

Z důvodu obsáhlosti tématu a omezeného rozsahu bakalářské práce je dále objasněna jejich koncepce negativní zdvořilosti coby jedné ze strategií vyjadřující lingvistickou zdvořilost. V této souvislosti jsou dále analyzovány pragmatické vyjadřovací prostředky využívající se v rámci negativní zdvořilosti.

Praktická část bakalářské práce je cílena na již zmíněné vyjadřovací prostředky negativní zdvořilosti, především na jejich četnost výskytu a funkce v mluveném formálním jazyku.

Klíčová slova: lingvistická zdvořilost, negativní zdvořilost, pozitivní zdvořilost, strategie, hodnověrnost, strategie, Goffman, Grice, Brown, Levinson, pragmatické vyjadřovací prostředky.

## ABSTRACT

The bachelor thesis deals with the linguistic politeness topic, which has lately gained ground of the linguistic and pragmatic research of the English language.

Given the broad field of the linguistic politeness and the limited extent of the bachelor thesis, the negative politeness and its devices stay ahead of the interest.

The first part of the thesis analyses the principal theories of the linguistic politeness and their gradual development with the predominant focus on the Brown and Levinson's politeness theory.

The practical part of the thesis concerns already mentioned pragmatic markers, mainly the frequency of their usage and functions within the scope of linguistic politeness.

Keywords: linguistic politeness, negative politeness, positive politeness, negative face, positive face, strategies, Goffman, Grice, Brown, Levinson, hedging devices, pragmatic markers.

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## INTRODUCTION

People communicate with each other on the basis of social interaction ever since. Many complicated ideas can be expressed via using various devices in the speech. As far as the etiquette is concerned, social interaction among people ought to be polite. Politeness is generally considered to be a part of the verbal communication. Although the linguistic politeness differs a little bit from the general association of the term politeness, it is present in the spoken language in large numbers.

Nowadays linguistic politeness seems to become one of the phenomena for the pragmatic research in comparison with the past. Many theoretical approaches and analysis were carried out in order to enlarge the linguistic politeness awareness. The field is divided into two basic categories, negative and positive politeness. The basic question asked in the bachelor thesis is which elements contribute to the higher degree of politeness in the spoken language.

The view presented in this paper concentrates on the hedging devices used for expressing attitudes in a negatively polite discourse and hence making the speech more acceptable for the hearer. The bachelor thesis aims to describe, analyze, justify the usage of hedging devices in dialogues, and also to provide evidences for the stated claims.

## **I. THEORY**

# 1 CONTEMPORARY THEORIES OF LINGUISTIC POLITENESS

Since politeness in linguistic pragmatics and sociolinguistics has become a phenomenon as evidenced by numerous publications, basic linguistic theoretical approaches have been created. People take part in social interactions every day and they have to be aware of and follow some rules to be able to communicate with the others, cooperate, and achieve their goals. The first part of this bachelor thesis deals with the major theoretical approaches to the linguistic politeness for a better insight into the topic and further analyzes particular devices.

## 1.1 Grice's Conversational Maxims

Urbanova (Urbanova 2002) mentions that communication is held mainly on the human conduct principles needed to be fulfilled. Those principles are cooperative and politeness principles.

Grice (Grice 1975, in Wilamova 2005) created a general principle called cooperative principle explaining how it is possible that speakers can mean more than they actually say. According to him, speakers in the conversation are rational individuals who want to tell a message effectively.

As Watts (Watts 2003) remarks, Grice's cooperative principle consists of four conversational maxims that should be obeyed as the rules by the interactants during the conversation. Grice (Grice 1975, in Urbanova 2002) puts forward four basic conversational principles: Quantity, Quality, Relation, and Manner. Quantity maxim means that interactants should tell enough pieces of information but not more than is needed for their conversational contribution. According to Quality maxim, all participants of the conversation should express only truthful ideas. They ought to say only what they believe to be true or what they have evidence for. Relation maxim focuses on the fact that participants of the social interaction should speak to the point and be relevant. The Manner maxim says that the interactants ought to speak clearly by avoiding ambiguous expressions and speaking briefly and in a systematic order.

The conversational maxims describe rational principles of the participants of a social interaction. The cooperative principle (Grice 1975, in Watts 2003) seems to be the basic framework of human speech conduct. Not all of Grice's four maxims are always used throughout the conversation; moreover, they can be violated. If any maxim is violated, the addressee makes implicatures in order to find out speaker's intended, unstated meaning. Therefore the cooperation among the interactants is crucial for an efficient communication.

These principles, involving mainly logics and truthfulness of information, postulated by Grice (Grice 1975, in Urbanova 2002) are not sufficient enough for explaining broader aspects of communication, such as social and psychological aspects. For this reason other explorations into the linguistic politeness field have been made.

## 1.2 Lakoff's Rules of Conversation

Lakoff (Lakoff 1973, in Watts 2003) recommends adding the rules of politeness to Grice's cooperative principle, which he calls the rules of conversation. Lakoff suggests two rules of pragmatic competence inspired by Grice.

1. Clarity rule. (Previously mentioned Grice's maxims actually form it.)
2. Politeness rule.

Since Grice already focused on the first rule, Lakoff decides to make a detailed examination of the politeness rule. As a result, he proposes three sub-rules of the politeness rule (Lakoff 1973, in Watts 2003, 103).

1. Do not impose (involving also do not intrude into other people's business).
2. Give options (let the addressee make his/her own decisions).
3. Make the addressee feel good – be friendly (the speaker should treat the hearer as his/her equal partner).

Lakoff (Lakoff 1973, in Wilamova 2005) states that his clarity and politeness rules of conversation may support each other or are mutually exclusive, depending on the circumstances. If the communication is the main aim, the former is usually employed. On the other hand, the latter is preferred if the speaker intends to create or maintain the friendly relationship with the hearer.

Concerning the hierarchy of these two rules, Lakoff considers the politeness rule higher than the clarity rule. However; in accordance with Wilamova (Wilamova 2005), this hierarchy should be perceived just as an ordering which depends predominantly on a context. There might be some situations when we prefer using politeness means in order to reduce imposition. Nevertheless; sometimes, if clarity is required more, too much formality is unnecessary and might cause the opposite result. In such a case, the speech act can be recognized by the hearer as impolite for too much redundant information and thus wasting a hearer's time.

The above mentioned hierarchical order is supported by the Figure 1 as well (Lakoff 1973, in Watts 2003, 60). The figure shows that although the speaker follows the politeness rules (the speaker does not impose, gives option and makes the addressee feel good), he/she will definitely violate Grice's maxims during the conversation. Lakoff states that if the speaker obeys the rules of conversation, he/she maximally imposes on the hearer who has to decode many implicatures to understand speaker's statement properly. As a consequence, Lakoff concludes that if there is a struggle between clarity and politeness rule, in most cases the politeness overrules.

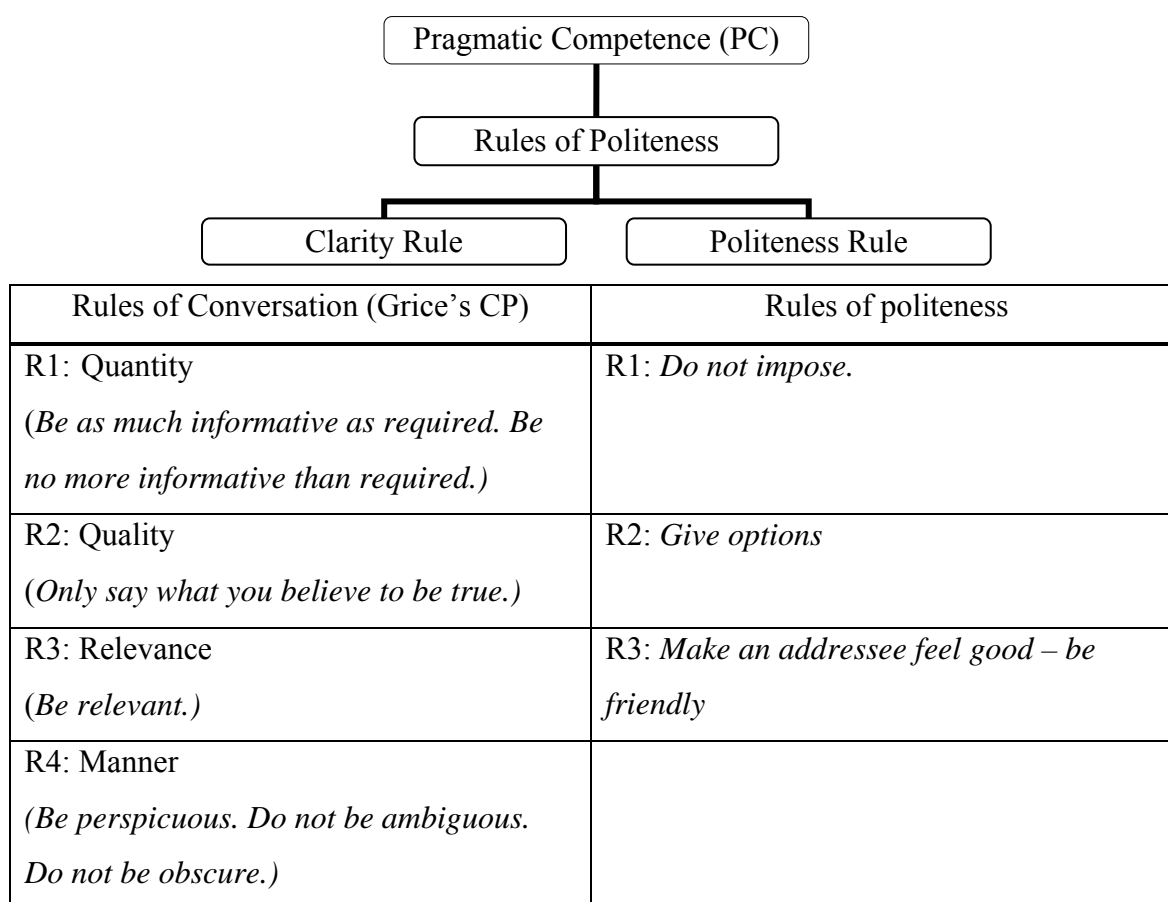


Figure 1: Lakoff's Rules of Pragmatic Competence (Lakoff 1973, in Watts 2003, 60)

### 1.3 Brown and Levinson's Politeness Theory

Theoretical approach to the linguistic politeness proposed by Brown and Levinson is considered to be the most significant and developed model of politeness (Mills 2003). It is said to be an attempt to create a theory of how people produce linguistic politeness (Watts 2003).

Brown and Levinson's theory is often termed as "face-saving theory of politeness" (Brown and Levinson 1987, in Watts 2003, 85). They define face as "a public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself" (Brown and Levinson 1987, 61).

As Wilamova says, their formulation of politeness is based on the notion of face derived from Goffman (Goffman 1967) and the folk term expressing shame (Wilamova 2005). Goody (Goody 1978, 66) supports it by claiming that this kind of face is "emotionally invested and can be lost, maintained or enhanced" and is still at risk during the conversation.

Brown and Levinson (Brown and Levinson 1987, 70) define politeness as "a redressive action" counterbalancing the possible face damage of the face-threatening acts. According to Wilamova (Wilamova 2005), they describe face-threatening act as an illocutionary act that might make threats towards another person's face, for instance in requests or orders. They explain the redressive action as "an action that gives face to an addressee" and that the face-threatening acts are modified via using various means that speaker employs throughout the conversation (Brown and Levinson, 1987, 70).

Similarly to Lakoff, Brown and Levinson's politeness theory also builds on the Grice's cooperative principle (Brown and Levinson 1987). Brown and Levinson suggest the existence of a "model person" (Brown and Levinson 1987, 58) with two special properties – rationality and face. The model person has the ability to rationalise. He/she defines a target and then chooses the best possible means for achieving his/her goals. In doing so, the model person has to evaluate the danger of threatening other participants' face and to select the appropriate strategies to soften any face threats during the face-to-face interaction.

#### 1.3.1 Mutual Knowledge among Brown and Levinson's Model Persons

Brown and Levinson propose so called model person to demonstrate their politeness theory. As they claim, the speaker and the hearer are the model persons. The theoretical

concept of their politeness hypothesis can be performed if every model person accepts the following five criteria as the “mutual knowledge” (Brown and Levinson 1987, 59).

1) Every model person has negative and positive face and is a rational agent. 2) Model persons both want to save each other’s face because it is dependant upon the action of others. This is the reason why the speaker will want to maintain hearer’s face, unless the speaker forces the hearer to maintain speaker’s face devoid of recompense. 3) Face-threatening acts are acts that intrinsically make threats towards face. 4) The speaker will tend to soften the face threat; unless his/her want to do the face-threatening act is greater than his/her want to maintain hearer’s (or speaker’s) face. 5) With reference to the following set of strategies, the speaker is likely to select a higher-numbered strategy in a direct proportion with a degree of threats towards the speaker’s or hearer’s face.

### **1.3.2 Face**

Goffman’s concept of face is influenced by fact that face is brought into being only in a social contact and depends on the other interactants (Goffman 1967, in Watts 2003). Brown and Levinson (Brown and Levinson 1987) broaden this assumption with the assertion that every individual has two kinds of face, namely positive and negative.

The positive face is defined as a desire of every person that his/her wants are desirable to at least some other people while negative face is understood as the want of an individual that his/her actions will not be “impeded” by others. In other words, it is the “desire for freedom of action and freedom from imposition” (Brown and Levinson 1987, 61).

### **1.3.3 Weightiness of Face-Threatening Acts**

Dontcheva-Navratilova (Dontcheva-Navratilova 2000) mentions that way how people talk to each other is derived from the degree to which the members of the conversation know each other, their social status, age, and formality of the occasion. Indeed, if the participants of the conversation do not know each other or take part in an official event, they will probably use more polite and indirect language in comparison with two friends talking about their latest news.

Brown and Levinson (Brown and Levinson 1987) offer social aspects of each situation which the speaker or the hearer has to take into consideration when choosing a particular politeness strategy. Those aspects form the “weightiness” of each face-threatening act and consist of three sociological variables: “the social distance (D), the relative power (P) and the size of imposition (R)” (Brown and Levinson 1987, 74). Watts analyses the

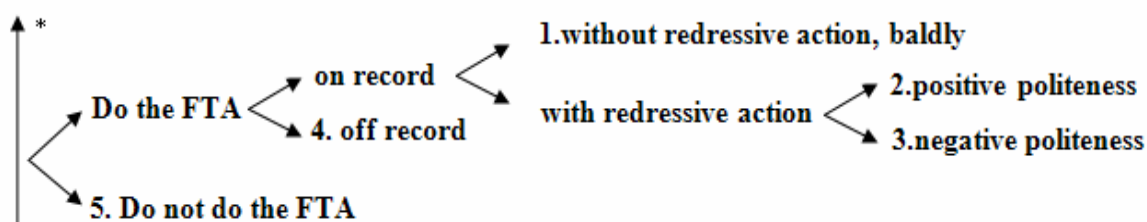


weightiness of the face-threatening act as “the social distance between the speaker and the hearer,

the power that the hearer has over the speaker’, and the size of imposition signifies an extent of an imposition made by the face-threatening act (Watts, 2003, 81).

### 1.3.4 Brown and Levinson’s Politeness Strategies

In relation to Goffman’s hypothesis that every participant defends his/her face, if it is threatened, and tries to maintain his/her face during the social interaction, consequently; each member of the conversation tries to soften the face-threats to a minimum (Goffman 1967, in Watts 2003). An interactant has to firstly rationally evaluate the danger of a potential face-damage and then comes to a decision either to avoid it entirely, or to minimise it by choosing an appropriate linguistic strategy. Therefore Brown and Levinson (Brown and Levinson 1987) postulate five possible strategies available to the speaker.



\* The arrow on the left represents the degree to which these strategies are face-threatening to.

Figure 2: Brown and Levinson’s Politeness Strategies (Brown and Levinson 1978, 69)

As apparent from the Brown and Levinson’s politeness strategies figure, the speaker has to firstly decide whether to perform the face-threatening act or not. If he/she makes the decision to carry out the face-threatening act (FTA), he/she has the possibility to do so either on-record or off-record (Wilamova 2005).

As Watts says (Watts 2003), the performing face-threatening act by going on-record baldly represents the greatest size of the face-threat. In contrast, if an actor completely avoids committing the face-threatening act, it is the least threatening type of the strategies. Wilamova further analyses it and claims that a participant of the conversation goes on-record in doing an act if the speaker’s intention for doing the act is clear to the other participants of the conversation (Wilamova 2005).

Brown and Levinson (Brown and Levinson 1987) deal with the speaker's motivation for a bald-on-record strategy usage. They mention that the main reason when the speaker employs the bald-on-record strategy is if he/she wants to some extent satisfy the addressee's face. Moreover, there are two other reasons: face is not relevant for the speaker and hence he/she does not minimize the face threat or the speaker wants to express the statement directly and reduces the impact of the face threatening act by an imposition, evidenced by the example of bald-on-record strategy: "*Help!*" (instead of "*Please help me, if you would be so kind.*"); (Brown and Levinson 1987, 94). As obvious from the example, direct imperatives stand for the best representation of the bald-on-record strategy. In the provided instance, the redressive action is not necessary because the statement involves urgency. The redressive action would diminish it and the proposition would not express the urgency need. Contrary, the second example serves as the evidence of the reduced the importance by a pseudo-conditional usage.

An actor goes off-record in doing an act if there is more than one clear intention. Wilamova calls this strategy "the avoidance of direct imposition" (Wilamova 2005, 24). Watts (Watts 2003) points out that by acting off-record the speaker will definitely violate at least one Grice's maxim and will hope that the addressee will be able to resolve the implicature, shown in the following example: "*Damn, I'm out of cash; I forgot to go to the bank today.*" (Brown and Levinson 1987, 69). The speaker uses the implicature in this kind of statement. He/she expects the addressee to decipher it and offer the speaker a loan.

The face-threatening act can be performed in two ways: baldly or with redressive action. As said by Goody (Goody 1978), an interactant does the action in the most direct and clear way by doing an act baldly, without the redressive action. The best example is a direct imperative as well: "*Do X!*" (Brown and Levinson 1987, 69).

Strategies with the redressive action have two forms, namely positive and negative politeness strategy forms. Brown and Levinson (Brown and Levinson 1987) find those two strategies the basic elements of the linguistic politeness.

#### **1.4 Positive Politeness**

Positive politeness is in general "a way how to show a solidarity and express a sympathy towards the addressee", as said by Urbanova (Urbanova 2002, 42). Brown and Levinson's concept of linguistic positive politeness is focused on the hearer's positive face.

The possible face threat is reduced thanks to the fact that the speaker desires for at least some of the hearer's wants (Brown and Levinson 1987).

## 1.5 Negative Politeness

Brown and Levinson's negative politeness strategies are redressive actions addressed towards the hearer's negative face (Brown and Levinson 1978). Goody (Goody 1978, 75) regards them as "avoidance-based" because as supported by Urbanova (Urbanova 2002, 43): "negative politeness enables the speaker to maintain his/her face and avoid conflicts by distancing the speaker from the hearer, such as in refusal, disagreement, or critique".

As written by Dontcheva-Navratilova, by using negative politeness strategies the speaker "gives the hearer an option to disagree or refuse and the speaker usually apologizes for imposing", shown in her example: "*I am sorry to interrupt but could you be so kind and tell me what time it is?*" (Dontcheva-Navratilova 2002, 59).

### 1.5.1 Sub-Strategies and Output Strategies of Negative Politeness

Figure 2 below illustrates a detailed classification of Brown and Levinson's negative politeness strategies (Brown and Levinson, 1987). The chart represents the speaker's specific wants and his/her reasoning for achieving the goals. There is the negative politeness strategy as the speaker's desire on the left of the chart. All the arrows stand for the means that would help the addressee to achieve the goals. By moving more and more to the right side, the speaker reaches the linguistic ways that will satisfy his/her wants.

Brown and Levinson's formation of negative politeness contains five sub-strategies of negative politeness: "1) Be direct 2) Do not presume or assume 3) Do not coerce hearer 4) Communicate speaker's want to not impinge on hearer 5) Redress other hearer's wants" (Brown and Levinson 1987, 131). Moreover, they further broaden those sub-strategies resulting in ten negative politeness output strategies: "1) Be conventionally indirect 2) Question and hedge 3) Be pessimistic 4) Minimize the imposition 5) Give deference 6) Apologize 7) Impersonalize speaker and hearer: Avoid the pronouns I and you 8) State the face-threatening act as a general rule 9) Nominalize 10) Go on record as incurring a debt or as not indebted hearer" (Brown and Levinson 1987, 131).

The "Be direct" sub-strategy stems from on-record performance and the want to say a message directly. On the other hand, the negative face is a desire of the hearer to stay independent, so there is the speaker's tension to be indirect. This kind of struggle is being solved via conventional indirectness. Hence, an emerged output strategy is

“Be conventionally indirect” with typical elements of phrases with contextually clear meanings as in the example: “*You couldn’t possibly pass the salt please, could you?*” (Brown and Levinson 1987, 136).

The “Do not presume or assume” Brown and Levinson’s sub-strategy is based on the idea of avoiding any assumptions about the hearer’s wants. This actually distances the speaker from the hearer. The output strategy is realized by the usage of questions and hedges as demonstrated in the following examples of question: “*Could you possibly by any chance lend me your car for just a few minutes?*” (Brown and Levinson 1987, 142) and hedge: “*A swing is sort of a toy.*” (Brown and Levinson 1987, 145).

In a “Do not coerce hearer” sub-strategy the speaker considers the reaction of the addressee and the addressee is given an option of not doing the act or not responding which, as visually illustrated in the Figure 3, generates three output strategies, the two previously mentioned (“Be conventionally indirect” and “Question, hedge”) and the third output strategy “Be pessimistic”. The speaker assumes that the hearer does not want to do an act and by being pessimistic he/she expresses the doubt: “*Could you jump over that five-foot fence?*” (Brown and Levinson 1987, 173).

If the speaker tries to reduce a danger of coercion, he/she can do so by using strategy Number 4 or 5. The strategy Number 4: “Minimize the imposition” is brought into being through the usage of the expressions downgrading the imposition, shown in the example: “*I just want to ask you if you could lend me a single sheet of paper*” (Brown and Levinson 1987, 177).

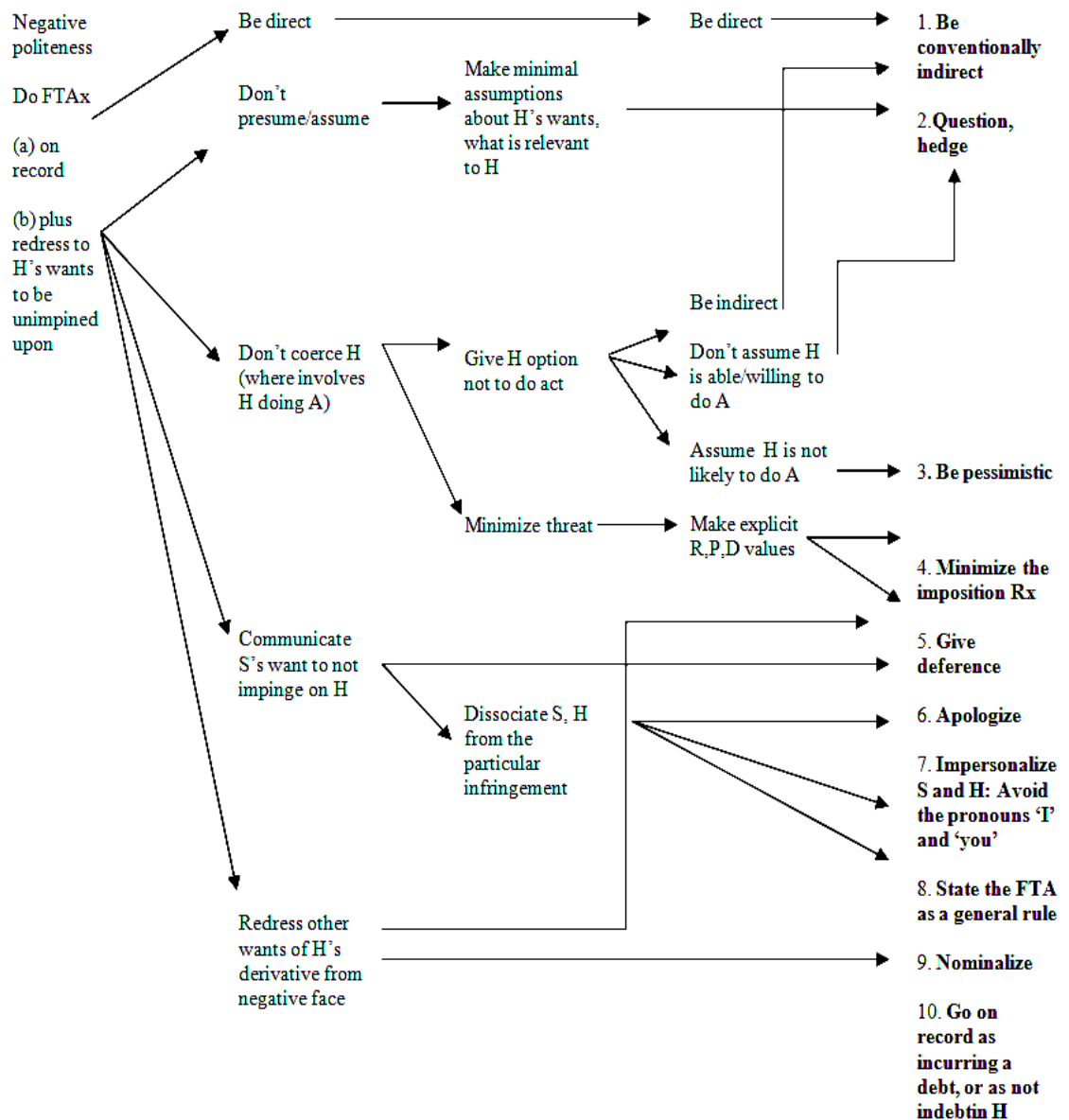


Figure 3: Chart of Strategies: Negative Politeness (Brown and Levinson 1987, 131)

The last strategy within the third group is the strategy Number 5: “Give deference”. It is employed if the hearer’s social status is higher and the speaker cannot force him. The hearer feels as he has the “rights to relative immunity from imposition” (Brown and Levinson 1978, 178), e.g.: “*We look forward very much to dining with you.*” (Brown and Levinson 1987, 181)

“Communicate speaker’s want to not impinge on the hearer” technique of how to satisfy addressee’s negative face is based on the fact that the speaker bears in mind

the hearer's wants. It can be achieved via four strategies: 6. "Apologize", 7. "Impersonalise speaker and hearer", 8. "State the face-threatening act as a general rule", and 9. "Nominalize".

Output strategy 6: "Apologize" involves indication of the speaker's unwillingness to impinge on the hearer's negative face and thereby he/she partially redresses the impingement, like in the example: "*I probably wouldn't ask you this, but...*" (Brown and Levinson 1987, 188)

Another output strategy of impersonalising the speaker and the hearer also shows that the speaker does not wish to impose on the addressee. Impersonalization is perceived as if the speaker was not the speaker himself/herself or at least the speaker alone and that the message is not sent particularly towards the addressee but towards people in general.

This output strategy, achieved by avoiding using *I* and *you* pronouns, gives the utterance a higher degree of politeness. The main aim is not to make an evident reference to the speaker and to the hearer (Wilamova 2005). The following Brown and Levinson's examples demonstrate the impersonalization which appears in:

- "passive and circumstantial voice" - "*It would be appreciated*" (Brown and Levinson 1987, 194)
- "impersonal verbs" - "*It seems*" (Brown and Levinson 1987, 191)
- using "indefinites instead of *I* and *you*" - "*One shouldn't do things like that.*" (Brown and Levinson 1987, 197)
- "performatives" - "*It is so.*" (Brown and Levinson 1987, 190)
- "pluralization of *I* and *you* pronouns" - "*We regret to inform you.*" Brown and Levinson 1987, 202)
- "point-of-view distancing" - "*I have been wondering whether you could do me a little favour.*" (Brown and Levinson 1987, 204)

The eighth strategy: "State the face-threatening act as a general rule" aims to distance the speaker and the hearer from the imposition by not using pronouns as evident in the example: "*Passangers will please refrain from flushing toilets on the train.*" (instead of "*You will please refrain from...*") (Brown and Levinson 1987, 207).

As far as the strategy Number 9: "Nominalize" is concerned, Leech (Leech 1983) defines nominalization as a noun phrase which has the fundamental semantic structure of

a clause. If the subject is nominalized, the statement sounds more formal because as Ross claims: “Degrees of negative politeness (or at least formality) run hand in hand with degrees of nouniness” (Ross 1973, in Brown and Levinson 1987, 207), e.g.: “*Thanks for telling me.*” (instead of: “*You told me.*”) (Wilamova 2005, 42).

The last sub-group called “Redress other wants of the hearer’s ” builds on partial compensation for the face threat by redressing other hearer’s wants. (Brown and Levinson 1987). Two output strategies result from that strategy. The already mentioned strategy Number 5:”Give deference” involving respect for the addressee and strategy Number 10:”Go on-record as incurring a debt or as not indebting a hearer”.

Brown and Levinson’s last output strategy expresses the idea that the speaker has the possibility of redressing the face-threatening act in two ways. He/she can claim his indebtedness to the addressee or reject any indebtedness of him. Example of this strategy provides the evidence: “*I could easily do it for you.*” (Brown and Levinson 1987, 210).

## 2 PRAGMATIC MARKERS

Pragmatic markers influence the propositional content of the utterance. In account of the way they influence it, the markers are divided into the hedging devices weakening the imposition and the boosters strengthening the message (Wilamova 2005). In relation to the negative politeness, only hedging devices are examined in this bachelor thesis.

Along with Andersen's characterization (Andersen 2001), pragmatic markers generally express non-propositional and deductive aspects of communication. Those aspects are highly subjective. The speaker uses pragmatic markers to show either his/her attitude or in order to be more polite throughout face-to-face conversation. Fraser (Fraser 1996) characterizes them as the lexical items encoding the speaker's intention which contributes to Andersen's claim that the pragmatic markers help the hearer to identify the semantic meaning of the message and therefore to understand the utterance properly. The addressee has to evaluate them in relation to the propositional meaning because propositional context seems to be critical for analysis and interpretation of pragmatic markers.

Pragmatic markers, occurring in the forms of "a particle, a word, a phrase or a clause" (Wilamova 2005, 80), are not dependant either on the message or on the grammatical structure but as mentioned, they have to be interpreted within a context (Andersen 2001).

### 2.1 Hedging Devices

Wilamova (Wilamova 2005) describes hedging devices as the pragmatic markers reinforcing the impact of the message and hence they appear to be associated mainly with the negative politeness. According to her, they provide a redress towards the hearer's face if any face-threat is carried out. This contributes to the Goody's description of the negative politeness as "avoidance-based" (Goody 1978, 75), because the speaker actually distances himself from the proposition he just stated (Urbanova 2003).

From Wilamova's point of view, Fraser's universal classification of pragmatic markers has to be reorganized a little bit. Thus she broadens his concept in correspondence with the Brown and Levinson's linguistic politeness strategies and consequently makes a new classification and characterization of the hedging devices consisting of: subjectivity markers, clausal mitigators, downgraders, tentativizers, pragmatic idioms, hedges on politeness maxims, and performative hedges.



### 2.1.1 Subjectivity Markers

As explained by Wilamova (Wilamova 2005), this group of pragmatic markers is oriented towards the speaker and shows his/her attitude to the conversation in progress. By using the subjectivity markers, the speaker softens the content of the utterance and indicates that the message should be viewed by the hearer just as the speaker's personal view and that the addressee has the possibility either of replying or of a different opinion.

Wilamova (Wilamova 2005, 83) comments on three kinds of speech act when the subjectivity markers are brought into the social interaction. They appear to be used for: "disagreement (reservation or refusal), suggestion and uncertainty and indecision".

She says that the first speech acts involve the acts that naturally attack the face because the speaker does not take into consideration what the hearer wants and what he feels. Corresponding to politeness, this fact is not acceptable; as a result, this type of speech acts has a tendency to be mitigated, as shown in practice by provided examples:

- "*I am afraid I can't agree.*" In this case, the speaker does not agree with the hearer (Wilamova 2005, 83).
- "*Well, I wouldn't say it was entirely my doing.*" This sentence provides an example for the reservation (Wilamova 2005, 83).
- "*I was going to say that after all I don't think it would be a good idea for you to stay the nights.*" (Wilamova 2005, 84) In this example, the speaker rejects the guest's staying over night in a polite way. The addresser could easily say it without redress, for example: "*If you think you will sleep in my place after your behaviour, you are stupid.*"

Wilamova secondary analyses a suggestion speech act. By suggesting, it appears to be very likely for either the speaker or the addressee to lose the face. The hearer might not want to accept it or; on the contrary, he/she would feel awkward to reject the suggestion and would cause the threat towards the speaker's face. In the instance: "*I thought maybe I would sleep in here tonight.*" (Wilamova 2005, 84) the potential answers on Wilamova's suggestion example may have two forms: the hearer can agree or he can disagree. If the hearer rejects it, the speaker loses his/her face. On the other hand, if he/she hesitates and agrees just because he/she does not want to upset the addressee, the speaker loses his/her own face.

The third group of subjectivity markers usually appears to operate when assuming and considering the things. The speaker expresses the uncertainty, reduces the responsibility for the truthfulness of his/her message, and distances himself /herself from the statement shown in the example: “Well, *I don’t think we have met, have we?*” (Wilamova 2005, 84) In this instance, the speaker assumes he/she does not know the hearer but is not really sure about it. That is why he/she does not use directness and accepts the possibility that they actually have met.

### 2.1.2 Clausal Mitigators

Clausal mitigators also weaken the utterance. According to Fraser (Fraser 1996, in Wilamova 2005), the speaker uses them with the purpose of face loss reduction. Those mitigating markers are divided into two groups, “pseudo-conditionals and but-clauses” (Wilamova 2005:88).

As apparent from the term name, there is an if-clause as a part of the pseudo-conditionals. Urbanova (Urbanova 2002, 26) calls them “afterthoughts” which contributes to Wilamova’s claim that the if-clause in pseudo-conditionals is usually situated in the position of the afterthoughts.

The conditionals are according to Richard Nordquist: “adverbial clauses” stating the condition and hence pseudo-conditional’s if-clause is not one hundred percent conditional sentence because of the absence of a characteristic conditional structure and a condition that should be in the conditionals fulfilled. (Wilamova 2005)

Pseudo-conditionals are purposely employed with the intention of softening the foregoing part of the utterance that might be viewed as imposition. The speaker firstly states the message directly on-record and immediately uses the pseudo-conditional as the form of a redress, as evidenced by the following example: “*Would you close the window, if you will forgive my asking?*” (Brown and Levinson 1987, 163). The hearer could view this question as rude without the pseudo-conditional softening the impact of the message at the end of the clause.

The clausal mitigating devices called but-clauses are defined by Wilamova as the clauses beginning with but preposition. If the speaker makes use of the but-clause during the conversation, he/she openly gives the reason for the statement (Wilamova 2005).

But-clauses have a tendency to appear in two patterns (Wilamova 2005, 94):

- 1) “Thanks + but clause” expressing “polite refusal”: “*Thanks but I can’t stop.*” The example of polite refusal indicates that although the speaker does not want to stop the vehicle and for example have a lunch, he/she uses this strategy not to offend the hearer.
- 2) “Apology + but-clause” expressing “polite apology”: “*Terribly sorry – but I forgot my key.*” or expressing “polite request”: “*Pardon my asking, but I’m curious. (+question)*”. Considering the apology instance, the addresser apologizes for bothering the hearer with the need of opening the door. The speaker can make use of the but-clause when wanting to achieve his/her goal via requesting as well. He/she firstly apologizes for asking for a favour.

Returning back to Brown and Levinson, they consider those means as “highly productive” strategies employed in spoken formal English language (Brown and Levinson 1987, 162).

### 2.1.3 Tentativizers

The group of pragmatic markers called “tentativizers” is used in speech for expressing “hesitation, uncertainty or vagueness”. Consequently; they are formed by two subdivisions: “markers of hesitation” and markers of intentional “vagueness” because of their different semantic meaning (Wilamova 2005, 97).

According to her characterization, the pragmatic markers of hesitation or uncertainty seem to be a little bit similar to subjectivity markers. Those terms expressing the hesitation show that the presenter is not so sure about it and thus he softens the propositional content, for example: “*Well, I am kind of tied up right now.*” (Wilamova 2005, 99).

The intentional vagueness gives the impression to be the one connected to the negative politeness field, precisely speaker’s unstated meaning. Urbanova (Urbanova 2003) acknowledges intentional vagueness that by not telling the whole truth the statement’s content is more acceptable for the listener.

In accordance to Wilamova (Wilamova 2005), the vagueness can be treated in two ways. Firstly, as the Brown and Levinson’s off-record politeness strategy, by which the speaker does not explicitly state his/her attitude and offer the hearer more than one interpretation of the utterance; and secondly, as an on-record politeness strategy that should be somehow redressed.

The Brown and Levinson's example of intentional vagueness: "*Looks like someone may have had too much to drink.*" (Brown and Levinson 1987, 226) can be re-interpreted as the on-record strategy without any redress which could look like: "*Oh my God, you are so drunk that you even can't stand on your feet.*" or as the on-record strategy with the redressive action: "*You are a little bit drunk, if I am not mistaken*".

#### **2.1.4 Downgraders**

Wilamova's concept of those addresser-oriented markers makes possible to express the negative meaning indirectly. The downgraders target to reduce the imposition which goes hand in hand with negative politeness (Wilamova 2005). As she put it, if a member of conversation has to say a message directly on-record, it is better to use a redress. The redress can have a form of positively structured utterance, which is the case of Brown and Levinson's positive politeness strategy (Brown and Levinson 1987), or can be achieved via means minimizing the imposition. On account of the minimized imposition, the speaker defends the hearer's face as well as his/her own face.

The example of downgraders is provided: "*Would you give me just a few minutes to change the sheets?*" (Wilamova 2005, 95). Besides polite formulae, the expressions *just* and *a few* downgrading the potential imposition contribute to higher level of politeness. The speaker admits that he does not have the clean sheets and also emphasizes the short time of changing in order not to upset the hearer.

#### **2.1.5 Pragmatic Idioms**

The pragmatic idioms show the addressee how the message should be understood.

In addition, corresponding to the negative politeness concept, they make the speech act more polite due to weakening its content. They weaken the propositional context through making the message more hesitant or by softening the face threat when speaking. Hesitation can be achieved for example by using pragmatic terms such as "*perhaps*" or "*maybe*" indicating that the speaker is not so sure about the solution he/she has just suggested. (Wilamova 2005, 87). In requests, pragmatic idioms soften the face-threatening act, as in the instance: "*Would you switch on the light, please?*" (Wilamova 2005, 87).

#### **2.1.6 Hedges on Politeness Maxims**

Wilamova supposes that the hedging devices on politeness maxims oriented towards the speaker are predominantly connected to Grice's Quality maxim: all members of social

interaction ought to tell the truth and their claims should be based on facts (Grice 1975, in Urbanova 2002), although it could result in an attack towards the hearer's face.

The hedges are purposely used for the attenuation of the face-threat for example when conveying an unpleasant message, e.g.: "*You don't mean to tell me that he's been cheating on you?*" (Wilamova 2005, 103).

### **2.1.7 Performative Hedges**

Performative hedges are also "speaker-oriented" hedging devices (Wilamova 2005, 85).

They in some way introduce and mitigate a content of the proposition that goes immediately after them. By the means of performative hedges, the speaker expresses the utterance indirectly and for this reason more politely. Moreover, they give the addressee time to create his/her attitude and answer (Wilamova 2005), as shown in the example:

*"I was going to say that before we go any further, perhaps we ought to come to an understanding."* (Wilamova 2005, 85).

## **II. ANALYSIS**

### 3 DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

As has been already mentioned, the linguistic politeness field is so broad that it was necessary to choose just some aspects for the discourse analysis. The analytical linguistic research of the material is predominantly based on Wilamova's characterization and classification of hedging devices in negatively polite discourse mentioned in the theoretical part of the thesis.

Her concept of hedging devices was chosen because the well-arranged categorization and description seem to be very useful for the faster understanding and an insight into the linguistic politeness topic when people start to be interested in the field.

The fundamental principle of negative politeness is based on the "hearer's freedom from imposition and his/her freedom for any action" (Brown and Levinson 1987, 129). Hence the addresser tries to express his statement in a way giving the listener an opportunity to disagree or to have his/her own attitude.

This actually is the reason for the first hypothesis, based on the expectation in relation to chosen material for analysis, that the most frequently used hedging devices in negatively polite discourse are the subjectivity markers in order to comply with the core of the negative politeness.

The second aim is to employ in practice the knowledge from the theoretical part and prove the Wilamova's claims about hedging devices stated in the first part of the bachelor thesis.

Given the fact that negative politeness occurs mainly in formal communication and language, the chosen material consists of four television show transcripts of political background, all of them enclosed on the compact disc at the end of the bachelor thesis. The first two texts are transcribed pre-election presidential debates of Barack Obama and John McCain transmitted on 26 September and 7 October 2008. The third transcript has been taken from Larry King Show with Barack Obama aired on 15 July 2008 and the very last one represents the complete transcript of The Daily Show interview with Obama broadcast on 29 October 2008. All of them together form one corpus.

Although it has been focused on the Obama's language throughout the life discussions because of the high formality of his language and political background of the speeches, the life debates of a little bit different character have been purposely selected in order to search for hedges influencing the impositions towards the hearer.

#### 4 GENERAL OVERVIEW

The analytical part of the bachelor thesis is derived from the Wilamova's point of view on the pragmatic markers (Wilamova 2005). As stated before, Fraser's concept of pragmatic markers motivated her and due to the need of a slightly different division, she has labelled the seven categories of hedging devices in negatively polite discourse.

Since the practical part of the bachelor thesis is based on linguistic research of the hedging devices and their function in the language, the five following particular tables and Figure 4 deal with the hedges occurrence in the discourse under investigation and serve as the demonstration of the extent to which those pragmatic markers are used in spontaneous, formal, and spoken language.

<b>Hedging Devices</b>	<b>Number of Hedges</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Subjectivity markers</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>Clausal mitigators</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>23</b>
Pseudo-conditionals	2	1
But-clauses	46	22
<b>Downgraders</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Tentativizers</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>15</b>
Markers of hesitation/uncertainty	15	7
Markers of vagueness	17	8
<b>Pragmatic idioms</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Hedges on politeness maxims</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Performative hedges</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Total number of hedging devices</b>	<b>208</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 1: Hedging Devices in the First Presidential Debate



<b>Hedging Devices</b>	<b>Number of Hedges</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Subjectivity markers</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Clausal mitigators</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>28</b>
Pseudo-conditionals	5	2
But-clauses	52	26
<b>Downgraders</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Tentativizers</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>19</b>
Markers of hesitation/uncertainty	14	7
Markers of vagueness	24	12
<b>Pragmatic idioms</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Hedges on politeness maxims</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Performative hedges</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Total number of hedging devices</b>	<b>201</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 2: Hedging Devices in the Second Presidential Debate

<b>Hedging Devices</b>	<b>Number of Hedges</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Subjectivity markers</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>Clausal mitigators</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>18</b>
Pseudo-conditionals	1	1
But-clauses	14	17
<b>Downgraders</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Tentativizers</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>18</b>
Markers of hesitation/uncertainty	10	12
Markers of vagueness	5	6
<b>Pragmatic idioms</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Hedges on politeness maxims</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Performative hedges</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Total number of hedging devices</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 3: Hedging Devices in the Larry King Show Transcript

<b>Hedging Devices</b>	<b>Number of Hedges</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Subjectivity markers</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>Clausal mitigators</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>18</b>
Pseudo-conditionals	2	4
But-clauses	6	13
<b>Downgraders</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Tentativizers</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>24</b>
Markers of hesitation/uncertainty	4	9
Markers of vagueness	7	16
<b>Pragmatic idioms</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Hedges on politeness maxims</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Performative hedges</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Total number of hedging devices</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 4: Hedging Devices in The Daily Show Transcript

<b>Hedging Devices</b>	<b>Number of Hedges</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Subjectivity markers</b>	<b>169</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>Clausal mitigators</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>24</b>
Pseudo-conditionals	10	2
But-clauses	118	22
<b>Downgraders</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Tentativizers</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>18</b>
Markers of hesitation/uncertainty	43	8
Markers of vagueness	53	10
<b>Pragmatic idioms</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Hedges on politeness maxims</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Performative hedges</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Total number of hedging devices</b>	<b>536</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 5: Total Number of the Hedging Devices in the Whole Discourse

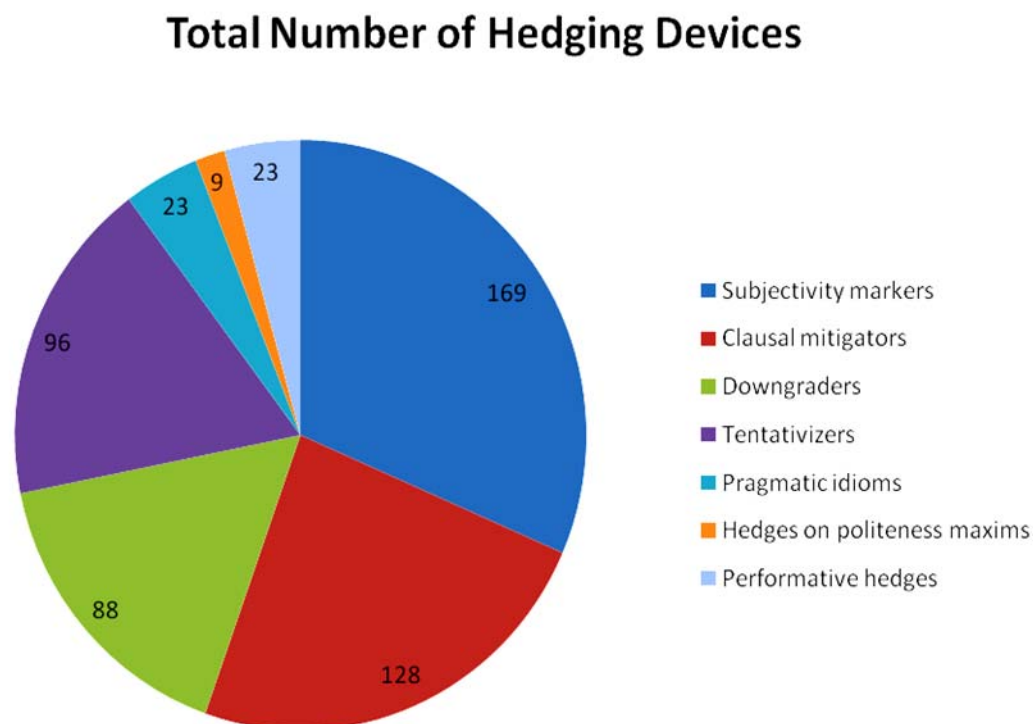


Figure 5: Total Number of Hedging Devices

Concerning the total number of the hedging devices in the Table 5 and the Figure 6 graphically illustrating the ration of the hedges usage, the first hypothesis has already been fulfilled. The most frequently used hedging devices really are the subjectivity markers.

As analysis confirms the Wilamova's claim, the hedging devices expressing the speaker's personal point of view contribute to a polite perception of the proposition. If the addresser shows the subjectivity, he/she softens the potential imposition of the message and expresses the fact that the hearer could also comment on the issue.

#### 4.1 Subjectivity Markers

The quantitative research has shown that the subjectivity markers containing phrases *I think* or *I do not think* are the most commonly used hedges in the corpus. The claim is evidenced by the Table 6 and Table 7 below. The former shows the occurrence rate of the subjectivity markers with the expression *I think*. There are 55% such expressions of all the subjectivity markers employed in the first presidential debate, 59% in the second presidential debate, 50% in the Larry King Show episode, and 63% in The Daily Show.

The latter concerns The Daily Show transcript and signifies the greater usage of *I think* terms in the spoken language.

Particular transcripts	Subjectivity markers	Number of <i>I think</i>	%
First presidential debate	65	36	<b>55%</b>
Second presidential debate	49	29	<b>59%</b>
Larry King Show	36	17	<b>50%</b>
The Daily Show	19	12	<b>63%</b>

Table 6: The Occurrence Rate of the Subjectivity Marker *I think*

For quantifiable analysis of particular hedging devices which Obama uses throughout the discussion, The Daily Show transcript was analyzed as the part of the corpus.

Particular subjectivity markers	Number
I think	10
I hope	4
I mean	1
I don't think	2
I don't mean	1
<b>Total number:</b>	<b>18</b>

Table 7: The Subjectivity Markers in The Daily Show

Considering other terms of the subjectivity markers in the examined material, the examples clearly indicate that Obama expresses his attitude by using various subjective elements, most usually verbs, throughout the corpus. The authentic examples of particular subjectivity markers from the first and second presidential debated have been chosen for demonstration.

#### The first presidential debate

- 1) "... that's what I hope we're going to be talking about tonight."
- 2) "I just fundamentally disagree."
- 3) "I believe the Republican Guard of Iran is a terrorist organisation."
- 4) "Look, I mean, Senator McCain keeps on using this ..."
- 5) "So my attitude is, we've got to grow the economy from the bottom up."

### The second presidential debate

- 6) “Now, Sen. McCain and I do agree, this is the greatest nation on earth.”
- 7) “That is what I intend to do when I am president.”
- 8) “I am absolutely convinced that...”
- 9) “I am sure that person will want to be on Larry King Show.”

Provided examples also illustrate various position of the subjectivity markers. They can be placed at the beginning, in the middle or at the end of the sentence. The final one is not so common in comparison to the initial and middle positions that are used approximately in the same degree.

There is a possibility to use more than one subjectivity marker or the same marker more than once in the sentence as in the example from the second presidential debate:

- 10) “Just – just – just a quick follow-up, because I think – I think this is important.”

Wilamova’s suggestion that the subjectivity markers are usually used for the expressing “disagreement (reservation or refusal), suggestion or uncertainty and indecision” (Wilamova 2005, 83) has to be mentioned as well. Concerning the first presidential debate, the analysis has shown that Obama uses the subjectivity markers most frequently for expressing his strong personal believe, mainly in disagreements or suggestions of the way how to control the country. A few examples according to Wilamova’s division are provided to make the complete idea of Obama’s language.

<b>Disagreement</b>
“I do not think that they are.”
“I just fundamentally disagree.”
<b>Suggestion</b>
“The question, <u>I think</u> , that we have to ask ourselves is, how did we get into this situation is the first place?”
“So-so the question, <u>I think</u> , that we’ve got to ask ourselves is, yes, we’ve got to solve this problem short term.”
<b>Uncertainty</b>
“ <u>I don’t think</u> any of us can say that our standing in the world now, the way children around the world look at the United States, is the same.”

Table 8: The Examples of Disagreement, Suggestion, and Uncertainty Markers

## 4.2 Clausal Mitigators

Clausal mitigators are the second most widely used hedging elements in the face-to-face conversation, based on the study. They contain two groups, the but-clauses and the pseudo-conditionals. The but-clauses have much higher occurrence rate than the pseudo-conditionals in all discussions, as supported by the tables at the beginning. Both subgroups of the clausal mitigators act in accordance with their function of mitigating the speech act propositions, as proposed by Wilamova, and therefore give the redressive action to the face-threatening act that is performed.

The percentage rate in the Table 9 confirms the Brown and Levinson's claim that the but-clauses are "highly productive means" in English language (Brown and Levinson 1987, 162). There are 92% but-clauses and only 8% pseudo-conditionals in the whole discourse analysis containing 536 hedges as a total number. Although the pseudo-conditionals are according to Wilamova quite typical of the formal language, the material under investigation surprisingly does not contain them in large numbers.

<b>Clausal mitigators</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>
pseudo-conditionals	10	8
but-clauses	118	92
<b>Total number</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 9: Pseudo-Conditionals and But-Clauses Occurrence Rate

Since Obama speaks about the current situation and ongoing problems, there is a tendency to use classic conditional sentences rather than pseudo-conditionals in the analyzed material. There are just a few cases in which he uses pseudo-conditionals, hence softens the preceding face-threatening act, but predominantly conditional sentences are employed throughout the conversation. Table 10, analyzing the first presidential debate and the Larry King Show as the representatives of the discussion under stress and stressful discussion, shows the truthfulness of the assertion.

<b>Pseudo-conditionals versus conditionals</b>	<b>Number</b>
--	---------------

<b>First presidential debate</b>	<b>2:21</b>
pseudo-conditionals	2
conditional sentences	21
<b>Larry King Show</b>	<b>1:7</b>
pseudo-conditionals	1
conditional sentences	7

Table 10: Pseudo-Conditionals and Conditionals Occurrence Rate

One point to make, if the pseudo-conditionals occur in the discourse, they are mostly placed in the position of the afterthoughts, claimed by Urbanova (Urbanova 2003) and Wilamova (Wilamova 2005), as shown by the example twelve below: “*If you’ve got health care system, then you can keep your plan, if you are satisfied with it.*” This contributes to the Wilamova’s description that the addresser firstly goes on record, expresses his intentions in unambiguous and a clear way towards the listener, and during the speech realizes the inappropriateness of his speech style and potential attack in the direction of the hearer. Hence he/she redress the face-threatening act he/she had just made.

The authentic examples of but-clauses, pseudo-conditionals and conditionals from the analyzed discourse are given to clearly confirm the previously stated pieces of knowledge:

**The examples of pseudo-conditionals in the first presidential debate:**

11) “*And if we want to talk about oil company profits, under your tax plan, John – this is undeniable – oil companies would get an additional \$4 billion in tax breaks.*”

**The examples of pseudo-conditionals in the second presidential debate:**

12) “*If you’ve got health care system, then you can keep your plan, if you are satisfied with it.*”

**The examples of the conditionals in the second presidential debate:**

13) “*If the American people make a decision to do something, it gets done.*”

14) “*If less money is coming in, you end up making cuts.*”

**The examples but-clauses the first presidential debate:**

15) “*I am sorry, but that’s not true.*”

**The examples but-clauses in the second presidential debate:**

16) “*... and I’m pleased to have his support. But there are other folks out there.*”

17) “*The secretary already has the power to do that in the rescue package, but it hasn’t been exercised yet.*”

18) “*And it’s a strain on your family budget, but it’s also bad for our national security.*”

19) “*And President Bush did some smart things at the outset, but one of the opportunities that was missed was, when he spoke to the American people, he said: “Go out and shop”.*”

Wilamova (Wilamova 2005) mentions the but-clauses occurrence in the patterns of refusing, apologising or requesting. The analytical study found that the most usual pattern employed throughout the discourse is for a refusal, as for example demonstrated on the previous examples number fifteen or sixteen.

### 4.3 Downgraders

The hedging devices downgrading the propositional content are represented in the discourse mainly by the *just* marker. Table 11 denotes the overbearing usage of the expression *just* that can, according to analysis and the Table 12, be situated at the beginning of the sentence before the topicalized items, between the subject and the verb, before the object or it can re-appear several times in the clause. The position of the *just* in the clause does not influence its function in any way, it still downgrades the negatively perceived impact of the message, like in the instances of the first presidential debate:

28) “*Now, I’ve got to correct a little bit of Senator McCain history...*” or: 29) “*That’s how we make sure that everybody is willing to make a few sacrifices.*”

Downgraders	Number
just	34
a little	2
a few	1
Total number	37

Table 8: Particular Downgraders in the First Presidential Debate



<b>Position of the <i>just</i> downgrader</b>	<b>Examples from the first presidential debate</b>
initial position	30) “ <i>Just</i> one last point I want to make,…”
between subject and verb	31) “I <i>just</i> want to make this point,…”
before the object	32) “...we are borrowing money from overseas to try to finance <i>just</i> some of the basic functions or our government.”
reappearing several times	33) “I <i>just</i> have to respond very quickly, <i>just</i> to correct – <i>just</i> to correct the record.”

Table 9: Position of the Downgrader *just*

#### 4.4 Tentativizers

Wilamova (Wilamova 2005, 97) distinguishes two kinds of tentative hedging devices: “the markers of hesitation or uncertainty” and the markers of the intentional “vagueness”. Table 13 below deals with the occurrence of the tentativizers in The Daily Show discourse. The table shows a marked contrast in the usage of uncertainty and vagueness tentative markers. The tentativizers expressing intentional vagueness are more productive in the whole analyzed data than the uncertainty markers. Concerning the total number of hedging devices, Table 5 and the Figure 5 above also provide evidence that the tentativizers of vagueness are produced in larger numbers than the uncertainty elements. There are forty-three uncertainty markers, which is 8% of the whole hedging devices, and fifty-three vagueness markers which make 10% of all 536 devices in the analyzed material.

As confirming Wilamova’s claim, hesitation is usually achieved through the expressions *I don’t know* and the pragmatic particle *well*. Other terms expressing hesitation have not been found. Hence those two mentioned are most usually used. The intentional vagueness is most frequently demonstrated by the terms *kind of* or *sort of*, as apparent from the Table 13 representing the discourse.

<b>Tentativizers</b>	<b>Number</b>
<b>Tentativizers of uncertainty</b>	<b>5</b>
Well	2
I don’t know	2
Yeah	1

<b>Tentativizers of vagueness</b>	<b>11</b>
Some of	2
Kind of	3
Sort of	3
Else	1
Seem	1
In the sense that	1
In terms of	1
<b>The total number</b>	<b>16</b>

Table 10: Tentativizers in The Daily Show

The authentic examples of the tentativizers taken from the analyzed material are put for better understanding.

**The examples of tentativizers of uncertainty in the Daily Show:**

34) “*We’re still here. I don’t know.”*

35) “*I won’t know what to do!”*

36) “*Well, this is the Obama infomercial.”*

**The examples of tentativizers of vagueness in The Daily Show:**

33) “*...to take a look at not just sort of pitch for me...”*

34) “*...I share some toys with my friends...”*

35) “*That’s the kind of attitude we’re going to need going forward.”*

36) “*...things are kind of going along pretty well and...”*

**The examples of tentativizers of vagueness in the first presidential debate :**

37) “*Well, there are a range of things that are probably going to have to be delayed.”*

38) “*I would send two or three additional brigades to Afghanistan.”*

“*We haven’t done enough in terms of transit.”*

**4.4.1 Tentativizers of Uncertainty versus Subjectivity Markers**

Wilamova (Wilamova 2005) refers to the similarity between tentativizers of uncertainty and the subjectivity markers. All of them, as mentioned, attenuate the content of the proposition by showing that the speaker is not certain about the made statement. On the other hand, there are different ways of achieving the attenuation.

Concerning the subjectivity markers, the speaker intends to show the hearer that the proposition should be viewed as something personal. This indication gives the hearer a space for answer by the usage of verbs such as *think, wonder, suppose, know etc.*, such as in: “*Now, I have listed the things that I think have to be at the top of the list.*”

In the case of tentativizers of hesitation or uncertainty, the tentativeness is expressed directly. The phrase *I don't know* or pragmatic particle *well*, suggested by Wilamova, are the only two examples found in the whole material. Nevertheless, they fulfil the function, as in the example: “*We're still here. I don't know.*” the phrase *I don't know* explicitly shows the addresser's indecision and at the same time implicitly signifies his/her awareness of the hearer's want of free of action.

The pragmatic particle *well* is predominantly placed at the beginning indicating the thinking, as in:

- “*Well, Tom, we're going to have to take on entitlements and I think we've got to do it quickly.*”
- “*Well, Terry, first of all, we honour your service, and we're grateful for it.*”
- “*Well, I know, it was the New Yorker's attempt at satire.*”

#### 4.4.2 Pragmatic Idioms

Pragmatic idioms are purposely used in the conversation in order to soften the content of the proposition. Taking into consideration Table 14 analysing in details pragmatic idioms and their frequency scale in the first presidential debate, pragmatic marker *potentially* is used most often. This element functions as the pragmatic idiom which makes the statement more tentative or hesitant, as in the example from the first presidential debate: 26) “*...have extensive trade with Iran but potentially have an interest in making sure ...*”

Pragmatic idioms	Number	%
potentially	5	50
probably	2	20
maybe	2	20
eventually	1	10
<b>Total number</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 14: Pragmatic Idioms in the First Presidential Debate

There are other pragmatic idioms in the analyzed data, such as *probably*, *maybe* or *eventually*. On the other hand, pragmatic idioms *perhaps*, *please* and *kindly* suggested by Wilamova (Wilamova 2005) as the typical pragmatic idiom examples have not been found in the discourse analysis. This appears to be the contribution to the assertion that there are other elements influencing the conversation such as formality of the occasion, social status of the individuals, the social status, the relative power or the size of imposition.

The expressions *probably* and *maybe* seem to be used within the suggestions by making the proposition more hesitant. The example from The Daily Show transcript is provided as the evidence: 27) “*At this stage, everything that needs to be said has probably been heard by a lot of voters.*”

#### 4.5 Hedges on Politeness Maxims

Hedging devices are employed in the face-to-face conversation with the aim to minimize the degree of the face-threatening act. As was written, they are usually used for expressing and softening the unpleasant information, which can be seen in the examples from the first presidential debate:

39) “... I have to say we are having...”

40) “I just have to make this general point that...”

41) “I just have to respond very quickly, just to correct the record.”

42) “And I have to say, Senator McCain and I...”

43) “Well, let me just make a closing point.”

44) “I’m sorry, but that’s not true.”

45) “Well, let me just correct something very quickly.”

After studying the politeness issue and its characteristic, the high occurrence rate of the hedges on politeness maxims had been expected. In contrast to the expectation of high occurrence rate of hedges on politeness maxims, they were not present in corpus-based study in such large numbers, as shown by Table 5, there were only 2% hedges on politeness maxims of all 536 hedges in the data.

Given the unpleasant information as the reason for the usage of hedges on politeness maxims, Barack Obama usually formulates the problem directly, using on-record strategy without the redressive action, or he states it and adds the conditional sentences as the tool how to improve the ongoing problematic financial situation of the USA.

*“If they can’t get a loan, that means that they can’t make payroll. If they can’t make payroll, then they may end up having to shut their doors and lay people off.”* (the first presidential debate)

*“If we get our tax policies right so that they’re good for the middle class, if we reverse the policies of the last eight years that got us into this fix in the first place and that Senator McCain supported, then we are going to be in a position to deal with Social Security and deal with Medicare, because we will have a health care plan that actually works for you, reduces spending costs over the long term, and Social Security that is stable and solvent for all Americans and not just some.”* (the second presidential debate)

These pragmatic markers seem to be usually employed in order to attenuate the face-threatening act caused by refusal (*“I’m sorry, but that’s not true.”*) or criticism speech act (*“I just have to respond very quickly, just to correct the record.”*), as stated by Wilamova (2005). She further explores the field via assertion that the speech acts such as refusal or criticism are connected to the Grice’s maxim of Quality based on the truthfulness of the information. Hedges on politeness maxims frankly express the truth although they could impose on the hearer.

#### **4.6 Performative Hedges**

This group of pragmatic markers is not represented very much in the analyzed conversation in comparison to the other hedges occurring in the data. There are only 23 performative hedges making 4% of the all hedges. The small representation of this hedging group seems to be resulted from the Obama’s preferences and content of his speeches. Although there are only twenty-three particular performative hedges in the whole discourse, they do fulfil Wilamova’s characterization of their function in the theoretical part. They comment on and soften the proposition that goes immediately after them which is supported by all the provided examples:

##### **The second presidential debate:**

20) *“I’ll tell you what, ...”*

21) *“I just want to make one last point.”*

##### **The Daily Show:**

22) *“I’ll will tell you a quick story.”*

23) *“Here’s what I’m going to do...”*

24) *“I can tell you, Jon, that we should...”*

The linguistic research has affirmed the Wilamova’s note that the performative hedges are generally employed when the speaker wants to suggest something like in the example twenty-four: *“I can tell you, Jon, that we should...”* The addresser might want to apologize and he/she can make use of performatives as well, as obvious from the sentence number twenty-two: *“I’ll will tell you a quick story.”* In this instance, Obama apologizes for making his speech a little bit longer than it is allowed by the rules of the pre-election debates and at the same time softens the propositional content of the following message. He says: *“I just want to make one last point”*.

## 5 COMPARISON OF THE PRESIDENTIAL DEBATES AND INTERVIEWS

Considering the use of hedging devices in the spoken language of political character, there is a need to compare two presidential pre-election debates to two interviews in terms of aspects influencing the choice of particular hedges.

Following tables represent a number of hedges in particular transcripts.

The presidential pre-election debates stand for stressful occasions and hence this fact influences the language. On the other hand, The Daily Show and Larry King Show embody the common interview without so much pressure.

<b>Hedging Devices</b>	<b>Number of Hedges</b>
Subjectivity markers	65
Clausal mitigators	48
Downgraders	37
Tentativizers	32
Pragmatic idioms	10
Hedges on politeness maxims	6
Performative hedges	10
<b>Total number</b>	<b>208</b>

Table 115: Hedging Devices in the First Presidential Debate

<b>Hedging Devices</b>	<b>Number of Hedges</b>
Subjectivity markers	49
Clausal mitigators	57
Downgraders	40
Tentativizers	38
Pragmatic idioms	7
Hedges on politeness maxims	2
Performative hedges	8
<b>Total number</b>	<b>201</b>

Table 126: Hedging Devices in the Second Presidential Debate

<b>Hedging Devices</b>	<b>Number of Hedges</b>
Subjectivity markers	36
Clausal mitigators	15
Downgraders	8
Tentativizers	15
Pragmatic idioms	4
Hedges on politeness maxims	1
Performative hedges	3
<b>Total number</b>	<b>82</b>

Table 17: Hedging Devices in the Larry King Show Transcript

<b>Hedging Devices</b>	<b>Number of Hedges</b>
Subjectivity markers	19
Clausal mitigators	8
Downgraders	3
Tentativizers	11
Pragmatic idioms	2
Hedges on politeness maxims	0
Performative hedges	2
<b>Total number</b>	<b>45</b>

Table 18: Hedging Devices in The Daily Show Transcript

As it is evident from the provided tables, the language usage of the hedging devices differs along with the occasions under or without a pressure.

There are quite similar numbers of four the most productive hedging devices in the presidential pre-election debates as the representatives of the stressful situations. Obama makes use of the subjectivity markers (65 in first and 49 in second debate), clausal mitigators (48 in the first and 57 in the second debate), downgraders (37 in first and 40 in second debate), and tentativizers (32 in first and 38 in second debate) in the same ratio.

Considering the Larry King Show and The Daily Show, common interviews, the ratio differs. Although the subjectivity markers reach high numbers (36 in Larry Kings Show and 19 in The Daily Show), other three groups of hedges are not employed so much.



There is much lower amount of clausal mitigators (15 in Larry Kings Show and 8 in The Daily Show), downgraders (8 in Larry Kings Show and 3 in The Daily Show), and tentativizers as well (15 in Larry Kings Show and 11 in The Daily Show).

The research shows that the subjectivity markers are the most frequently employed hedging devices in all kinds of the face-to-face social interaction. A number of other hedges tends to differ with respect to the pressure influencing the speaker's choice of strategies in the language.

## SUMMARY

The bachelor thesis deals with the linguistic politeness in the spoken English. The first part of the bachelor thesis is concerned with the contemporary theories of the linguistic politeness as the basic elements for better understanding of the topic. The theories refer to Grice's conversational maxims generating his cooperative principle of four maxims of conversation which Lakoff further broadens with politeness principle. Brown and Levinson's concept of politeness is considered as the most important and therefore the thesis concentrates on it.

The theoretical part mentions the Brown and Levinson's general politeness strategies with the focus on the negative politeness sub-strategies and its output strategies as the means employed in the spoken language. Corresponding to negative politeness, pragmatic markers called hedging devices are put to the analysis as the last part of the theoretical part of the bachelor thesis.

The practical part of the thesis applies the Wilamova's theoretical classification of seven types of the hedging devices: subjectivity markers, clausal mitigators, downgraders, tentativizers, performative hedges, hedges on politeness maxims, and pragmatic idioms to the corpus under investigation. Their function in the negatively polite discourse and frequency of their usage appear to be the main target of the analytical part, based on the material enclosed on the compact disc at the end of the bachelor thesis. Therefore, tables indicating the frequency of the particular hedging devices and tables concerning typical expressions of each category are provided as the satisfactory evidence. To achieve confirmation of the Wilamova's claims, authentic examples from the studied discourse are given as well.

There is a comparison of the different kinds of discourse as the very last analytical part. Provided comparison is based on the whole corpus divided into the presidential debates, where the speaker is under pressure, and the transcripts of Larry King Show and The Daily Show as representatives of the common interviews.

## CONCLUSION

The bachelor thesis analyses theoretical background of the linguistic politeness, its basic theoretical approaches, and strategies used to maintain an effective communication between the speaker and the hearer.

Given the broad range of the general linguistic politeness and limited extent of the bachelor thesis, it was needed to select a number of elements of this pragmatic phenomenon for the analytical part of the thesis. Therefore negative politeness is of the primary concern.

The practical part aims to apply the Wilamova's theory on the chosen discourse of spoken, formal language of political character. Concerning the discourse analysis, all hedging devices classified by Wilamova (Wilamova 2005) have been found, although in slightly different numbers than expected.

The hypothesis about the subjectivity markers has been fulfilled via the text analysis. The subjectivity markers are the most widely used elements in the formal spoken language. There are 169 particular subjectivity markers in the corpus which make 32% of all the 536 hedges found in the material.

Concerning the but-clauses, the Brown and Levinson's claim about their productivity in English has been fulfilled as well. There are 118 but-clauses (22% of all 536 hedges) in the discourse. The but-clauses are primarily employed in the analyzed material when refusing.

Pseudo-conditionals have been expected in large numbers throughout studying the theory of linguistic politeness. Surprisingly, there is a higher extent of conditional sentences in comparison with the pseudo-conditionals. Obama predominantly uses the conditional sentences during the speeches. He is asked the questions and in terms of answering he rather tends to picture the situation, expresses the solutions for the particular problems or some hypothetical situations occurring in the United States. In such cases, Barack Obama prefers conditional sentences to pseudo-conditionals. When he feels the mitigation is needed, he employs other devices softening the content of the propositions, such as subjectivity markers, but-clauses, downgraders or tentativizers. This appears to confirm the assertion about the elements which a conversation is influenced by. It derives from the R, P, D values, character of the occasion and individual interactants.

The truthfulness of Urbanova's claim in the theoretical part (Urbanova 2003) namely that the speaker can maintain his/her face and; what is more, avoid the disagreement with the hearer by distancing himself/herself from the message, is apparent from the material study. Obama uses the means of negative politeness during the debates and interviews with Larry King and Jon Steward in order to express the attitudes or opposite opinions in polite way.

The presidential debates are definitely more stressful situations compared to common interviews in Larry King Show and The Daily Show. The linguistic research shows that the subjectivity markers are always used the most. When the social interaction involves tension and the speaker and the hearer are the two opposing sides, there is a higher amount of the hedging devices in comparison with the friendly discussions. The ratio of all the hedges used during the particular presidential debates represents higher occurrence of particular hedging devices. Contrary, the high occurrence in the discussions without pressure appears only in the subjectivity markers group. The others are not so employed because there is not so urgent need to use them.

Taking into consideration all the seven sub-types of the hedging devices proposed by Wilamova (Wilamova 2005), each of them behaves as the pragmatic markers which has the typical function of influencing the content of the proposition. In a case of hedges, the propositional content is mitigated in relation to negative politeness. The research approved that they tend to minimize the size of imposition made by the speaker towards the hearer. In the corpus, Obama uses means of negative politeness to soften the damaging effect of the potential face-threatening acts and; moreover, he gives the John McCain or the listener space for his own attitude or answer. The most frequently produced mean how to achieve this goal is the usage of indirectness.

The material under investigation has the formal character. Political debates, where the formal polite language is expected, are the best sources of negatively polite discourse.

The whole field of linguistic politeness is broad and quite hard to understand. There are many elements that can be studied throughout this field. The broader study could be carried out as a part of the diploma thesis.

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